

New Research about Stress and Drug Use

According to the most recent (2007) Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, the number one reason teenagers report they use drugs is to “cope with school pressure” (Partnership for a Drug-Free America). For years, “feeling cool” was ranked number one. 65% still report that teens use to “feel cool” as well as to “feel better about themselves”. However, 73% of the 6,511 teenagers surveyed in 2007 reported that school stress is the primary reason for teen drug use. This change indicates that teenagers are increasingly relying on drugs and alcohol to help them solve problems and cope with difficult situations.

Despite these high numbers, only 7% of the parents surveyed believed that stress was a primary factor for teen drug use. This discrepancy points out a disconnect between what teenagers feel and what parents believe teenagers feel regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. One resource for parents is the “Time to Text” initiative that guides parents in the world of text messaging as a means to increase communication with their children (www.timetotalk.org). TimeToTalk also shares tips such as making time for free time, discussing how you deal with pressure, and practicing what you preach, to help teenagers reduce their stress.

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