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Renz Addiction Counseling Center
One American Way, Elgin, IL 60120
847.742.3545

Project Towards No Drug Abuse (TND) continues with the next three sessions focusing on tobacco, self-control and marijuana. In the 7th session of the 12 session program the students play a “tobacco basketball” game to review information about the consequences of tobacco use. The students review a brief quit manual that presents information on the physiological effects of tobacco use, symptoms of withdrawal, and strategies for stopping tobacco use. A national survey by the Center for Disease Control’s Office of Smoking and Health reported 34% of high school students are using tobacco products. Most adolescents don’t consider the long-term health problems that are associated with tobacco. There are more than 7,000 chemicals and chemical compounds in cigarette smoke, many of which are toxic. Even young adults under age 30 who started smoking in their teens can develop smoking related problems such as early heart disease, smaller lungs that don’t function properly, wheezing that can lead to asthma, and DNA damage that can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body. The smoke exhaled by a smoker is even more toxic commonly referred to as “second hand smoke”.

The goal of session 8 is to increase students’ awareness of different social contexts and how to match their behaviors to the social situation they are in. Students learn the importance of exercising self-control and utilizing assertiveness skills, in order to improve their chances of making positive social bonds and achieving their personal goals. The primary activity in the classroom is role play and discussion as they complete a brief self-assessment behavior checklist and then participate in a demonstration of passive, aggressive and assertive behavior, and role play assertive responses to hypothetical social situations. They finish by discussing how drug use contributes to poor self-control.

Session 9 provides students with information about the emotional and social consequences of marijuana use. The primary activity is a psychodrama panel discussion in which the panelists discuss the consequences of marijuana use from a variety of perspectives. Consequences or issues that may be discussed include: loss of coordination, memory loss, and impaired judgment /decision making, and lung/breathing problems. A recent study followed people from age 13 to 38 and found that those who used marijuana a lot in their teens and continued into adulthood had a significant drop in IQ even if they quit. Is marijuana addictive? About 9 percent of users become dependent on marijuana, but this figure increases to 17% for those who start young and among those who use marijuana daily. How is marijuana different now than 30 years ago? The amount of THC in marijuana samples confiscated by police has been increasing steadily over the past few decades. In 2012, THC concentrations in marijuana averaged close to 15 percent, compared to around 4 percent in the 1980s. Does using marijuana lead to using other drugs? While most people may not go on to use other drugs, using marijuana does put teens in contact with people who use and sell other drugs. A person who uses marijuana is more likely to be exposed to and urged to try other drugs. For more information on marijuana you may go online to: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana>.

For information related to TND call Ricardo Gasca, Prevention Coordinator, at 847-742-3545 x264.