Adriana Martinez

Professor Toruno-Conley

English 90

05.17.11

Overcoming Oppression by Problem-Solving

Why are kids doing drugs at such an early age? It’s hard to read and even harder to watch kids grow older and become addicted to drugs. There is no support or caring going on in their lives and it’s getting out of hand. There should be programs, random drug tests and their parents should get more involved in their kids’ lives so that they know they are loved and they will stay off drugs.

A lot of kids today are starting to smoke because of stress in their lives. In some research about drugs, a graph in the ACE program shows that the starting age of drug use is eleven years of age. ACE is a program that works on social justice topics that try to find solutions on them so the people can get the help they need. Eleven years old is way too early to be doing anything, let alone drugs. It’s really sad to know that kids are starting to use drugs at such an early age. It needs to be stopped because if it’s not, then maybe kids will start using drugs at an even earlier age. It’s quite startling to hear that kids start to use drugs in elementary school and get addicted as they get older and start doing it every day in high school. In the article “Do school programs push the wrong message?” it talks about how schools aren’t really enforcing the rules about preventing teen drug use. “Kids really see drugs a problem, and parents and schools are letting them down” (Booth). This is a sad but true quote. Kids do drugs because they have problems at home, have a lot of stress, are not happy with their relationships or school related stress. But it doesn’t seem to faze the adults in their lives which are the teachers and parents. They are the ones who are supposed to guide them and tell them that if they are doing drugs, there is help out there. Clubs can provide support and so can drug prevention programs. That’s what they are there for; to help. But if they are not saying anything, then no one wins because the adults aren’t doing their job and the kids are still using drugs. They really are being let down because teenagers feel like they are not cared about or loved. And due to the feeling of neglect, they turn to drugs which get them more addicted. It’s not fair for the kids to keep suffering. There should be a place teens can go to for help without feeling oppressed. It doesn’t just affect the teenagers; it also affects everyone who cares about them.

Random drug tests are another option to stop kids doing drugs. The article “The Effectiveness of Mandatory-Random Student Drug Testing” it talks about the pros of drug testing. “Students involved **in** extracurricular activities and subject to **in-school** random **drug** testing reported using **drugs** less often than their peers **in high schools** that didn't have **drug**-testing programs” (Samuels, 4). If random drug tests are what it takes to get teens off drugs, then it should be done. This generation can get drugs anywhere and if it’s not prevented now, then it never will be. Soon it will be out of control and no one will know how to handle drug addiction. Lack of support should not be an excuse because adults should be helping students in the first place anyway. Kids and teenagers should be able to come to their parents for support and if not their parents then drug testing might help. If the support groups aren’t working and the parents aren’t there for their children, then drug tests could be the answer. It might not be the best option, but if it’s going to help kids stop doing drugs, then why not? It could help them and the teachers to be more aware and speak up about the kids doing drugs. “It was loud, and it was repeated. That [kind of effort] has declined considerably” (Johnston). Saying no to drugs back then was easy, but now since you can get drugs from just about anywhere and if friends are doing it, it may be hard to say no. Nowadays it’s not even a big deal if someone does drugs and that should change. Adults should not be doing drugs and especially not teenagers. It’s become an epidemic and it’s getting worse.

Parents don’t talk to their kids about drugs. It should be at the top of their list because a lot more kids are doing drugs in this generation. “Parents are scared to talk about it with their kids” (Booth). This may be one of the reasons why kids do drugs. Their parents don’t want to talk about it so they never really get the idea that it’s not supposed to be good. Parents should not be afraid to talk to their kids about drugs. It’s not a hard conversation to have. They have to realize that if they don’t talk about it with their kids soon, then chances are they probably will do drugs. Reality will sink in but at that point it will be too late and their child might be addicted already. “It seems like a kind of generational forgetting on the part of youth” (Smith). Instead of doing drugs, kids should be enjoying their youth, hanging out with their friends and doing other activities. Teenagers can have fun without drugs and parents should feel comfortable talking to their kids about drugs because they’re family and if parents don’t talk about it, most likely no one will and they will go down the wrong path. In the book “Teen Drug Abuse”, Stanton Peele states, “People become addicted to experiences that protect them from life challenges they can’t deal with” (35). Parents should be more involved in their kids’ lives and help them get through their problems. They can’t just sit back and expect everything to pass over. Parents sometimes don’t want to bother their kids because they think they’ll get over whatever is bothering them when in fact, it’s making things worse. Parents should be notice the symptoms or signs that their child or teenager is using drugs. And if they do find out that they are in fact using drugs, they need to confront them and talk with them. Parents have to talk to their kids about drugs before it’s too late. It doesn’t matter if they think they’re invading their space, they are the parents and they have every right to know whether or not their child is doing drugs. “But the problem “is being pretty much ignored [by adults]” (Booth). Parents are just not paying enough attention to their children and if they don’t start, their kids will be addicted to drugs within one year. Kids do want their parents to notice that they have a problem but won’t admit it, so parents need to open their eyes and realize that their kids do have a problem; and addiction. Because if teenagers’ parents can’t even speak to them about drugs, who will?

All in all, these three solutions are the best ways to get teenagers off of drugs. They need a lot of support and love from their teachers and parents to help them overcome their addiction to drugs. It will help them in the long run and the teenagers will really feel better about themselves. The random drug tests will also help a great deal because if kids know about them, they will stop using drugs because that way they won’t get in trouble and they will get off drugs. Joining extra- curricular activities or drug prevention programs will also help because they will meet people who don’t do drugs and it might help them get over their addiction if they see other teenagers who are drug free and have a different outlook on life. And last but not least, the parents should be more involved in their lives. Their parents are the first people teenagers should go to because it’s their parents. They know them best so of course they should open their heart to them about their addiction. Teenagers should be able to talk to their parents about their problems and parents should be able to notice signs in their kids that show they are doing drugs. Parents should also talk about it with their younger children (if any) because they can prevent them from doing drugs as well. They should all be in this together to let their teenager know that they are there for them no matter what. These solutions will help teenagers and everyone involved in their lives. It may be a long process to recovery, but it will be worth it in the end.

Work Cited:

*Peele, Stanton et.al. “Teen Drug Abuse Opposing Viewpoints.” Farmington Hills, MI: 2011*

*Samuels, Christina A. “The Effectiveness of Mandatory-Random Student* ***Drug*** *Testing". 2011 EBSCO Industries*

*Glaze, Sarah et.al. “Do school programs push the wrong message?” 1995 July 28*