

SUSPENSION LEARNING PACKET #: 10

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

INTRODUCTION

This is a Suspension Learning Packet. It consists of several pages of text and a Response sheet. Your assignment is to read the text and answer the questions on the Response sheet. The text includes three stories about students who broke a school rule. The Response sheet asks questions about what the people in the stories did that got them into trouble. Reading the text and answering the questions on the Response sheet will help you understand what you have done wrong and how to avoid doing it again. Read the text first and try to remember what you've read. Then read the Response Sheet and write answers to the questions.

WHAT YOU DID

You have been suspended because you brought drugs and/or alcohol to school or you came to school under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol haven't always been such a problem. Before the 1960s, they were rarely seen in middle and high schools. But during the sixties, American popular culture changed. Among the changes was the use of narcotics by young people. Doing dope in the sixties was a part of what was known as the "hippie movement."

Along with the dope came popular sixties idols, especially in popular music. It was a time when the release of a new rock record was a cultural event. In the summer of 1968, thousands of people across the country argued about which record albums had the greatest dope songs.

By the seventies, the hippie movement had gone sour, and the United States' involvement in the Vietnam war replaced the Summer of Love in everybody's

mind. What had begun as an innocent fantasy became what the media called "The Revolution."

It wasn't a real revolution, but a few students died on college campuses and tens of thousands of young people died in Viet Nam. The country was split apart over the war. Young people grew distant from their parents, and experimented with new ways of making it in the world.

By the eighties, marijuana and LSD had been replaced by cocaine, crack and Angel Dust. All the joy was gone from the youth movement, and alcohol began to become popular again among high school and college students. But the change has taken its toll.

Now there are teenagers who deal dope on the school yards. Some kids whose parents were into the dope scene in the sixties have grown up in an environment where drugs and alcohol have become all too common. With the return of alcohol use among teens, the problem has become worse. There are few combinations more deadly than narcotics and alcohol.

Why are drugs and alcohol so popular? What do they do for you?

While they may give you a quick lift at first, in the long run they make you sick. Drugs and alcohol make you sick physically, because they interfere with the normal processes in your body. They make you sick mentally, because they take away your natural imagination, creativity, and drive. They make you sick socially, because they enable you to avoid your problems instead of solving them.

Schools teach you how to lead a healthy, creative, and satisfying life. Drugs and alcohol ruin your health, deaden your imagination, and rob you of your dreams for the future. Schools help you create your life. Drugs and alcohol help you destroy it.

When the final count is made, the use of drugs and alcohol among young people over the last 25 years will prove to have been more destructive to young Americans than the entire Viet Nam war. And no monument will be built to honor the casualties.

THREE STORIES ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

THE NICK NOBODY KNEW

Nick was always a puzzle to the people who knew him. Nobody knew Nick well, because he never seemed to be interested in making friends.

Although he was the same age as the rest of his classmates, Nick always seemed older. He kept to himself, didn't talk much, and never took part in sports, extracurricular activities, or class presentations. He did his school work quietly and went about his business.

Nick's business was drugs. He smoked his first joint when he was ten years old. His older brother had brought some marijuana back from a trip to New Mexico, and Nick watched him smoke it. When he asked for a puff, his brother handed him the joint.

As he got older, Nick got into other drugs. Nobody dropped acid anymore; everybody was into cocaine. By that time, people had discovered that speed really did kill. Crack was a cheap form of cocaine, and even grammar school kids were smoking it.

Street gangs took over the teen dope supply lines. Gang wars erupted all over the country.

By that time, Nick was in middle school and had a thriving drug business. He laughed at people who did their school work. Nick made more money in a week than his teachers did in a year. He wore a beeper, and had a new car parked outside the schoolyard, although he was not supposed to be old enough to have a driver's license.

Everybody else wore denim. Nick wore silk shirts. His teachers tried to find his parents, but they were no longer in town. Nick lived with his brother. His teachers reported their suspicions about Nick to the principal, who related them to the police. An investigation was begun, with an undercover operation.

Eventually, Nick was caught trying to sell cocaine to an undercover agent. He was arrested and taken to jail. That's when they discovered that he was a lot older than everybody thought he was.

Further investigation turned up gang connections. Nobody had any idea how much money Nick made or how much dope he sold. But everyone did know that Nick was in over his head.

They never did find Nick's parents, but they found his brother. He stood trial with Nick. Nick will be up for parole in four years. Just in time to see his former classmates graduate from college. At least the ones he failed to hook. Those he sees every day in jail.

CHAD AND ZELDA

Chad and Zelda are leftovers from the sixties and seventies. Chad's father was at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco in the summer of 1967, when the hippie movement first started with what was called the "Great Gathering of the Tribes."

Zelda's mother was at the Monterey Pop Festival the same year when Janis Joplin stole the show and the Mamas and the Papas sang "If You're Going to San Francisco, be Sure to Wear a Flower in Your Hair." As pop singers Simon and Garfunkel put, "It was a time of innocence."

Chad and Zelda's parents met at Woodstock, when the Age of Aquarius was winding down. Up until last year, the worst day in Chad and Zelda's parents' life was when John Lennon was shot. Chad and Zelda were twins, born in early 1977, just ten years after Hippy Summer. The Hippy movement was dead and the Revolution had died with the draft.

Their parents were dopers and alxies, and spent most of their time thinking about how great it all was back then when a new album by the Stones came out. They followed the Grateful Dead concerts around the

country every year. Chad and Zelda didn't understand what it was all about, but they grew up in an atmosphere of drugs and alcohol.

There was no structure to their home lives. Their parents skipped from one job to the next, never planning ahead and never staying in one place long enough to provide a stable existence for Chad and Zelda.

Chad started drinking when he was nine years old. Zelda started doing dope when she was ten. It was a way to feel closer to their parents. Both had become alcoholics by the time they were 14 years old.

Chad and Zelda never fit into the school crowd. When their parents were killed last year in a car wreck, they moved to another state to live with their grandparents. Everybody wonders whatever happened to them.

BUDDY THE BEER BLASTER

Everybody liked Buddy. He was a good ole boy. Buddy never let anything bring him down. He loved to party, and helped plan some of the most spectacular beer blasts ever held. He was big for his age, so buying beer was not a problem. He had a fake I.D. and winning smile. Like his father before him, Buddy just wanted to have fun.

When he finished middle school and went on to high school, Buddy got his driver's license and worked all summer to be able to buy an old car. He was good at mechanics and bodywork, and fixed up an old Chevy convertible.

Buddy's father owned a local gas station, and Buddy worked there after school and on weekends. It seemed like Buddy never quite got the black out from under his fingernails, but he didn't care. Buddy dearly loved his car.

During high school football season, Buddy and his friends would meet at the Kegs after the game. There was always a little marijuana going around, but Buddy and his crowd usually stayed with the booze. They

were loud, happy and full of fun. It all seemed wonderfully innocent until the night they tried to beat the bus.

Buddy was driving, and his girl was sitting in the front seat. Two couples were crammed into the back seat. They had driven into the city to watch a ball game. They had two bottles, and passed them around through the entire game. By the time they left the stadium parking lot, none of them was sober.

They were about 200 feet from an intersection when the light started to change. Buddy floorboarded the old Chevy to beat the light. A bus driver headed toward the intersection saw the light start to turn green when he was 150 feet away. He continued toward the intersection just a little above the speed limit.

The two vehicles reached the intersection at the same time. The friends in the back seat never knew what hit them. Buddy's girlfriend lived until early the next morning.

Buddy wasn't hurt at all. At least, not where it showed.

REASONS PEOPLE USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

People start using alcohol and drugs for many reasons. Usually, at the beginning, it seems like innocent fun. Alcohol has been around for thousands of years, and it is always popular. Because it clouds your judgement, it is hard to believe that it can hurt you or kill you.

Here's a partial list of reasons why people drink alcohol and/or do drugs:

- peer pressure
- to reduce stress or tension
- their parents drink alcohol and do drugs
- it seems "grown up"
- they enjoy being high
- everybody does it: "everybody drinks," "everybody does drugs"

- parents, relatives, or close friends are alcoholics or drug users
- escape from unhappy home life
- avoidance of problems

Most people start drinking because their friends are drinking. If your parents drink too much, you may be at risk, too. If you come from an alcohol or drug-abusing family, talk to your school counselor about it.

Remember that alcohol and drug-abuse also have educational consequences. It is hard to learn and remember what you've learned when you take drugs or drink alcohol. You can't concentrate when you are on drugs or alcohol. So how can you learn? You'll also be suspended from school if you are caught with drugs or alcohol. And don't forget that possession or use of these substances is against the law. If you have them or use them, you'll become involved with the police. Does that really sound like a good idea?

CONSEQUENCES OF USING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The results of using drugs and alcohol are simple: a reduction of your mental and physical functions. Most drug and alcohol abusers lose initiative and hope. Many get sick or die.

Sound dramatic? It's not, really. It's just sad. It's sad to watch people throw away their lives while trying to live a lifestyle that is unrelated to reality. Alcohol is poisonous, as many young people find out each year when they die from consuming large amounts of alcohol in brief periods of time.

The healthier you are, the longer it takes for the destructive effects of alcohol to take their toll. But remember that alcohol can permanently damage your liver, heart and brain. If used during pregnancy, it can damage the baby.

Next time you are down at the beach or at the pool, take a good look around you at the middle-aged people who drink a lot. Look for the earmarks of the alcoholic lifestyle: lack of muscle tone, bags under the eyes, bloating, dry facial skin, puffy fat, shapelessness, broken blood vessels in the face and

breathlessness. While you're at it, look around for the druggies. You won't find them at the health club. You can't do dope and work out.

WHAT YOU MUST DO IN THE FUTURE TO AVOID DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

The first step is to wake up and get hold of yourself. If you wake up to what you are doing but still can't get it under control, talk to your school counselor. If you are abusing drugs or alcohol, chances are that you will not be able to stop without help. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. That's what your teachers and counselors are for.

If you have a substance abuse problem, attack it right now. Don't say, "Oh, I can stop any time I want to." **That's what every alcoholic and druggie says.** People who counsel substance abusers have heard that sort of thing thousands of times. It's an old story.

The second step is to talk with your parents if you have a substance abuse problem. Often, there are no simple answers as to why young people abuse drugs and alcohol. Sometimes, the parents help, and other times they contribute to the problem. Whichever is the case, you have to talk with your parents on this subject. You probably need help doing it. Ask your counselor for help.

The third step, as your counselor will tell you, is to get into a counseling program that includes a support group. It's next to impossible to do this without help. A good support group will give you help. They already know your situation. They know that you really have two problems: you abuse alcohol and/or drugs, and you haven't yet admitted that you can't control it. Support groups can help if you have a drug or alcohol problem.

Don't waste your life. There's nothing beautiful about being drunk or stoned. Drugs and alcohol are dangerous. They can ruin your life. If such substances are a part of your life, ask for help and you will be glad you did. Remember,

drugs, alcohol and school don't mix. Disciplinary actions are taken for drugs and alcohol violations. Keep these substances away from your body and your school!

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 10.1

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you just read. These questions will help you learn why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such problems in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

For most of the questions, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The answers depend on you. Be honest with yourself as you write the answers. Take time to think before you write. The work you do on these Response Packets reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences.

1. Why have you been suspended? Was it because of alcohol, drugs or both?

2. Where did you get the alcohol or drugs?

3. Why is use or possession of drugs or alcohol against school rules?

4. What would school be like if there wasn't such a rule?

5. Why are the police usually notified when someone at school possesses or uses drugs or alcohol?

6. Why would being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school be a bad idea?

7. If none of the rock stars did drugs, would there be fewer young people involved in drugs? Explain your answer.

8. How do people usually get started with drugs or alcohol?

9. Why is drinking or taking drugs harmful to one's body? Give four or five reasons.

10. You read the three stories. Do you know anybody like Nick? What is Nick's problem? How do you think he got mixed up in dope dealing?

11. What do you think about Nick's future? What should he do when he gets out of jail that will help him put his life back together?

12. Why are Chad and Zelda the way they are? Look over the story again and explain what you think made them the way they are.

13. If you were going to write the rest of Chad and Zelda's story, how would it end? Write a paragraph or two about what's going to happen to Chad and Zelda. Remember, the ending could be something positive. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

14. Everybody knows somebody like Buddy. Why did Buddy drink too much?

15. If you were Buddy, what would you do? How would you get hold of yourself and put your life back together?

16. You've read several reasons why people drink or abuse drugs. Write some other reasons.

17. What are your own reasons for possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. What do you think will happen to you if you don't stay away from alcohol and drugs?

18. Write two goals that will help you avoid becoming involved in alcohol and/or drugs.

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET # 10.2

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

NAME _____

DATE _____

GRADE __ HOMEROOM _____

WHAT TO DO

Below are some questions about what you just read. These questions will help you learn why what you did was wrong and how you can avoid such problems in the future. Your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents may read your answers. Your answers will not be graded.

For most of the questions, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The answers depend on you. Be honest with yourself as you write the answers. Take time to think before you write. The work you do on these Response Packets reflects your willingness to improve your behavior and attitude.

Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences.

1. Explain why you have been suspended. Tell us what you were doing and why you were doing it.

2. How were you caught?

3. Why are drugs and/or alcohol forbidden in your school?

4. Why do schools require everyone to take a course in health, where information is given about drugs and alcohol?

5. Are drugs and/or alcohol becoming a problem for you? Remember that this is the second time you have been suspended for a drug- or alcohol-related situation.

6. Why is there a strong connection between doing poorly in school and using drugs and/or alcohol?

7. In what way can alcohol or drugs be dangerous to a person's health?

8. You've read three stories about drug or alcohol use. Why do you think Nick turned out the way he did? Given what you read, try to write what you think made him the way he is. Use the back of this sheet if you need more writing space.

9. What do you think Nick will do when he gets out of jail? Write a positive ending to Nick's story, showing how he got his life together.

10. Do you know anybody like Chad and Zelda? What do you think of their home life? Do they seem strange to you?

11. Can you see a relation between the sixties and today as far as alcohol and drug use are concerned? Try to make the connection and write it down as you understand it. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room to write.

12. Why do you think Buddy was the way he was? Was the accident Buddy's fault? Have you, your parents, or your friends ever been in an accident

where alcohol was involved? If so, tell about it. You can use the back of this sheet to finish your answer.

13. If a student needed help with a drinking or drug problem, what people could they turn to at school and home?
14. Why do you think it would be easier to solve a drug or alcohol-related problem when a person is young than when he or she is older?
15. Why do people abuse alcohol and/or drugs? You've read some reasons. What reasons made the most sense to you?
16. What happens to people who abuse drugs and/or alcohol? Write what you know about the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. Give examples from your own experience if possible. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room to write.
17. If you had a little brother or sister, what advice would you give him or her about using drugs or alcohol?
18. What do you think you need to do? Write yourself three goals. Then explain how you plan to achieve them. What kind of help do you think you need?

