



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

JOHN A. GERM, Executive Director

P.O. Box 490, Painesville, Ohio 44077
(440) 350-3333 • (440) 918-3333 • Fax (440) 350-3313



P.L.U.S.² Parent's Guide to Week #4

This week we have asked the students to research information on Marijuana and Inhalants. Similar to last week we asked the students to write some notes on the information from the research search. We asked the students to share with you what they had learned and to receive input from you regarding the information collected. The notes will be used in class for reference while the students play a "Marijuana/Inhalants Drug Jeopardy" game. The categories for the Marijuana section are *Physical Effects* and *Psychological Effects*. The categories for the Inhalant section are *Just the Facts* and *True/False*. This week the students get to work in teams as they play the game. Ask your child to share what they learned.

As part of this week's homework we ask the class to discuss how they see marijuana effecting youth throughout the United States. The discussions within the groups tended to focus on the usefulness of marijuana. A lot of discussion also focused on how dangerous it is to be high on marijuana while operating a motor vehicle. The P.L.U.S.² officer talked about the myths regarding marijuana being useful as a "medicine". There is some research indicating medical benefits from some of the chemicals found in marijuana, HOWEVER none being worth the risk of putting marijuana into the body in it's current form, through smoking. The most current research says; the cannibinoid chemicals could help people with AIDS by helping increase the appetite; the chemical THC could help relieve an AIDS patient and cancer patient vomiting due to the treatments they are under; the chemical THC could help relieve some of the involuntary spasms experienced by those with multiple-sclerosis, "IF" these chemicals could be put into the body *without* the process of inhalation. The truth is medical science is not able to remove these chemicals directly from marijuana in any "safe" usable form to date. (There is a *synthetic* form of THC which has been on the market as a prescription drug since 1985.) The chemicals in marijuana are more cancer causing and damaging to the lungs than smoking cigarettes. One study "Effects of Marijuana on the Lungs and Its Immune Defenses", University of California-Los Angeles School of Medicine Study, 1997, found that smoking **3-5 marijuana joints per week** does equivalent damage to the lungs as smoking **16 cigarettes per day**.

Another "medical use" myth has to do with Glaucoma. "The quantities of marijuana required to reduce intraocular pressure in glaucoma sufferers are large, and would require in inhalation of at least six (6) marijuana cigarettes each day.", said Dr. Keith Green, American Journal of Ophthalmology (1982). Furthermore, glaucoma experts testify that "at this quantity of use a reduction of blood supply to the optic nerves due to low blood pressure would speed up, rather than slow down, the loss of eyesight and cause blindness."

The officer then shared with the students the marijuana data compiled through the survey done by the students during the first P.L.U.S.² class. The data was interesting and surprising for the students. Here are some of the results:

I have tried marijuana without my parent's knowledge or permission?
2.9%

I have used marijuana, more than 5 times, without my parent's knowledge or permission?
0.9%

I am currently using marijuana without my parent's knowledge or permission?
0.9%

I have never tried marijuana without my parent's knowledge or permission?
97.1%

I have never used marijuana, more than 5 times, without my parent's knowledge or permission?
99.1%

I have never used, nor am I using marijuana without my parent's knowledge or permission?
99.1%

Dedicated to Protecting a Great Way of Life

So what does this all mean? With the first data set the students saw that very few of their peers said they had *tried marijuana*. When the students talked about why kids use marijuana they came up with: to fit in, to be like their peers, to be part of the cool group, and curiosity. The second data set gave the same results, even less peers have *used marijuana more than 5 times*. And the third data set showed 3 students indicating that he/she *was using marijuana*. Even if ten percent of students lied on the survey the fact is very few 7th grade students, who attend LaMuth Middle School, have used marijuana.

The data on Inhalants was not as good. Two percent - 1.5% (5 students) of the students in 7th grade at LaMuth indicated that: "I *have tried* inhalants without my parents knowledge or permission." Ninety-eight percent (98.5%) of the students in 7th grade at LaMuth indicated that: "I *have never tried* inhalants without my parents knowledge or permission." Less than one percent – 0.3% (1 student) of the students indicated: "I *have used inhalants, more than 5 times*, without my parents knowledge or permission." None of the students indicated: "I *am currently using* inhalants without my parents knowledge or permission." The results are good compared to 7th graders around the U.S. (4.2%) *providing* all of the students were honest on the survey.

Another interesting point about the inhalant discussions was the students learned the dangers of Sudden Sniffing Death (SSD) and how 30% of youth who die from SSD die the **first time** they use inhalants. We know the kids are listening when we talk about inhalants because of their reaction as they learn how dangerous these drugs are!

I don't think the students were too shocked about the inhalant data. They knew that there were not many peers using inhalants. But they reacted differently to the marijuana data. The students really thought more kids were using marijuana. The problem lies with what the kids *believe to be true*. If people believe something to be true then they strive to meet that belief (*normative behavior*). As with the tobacco and alcohol data, the students actually seemed relieved to know that the vast majority of their peers don't use marijuana or inhalants, and most of them haven't even tried!

This week for homework the students are asked to study for a "Prescription Abuse/Over the Counter Medication abuse" test they will be administered during the next P.L.U.S.² lesson. The web pages listed below will be where the information on the test will come from. The students have been told that any handwritten notes they have put together while studying can be used on the test. **No computer generate notes will be allowed.** The Internet sites suggested include: *theantidrug.com*; *drugfree.org*; *nida.nih.gov*; *abovetheinfluence.com*; *kidshealth.org*; *whitehousedrugpolicy.gov*; *mayoclinic.com/health/prescription_drug_abuse/DS01079*.

*Don't forget....you can get homework, Parent's Guides and much more information at our web site:
www.lakecountyohio.gov/lcna.*

You need to login in with your username and password to see the homework and Parent's Guides.