Youth in Action

Samuel E. Shull Middle School
How we chose our topic

- We discussed problems in our community

- We chose Drugs and Alcohol

- It seemed to be the most of our concern and we knew people it affects
Our Research Question

- Why do teens use and abuse drugs and alcohol?

- We decided that drugs and alcohol can damage your body and teens should not be using drugs or alcohol.

- We wanted to find out why teens would risk ruining their lives just to drink or do drugs.
We surveyed students to find out if they think drugs and alcohol are a problem and what the causes are.

- We interviewed 5 students on the experiences with drugs and alcohol, and 3 teachers to see why they think students do it.

- We created a quiz to see what students at our school know about drugs and alcohol.
We surveyed 30 students at Shull Middle School from the 7th and 8th grade on different teams and academic levels.

- 22 students have friends in middle school who use drugs, 14 of those students knew 20+ students who use

- Students ranked the top 4 causes: Depression, Peer Pressure, Lack of Family Support, and Substance Abuse in the Community.

- 13 students have been asked to try drugs or alcohol, but only 2 of those 13 did not end up trying.
We interviewed 2 Shull students who have never used drugs or alcohol and 3 students who have.

Non-User Quotes:

1) "I don't want to destroy my life."

2) "My parents told me never to do it."
Our Findings: Interviews

Students who have used:

1) “You can’t die from marijuana. You only get high.”

2) “It’s not like my parents don’t know I use alcohol… My mom drinks with me.”

3) “I am an honor student so it doesn't affect my work… In ten years, I see myself in college- still smoking.”
We quizzed 41 students at Shull Middle School from the 7th and 8th grade on different teams and academic levels.

- 33 students do not know that Tobacco kills more people each year than cocaine or heroin.

- 21 students do not know that marijuana has been shown to cause mental illness.

- 27 students do not think that Alcohol is the most commonly abused drug in the US. Most chose cocaine or heroin.
Conclusions

1) Students do not know the effects drugs and alcohol can have on their bodies, academics, or lives.

2) There is a direct connection between how parents feel about drugs and alcohol and whether their teen chooses to use them.

3) Peer pressure influences many teens.
We interviewed 3 teachers to find out if they think drugs and alcohol are a problem with students, and what information students receive:

Teacher 1: “Students don’t know enough information about the side effects, just think that it’s cool.... All we can do is give you the information.”

Teacher 2 (When asked why students learn more about sex and AIDS and less about drugs and alcohol): “We’re required to follow New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.... I’d like to have more time for health class.”
- Students need information!
  * Teacher 1: "I'd like to take a workshop or have someone come in from the outside to talk with students."

- Parents should be involved.

- Simply sending people to jail won't help

- Anti-Drug and Alcohol campaigns should reach people on a more emotional level

  *Example: Montana Crystal Meth Campaign
Any Questions?

Thank you!