

DRUG & ALCOHOL FACT SHEET

Adolescent abuse of drugs and alcohol is a **preventable behavior**, and the disease of drug/alcohol addiction is a **treatable disease**.

Parents are the most effective resource, and leverage point, in preventing and reducing adolescent and young adult drug and alcohol abuse and addiction.

- **11 million** American adolescents and young adults ages 12-29 need help with drug and alcohol problems; **9 million** of these are between the ages of 12-25. (2009 National Study on Drugs and Health)
- **90%** of the nearly 2 million adolescents who need help with drug and alcohol problems are **not getting the help they need**. (2008 National Study on Drugs and Health)
- The related public health, social services, public safety, and lost productivity **costs of drug and alcohol abuse to society is \$465 billion** a year. (\$280 billion drugs, \$185 billion alcohol; Harwood 2004, 2000)
- Parents consider drugs and alcohol as one of the **most important** issues facing teens, young adults, and parents today. (Horowitz Associates 2010)
- Kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to **50% less likely** to use drugs, yet only 37% report getting that benefit. (Partnership Attitude Tracking Study 2008)
- Parents who intervene early with their child's drug or alcohol use can help **significantly reduce** the likelihood that they will become addicted, or suffer long-term negative consequences. (Dennis 2008)
- 90% of all adults with drug or alcohol problems started using before the age of **18**, and half before **15**. (Dennis 2007)
- There is a clear association between adolescent drug and alcohol use and **unhealthy, risky behavior**, including: unprotected, unplanned, unwanted sexual activity; impaired motor vehicle driving/passenger; involvement with juvenile justice system; poor academic performance and dropping out. (numerous sources)
- Some adolescents and young adults have **special vulnerability** to drug and alcohol problems, including: drug or alcohol use at an early age; family history of drug or alcohol problems; existing mental health problems; having friends who use drugs and alcohol. (National Institute on Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration)
- **African American** adolescents have consistently shown **lower** drug and alcohol usage rates than Caucasian adolescents. (Johnson/Monitoring the Future 2008)

- **Coerced** (non voluntary) treatment for adolescent drug and alcohol problems can be **just as effective** as treatment after **hitting bottom**.+ (National Institute on Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration)
- The **adolescent brain** is not fully developed until ages **22-24**, and can be more vulnerable to the effects of drugs and alcohol; the part of the brain to develop last is the prefrontal cortex, responsible for **decision making** and moderating social behavior. (Winters 2008)
- Effective **treatment for adolescent** drug and alcohol problems has been shown to be **different** than treatment for adults. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- On an **average day**, **7,540 adolescents** 12-17 drank **alcohol** for the first time, **4,365** used an **illicit drug**, **2,466** abused a **prescription** pain medication (without a prescription) and **263** were admitted to treatment for **marijuana dependence**, more than any other drug. (2008 OAS/ SAMHSA)