



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

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P.L.U.S.² Parent's Guide Lesson 7 Talking About Tough Stuff

During the first 5 lessons we looked at the effects of drugs on youth in general across the United States. What we did in last week's lesson was look at the impact of drug use on us personally, on our families and friendships if we choose to use. We have moved from a general scope of drug effects to a personal reference of risks from drug use. The purpose of this week's lesson is to have the students look at themselves and identify what makes it difficult to talk with parents about all types of *difficult* issues, including drug use.

The lesson begins with the officer asking the students to identify what they see as fun activities they do with parents and family. We talk about what makes the activity fun to do with parents. Some of the things brought up by the students that make it fun are: companionship, time spent together, lack of seriousness, one-on-one time, and parents knowing "I'm getting older." Many of the students have said they like to play video games with mom and dad. When asked why they like to do this so much the answer is: "Because it's something I can beat my parents at."

The officer then asks the students if there are things that they would like to do with mom and dad, but haven't had the chance. Some students have said they would like to build something together, as simple as a birdhouse. Others say they would like to have some one-on-one time without other siblings around. Playing cards or a board game with the family as a way to relax and not talk about anything serious is of interest to some students. What has become loud and clear is that the students really want to have some of their parent's time. The one thing most of the students don't want to do with mom and dad is "go to the movies," as they have said they feel embarrassed. When they see friends at the movies and their parents are with them, it makes them feel "little."

The next set of questions moves away from activities and looks at issues discussed with mom and dad. Most of the students say they have talked with parents about cigarettes and alcohol. On the other side of that, many students also said that they have not talked with parents about LSD, Ecstasy, RX Meds or Inhalants. Behavior expectations, friends, household rules, homework, and school expectations are the most common issues that students say they have discussed with parents.

From the list of issues on the homework sheet, the students have identified the following as not talked about with parents: dating, helping others, opposite sex attractions, parties, world affairs, music, and internet dangers. The students' explanation for why they are not talking with parents about this stuff was: "What's so important about those things anyway.... it's not like my parents know what I'm going through."

Some parents unknowingly make it easier for their child to use drugs or get into other problems. Simply not talking about these issues is a major factor in drug involvement. Another factor is "giving in to the pressure your child puts on you *to be like other parents*". Parties at your house allowing kids to drink and use other drugs like tobacco make it *easier* for your kids to

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use. Parties at your house allowing kids to drink take away your child's feelings that they are doing something that is wrong, which makes using *easier*. As adults we say things like "well I'd rather know where they are when they're drunk." That sounds caring and helpful, but what does it say about our expectations? "I expect my child is going to drink therefore I will have them drink where I can control it." So now your child knows it's okay to drink "responsibly" and break the law, by your standards, and who is going to be watching them when they are drinking *responsibly* at a different friends house and decide to go to the movies? The fact is...kids live up to parent's expectations more often than not! When a child comes to your home under the influence, and you help cover for them, not only are you breaking the law but you are making his/her drug use *easier*. When you allow your child to have parties while you're not home you are making it *easier* for them to use drugs including alcohol. By the way, did you know that your homeowners insurance will not cover you when youth are drinking in your home?

It takes a lot of time for a person to *use drugs*. First the user needs the *time to be high*. That doesn't take any more time than other activities friends have together. Next, the user has to take *time to hide* his/her user activities. This takes *time to lie, manipulate, and deceive* those you don't want to know. It takes time to come up with the *money needed to use*. The money can come from allowance, but a lot of times allowance isn't enough. This means pestering you (parents) repeatedly, stealing from others, or selling personal possessions for "bargain basement prices" which then becomes the source of drug money. The user also needs *time for recovery*. The "hangover" takes up extra time, usually at least half a day some times even longer. It takes time to *plan where you are going to use*. You certainly can't use out in the open or where your parents are going to know, so now you have to plan. Phone calls to friends to see whose parents are going to be out for the evening or out of town for the weekend or what about those parents who allow drinking at their house. It also takes *time to avoid being caught*. Teachers, police, coaches, neighbors, and parents are a few of the people one needs to avoid when using. Keeping the lies straight, coming up with the excuses about homework not completed, blaming others for your irresponsibility *takes time*. The user slowly loses the ability to perform as well in school, sports, music, and other activities as they once had because he/she just *doesn't have the time anymore* to keep up. It's amazing when you look at it....IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME TO USE DRUGS!

When kids are not involved in activities, and when we as parents are not taking time to talk with our kids, we *are* giving them *the time* they need to break the rules and the excuse to live up to *perceived* expectations. -At that point, we really *don't know* what's going on in the "other life" our child leads.

Our kids know they are not supposed to break rules or use alcohol and other drugs. They **know** the risks of making poor choices, just ask them. And yet they still do! As parents we can make a huge difference in our child's choices:

- 1) By making sure they know how we feel about them.
- 2) By making sure they know what our expectations are.
- 3) By making sure they know what the consequences for poor choices will be *in advance*.
- 4) By following through with what we tell our children our expectations are and what the consequences will be.

We can do more than we think by just standing by what we know is right.

This week's homework: The Persuasion Effect