Health – Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol

There are several drugs that adults use in our society, that are not viewed as “drugs”. Caffeine and tobacco are just two of them. Tobacco advertising in Canada and BC has changed significantly over the last 20 years. I can remember in the early 70s, as a child of 10, going to the store to purchase cigarettes for my parents. We simply never thought anything of it.

Before January 1, 1989 there were no legal restrictions on cigarette advertising, although the companies had to refrain from direct advertising on television or radio. Any warnings on advertising were strictly voluntary and generally in very small print. Between 1989 and 1995 the Tobacco Products Control Act banned all direct advertisements. Health warnings were not required on advertisements, but were required on cigarette products. Tobacco companies could sponsor events and thereby indirectly advertise their brands. In September 1995 the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the Tobacco Products Control Act as unconstitutional and for almost two years there were no laws regarding tobacco advertisement. While the industry refrained from using people in direct advertising, they continued to use other images to suggest a wonderful lifestyle was yours for the taking if you just smoked their cigarettes. Any health warnings were placed voluntarily. In April 1997, the new federal Tobacco Act once again restricted tobacco advertising. Health warnings were still not required on advertisements, but warnings on tobacco products needed to double in size and be in colourful graphic detail. See the comparison between the old warnings and the new ones in Student Handout #2 of the readings for this assignment. Sponsorship ads continued to use humans and lifestyle imagery. On October 1, 2000 the government imposed restrictions on sponsorship ads, but did allow ads in newspapers, direct mailings and in bars – where the target audience is supposed to be adults.

Take a look at the facts on Canadian Retailers and Cigarette Promotion in Student Handout #3 from the readings for this assignment. So is there a connection between retail stores promoting cigarettes and youth smoking? The data certainly supports that finding and it helps to explain why on March 31, 2008 it became illegal in BC to display tobacco company advertisements or cigarettes where it would be visible to minors. Check out the new regulations in Student Handout #1 from the readings for this assignment. Now retailers are required to hide cigarettes from view and are prevented from selling to tobacco to anyone they know or suspect as being under 19 – a significant shift in public policy from a time when I purchased cigarettes for my parents.

So, what effect do the new regulations have on the tobacco companies? Their profits are threatened. The tobacco companies know it is important to their profits to not only replace quitters with new smokers, but also replace the estimated four million adults who die each year of tobacco-caused diseases worldwide. But where is the evidence that they are targeting youth? Check out Student Handouts 4-6 for the facts. To see how far they will bend the rules, check out How Do You Sell Death?

1. Write a paragraph or two on what you have learned about tobacco advertising in BC and Canada. Do you think the government is doing enough? If no, what else could they do? Have they gone too far? If yes, what would you change?
2. In this lesson you are going to learn about illicit drugs, so you are informed and can make responsible decisions to avoid them in your future. Go to the following website http://www.narconon.ca/Narconon_DrugInfo.htm and/or use the Effects of Drugs slideshow and research the drugs listed below. For each drug you need to find answers to the following questions.

- What does the drug look like?
- How is the drug taken?
- What are 10 street names for the drug? The page above will give you some street names for the drug, but check out http://www.casapalmera.com/articles/top-20-drugs-and-their-street-names/ for a comprehensive list. (You might only find 9 street names for magic mushrooms.)
- How does the drug affect the person who takes it? You want to find out both the “beneficial effects” (why would someone take the drug) and the “harmful effects” (why no one should take this drug).

  - Cocaine and Crack
  - Ecstasy
  - GHB
  - Heroine
  - Inhalants
  - LSD
  - Magic Mushrooms
  - Marijuana
  - Methamphetamine
  - Speed
  - Steroids

If you use other sources than that provided above, be sure to list them below your work.

3. Read the link on the Centre for Substance Abuse Research page about alcohol. Write a paragraph which describes what alcohol is, where it comes from and how it affects people.

4. Read Gender and Alcohol. Create a table to compare and contrast the differences between girls and boys when it comes to alcohol use and advertising that targets that use. (Add more rows as needed.)

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Girls | Boys
5. Given what you have learned about alcohol, what you’ve seen in the media, and your own personal experiences, identify 5 extremely dangerous activities people who are drinking should not do.

6. Read about the P.A.R.T.Y program designed to prevent alcohol and risk related trauma in youth. Check out the whole site, so you have an idea of what the program is, where it began, where it is currently being offered in BC, and how effective it could be for youth in your community. Write a paragraph explaining what PARTY is and then write another paragraph indicating whether or not you believe this is something worthwhile for you and your peers. If so, at what level would you be willing to get involved to make P.A.R.T.Y. available in School District 83.

People rarely use drugs one time and suddenly they are an addict. Usually there is a progression from the so-called Gateway drugs of marijuana and alcohol to other harder, more damaging, street and designer drugs. Read The Path to Developing a Drug Problem handout.

7. At what stage(s) of addiction would you most likely notice that someone:

- Has never tried cocaine. Stage(s) _____
- Stops associating with friends who don’t use. Stage _____
- Is known to peers as a drug user. Stage _____
- Is suspended from school for drug use. Stage _____
- Sneaks alcohol on a school fieldtrip. Stage _____
- Frequency of use increases. Stage _____
- Has dropped out of school. Stage _____
- Uses alcohol mostly on the weekends. Stage _____
- Has blackouts. Stage _____
- Finds it easy to rationalize the use of drugs or alcohol. Stage _____
- Has increased absenteeism and tardiness. Stage _____
- Is unable to control the urge to use. Stage _____

8. Describe 2 strategies that you use to avoid substance misuse.