

Faculty Training: Adolescent Substance Abuse

Why Kids Get High

- Experimentation / curiosity
- Peer acceptance
- Rebellion
- Coping strategy
- Attention / Status / Confidence (social)
- Perceived availability / harm

Why We Should Intervene and Why We Don't

- It's the law
- "They're just going to do it anyway"
- "I want them to trust me"
- "It's none of my business"
- "What if I'm wrong / cant' prove it"
- "I did it when I was in school"
- "Our job is to teach kids, not parent them"
- Importance of early intervention
- Developmental issues (coping skills, resilience, neuropsych.)

Trends and Statistics:

"I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words. When I was a boy, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint."

-- Greek poet Hesoid, 8th Century BC

"Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise. They no longer rise when others enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers."

-- Socrates, 5th Century BC

Why kids get high

- Experimentation/curiosity
- Peer acceptance
- Coping strategy
 - Recreation / boredom prevention
 - Relaxation / energy
 - Self-medication
 - Immediate gratification / effect
 - To alter feelings/experiences
 - feel nothing
 - feel something
 - feel something else
- Perceived availability / harm
 - Seriousness - *Are the consequences bad?*
 - Probability - *Are the consequences likely?*
 - *Who cares?*
- Rebellion / attention
- Confidence

(Mis) perceptions

- **Availability**
- **Number of users**
- **Benefits (maximized)**
- **Harm / risks (minimized)**

Seriousness - Are the consequences bad?

Probability - Are the consequences likely?

- **Inclusion**
- **Popularity / status**
- **Confidence**

Number of children between the ages of 12 and 20 who had at least one drink in the past MONTH...

10.4 million

(1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, NIDA)

Lifetime use of alcohol...

	<i>Bergen County sample</i>	<i>87.7%</i>
National average	<i>75.8%</i>	

(National data derived from the averages of 10th and 12th graders reported in "Monitoring the Future," (Johnston, et al 2001))

Percentage of U.S. seniors in 2000 who reported using illicit drugs at least one time during their high school years...

57 %

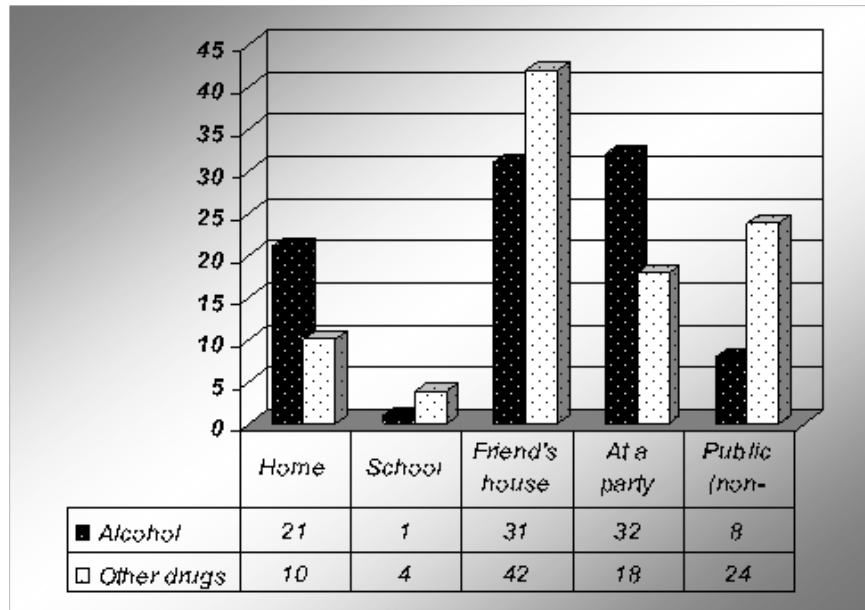
From: "Monitoring the Future," (Johnston, et al. 2001)

Percentage of students who exhibited signs of alcohol abuse or dependence...

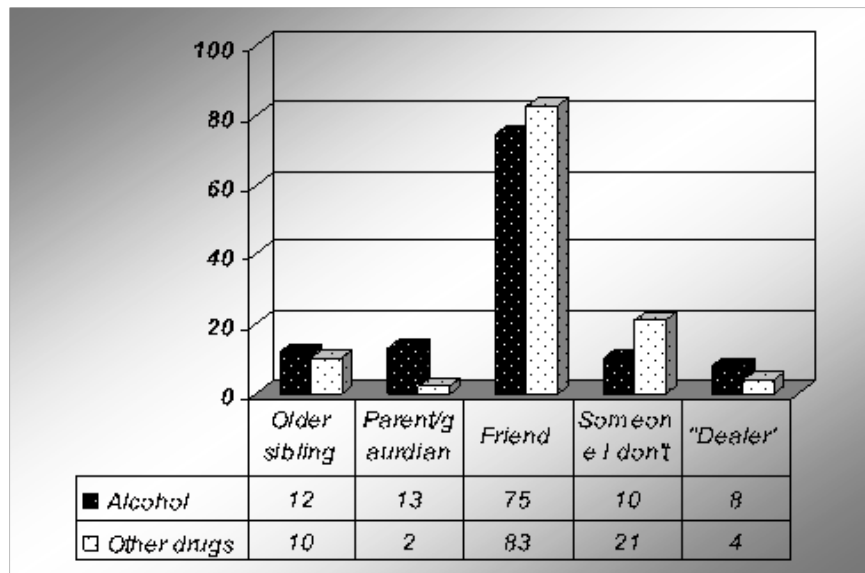
12.5

Chen, K., Sheth, A.J., Elliott, D.K. & Yeager, A., (2004). Prevalence and correlates of past-year substance use, abuse, and dependence in a suburban community sample of high-school students. *Addictive Behaviors*, 29(2), 413-423.

Where do kids USE drugs?



Where do kids GET drugs



(Bergen County Youth Health Assessment Survey, 2000)

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE OR ABUSE:

ILLICIT BEHAVIORS

- Drug or alcohol use
- Theft
- Disappearance of possessions, money, clothes
- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia
- Possession of weapons
- Drug- or alcohol-related posters, signs, tee shirts, etc.
- Use of goldenseal or other OTC herbs

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Marked drop in grades
- Lack of concern about grades
- Little or no investment in homework, studying, etc.
- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Marked drop in classroom participation
- General loss of interest in school
- Excessive procrastination / avoidance
- Frequent lates or cuts
- Loss of interests in sports, activities, school events

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Excessive sleeping or drifting
- Defiance of rules
- Verbal or physical abuse
- Mood swings
- Excessive talking
- Non-communicative

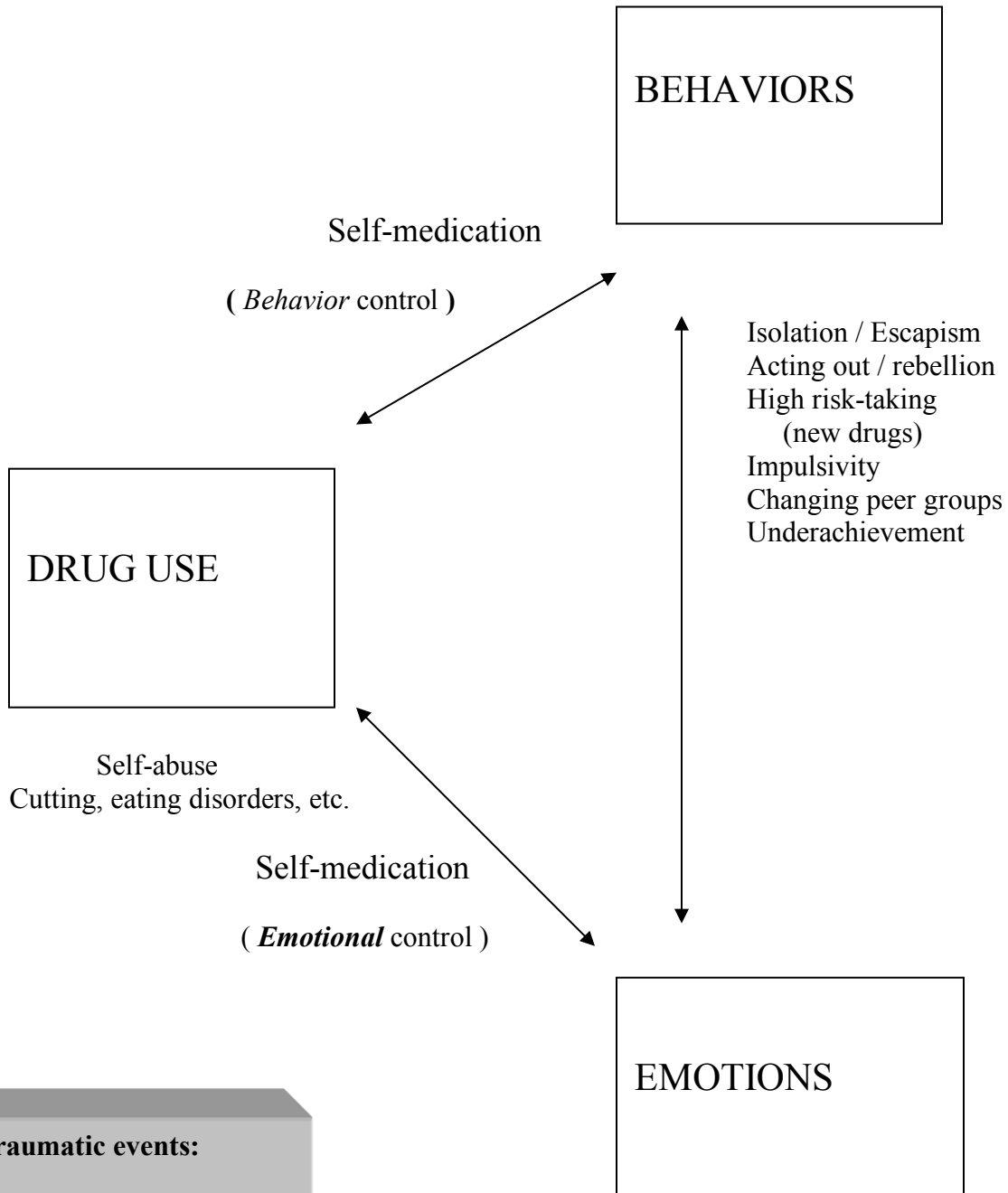
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

- Change in friends
- Change in hangouts
- Unknown friends who avoid parents
- Always out of the house with no particular destination
- Secretive / suspicious phone conversations
- Hang-up phone calls
- Callers who refuse to identify themselves
- Significantly older or younger acquaintances
- Isolation
- Argues that drug use is alright
- Argues that teachers / parents don't understand drug use
- Lives day-to-day with no long term planning or commitments
- Extreme avoidance of family / extended family functions
- Use of street vocabulary
- Demands / steals money from siblings, parents, friends, classmates

WARNING SIGNS OF PRESENT INTOXICATION

- **Smell of alcohol, marijuana, or strong chemical**
- **Appears disoriented or confused**
- **Excessive sleeping, inability to arouse**
- **Loss of muscular coordination**
- **Unexplained happiness, giddiness, laughing**
- **Dilated, red, or unusual eye appearance**
- **Poor hygiene**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Hyperactive**
- **Hyper-anxious**
- **Excessive indulgence in food**

Dynamics of Substance Use and Abuse: A Unifying Paradigm



Self-abuse
Cutting, eating disorders, etc.

Isolation / Escapism
Acting out / rebellion
High risk-taking
(new drugs)
Impulsivity
Changing peer groups
Underachievement

Depression
Anger
Emptiness/loneliness
Fear / anxiety
Guilt / shame
Low self-esteem

Sudden, traumatic events:

- Initiate the cycle
- Perpetuate the cycle

Implications for treatment

- Breaking the cycle