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The REAL story about alcohol and other drugs

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As a young person, you'll hear everything there is to hear about alcohol and other drugs from friends, your brother or sister or other young people.

Unfortunately, much of what you hear from them is based on myth and misconception and, as a result, it may not always be true or accurate. So, like anything else in life, you need to do your own homework and Learn About Alcohol and Learn About Drugs.

For some of you, you have already seen firsthand the dangers of alcohol and drugs and the damage they can do to the individual, to relationships, to friendships and to families. Maybe you are concerned about mom or dad, an uncle, a friend, a neighbor or even yourself. If so, you will find the information in For Family and Friends to be helpful.

So, *what's the REAL story about alcohol and other drugs?*

Facts About Alcohol and Drugs:

FACT: Alcohol and drugs are the leading causes of crime among youth.

FACT: Alcohol and drugs are the leading factors in teenage suicide.

FACT: More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs, affecting millions more people.....spouses, children, family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues at work.

FACT: Marijuana and Grades: 19.3% of students ages 12-17 who receive average grades of "D" or lower used marijuana in the past month and 6.9% of students with grades of "C" or above used marijuana in the past month.

FACT: Not everyone is using drugs.

One reason some teens decide to start smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol or using other drugs is because they think "everyone is doing it." And, since they think that the majority of their peers are using drugs, they draw the conclusion that it must be OK. If most of the people that you are hanging out with are drinking alcohol or using drugs, it's easy to think that "everyone is doing it." But statistics don't back up that claim.

Most teens aren't using drugs

Consider the facts. Most students go all the way through high school without ever doing drugs or getting drunk. The annual **Monitoring the Future (MTF)** nationwide survey of thousands of 12th grade students asks seniors about their use of alcohol and drugs **during their lifetime**:

- 53.3% never used any illegal drug.
- 58% never smoked marijuana.
- 90.5% never did inhalants.
- 90.7% never did tranquilizers.
- 91.8% never did barbiturates.
- 93.5% never did ecstasy.
- 94% never did cocaine.
- 96.1% never did LSD.
- 97.6% never did methamphetamine.
- 98.8% never did heroin.

Make your own choices

Given the above statistics, if you are hanging out with a group in which the majority of kids are using drugs to get high, you may want to think about making some new friends. You may be headed toward an alcohol and drug problem if you continue to hang around others who routinely drink alcohol, smoke marijuana, abuse prescription drugs or use illegal drugs. **You don't have to go along to get along.**

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