

Parents can influence their drug abusing child

(This is the fifth in a series of articles on drug abuse among adolescents prepared for the News by the Addiction Research Foundation of Thunder Bay and Timmins.)
By Ken Moffatt (Thunder Bay) and Dennis Bernardi (Timmins)

The previous article in this series presented some guidelines for parents with drug-abusing children. In this final installment on the subject of youth and drugs, I think it might be worthwhile to look at some of the other ways in which we parents can influence children in the direction of healthy, non-drug-dependent lifestyles:

(1) *Examine Our Own Approaches To Health and Drugs*

Parents have a vital influence on the health attitudes and habits of their

children. Alcoholic parents have a higher rate of alcoholic children. Fat parents have a higher rate of fat kids. Smoking parents have a higher rate of smoking offspring.

Our attitudes and behaviours regarding medication provide a strong example to our children. If we see the quick fix of pills as the sole solution to our perceived health problems, there is a good chance that our children will too.

It will do little good to say "Do as I say, not as I do." What we do sends a stronger message than what we say. Likewise, our approaches to physical fitness, nutrition, and wellness can have a powerful positive effect! We parents need to take time out periodically, to check ourselves out on these issues.

(2) *Dealing With Problems/Adversity*

Problems by themselves are not cause for desperation. As long as we are alive, we will encounter them. Our children must learn from us that problems are a part of life, and these can be opportunities for growth.

The learning of problem-solving skills is a necessity for functioning in the adult world and for building confidence. The resort to drugs as a substitute for problem solving says, in effect, that "if you make the problem disappear for a while it will go away." This is a deadly message!

(3) *Communication/Doing Things Together*

It is possible to be too controlling or too distant from our children. And while we all love our children, there are adjustments required from time

to time which can strengthen a home atmosphere and which is conducive to building a sense of self-esteem in them.

The home environment can foster the child's understanding of his or her own emotions and nurture the ability to express these emotions constructively.

Emphasis on the child's positive traits and accomplishments, rather than dwelling on shortcomings and screw-ups, is an important method of building a positive self-identity.

Positive interaction tempered by realistic discipline gives children a reference point and a sense of belonging.

(4) *A Positive View Of The World And The Future*

Do we view the world as our

prison or as our arena? Do we believe the world is going to hell in a hand-cart no matter what we do, or do we see good possibilities out there?

Drug abusers generally have a pessimistic view of the world and hold little hope for the future. By our attitudes and actions we can influence an orientation either of hopelessness or of optimism. Accompanying that may also be the ethic of construction participation in life.

(5) *Discipline*

We dealt with discipline in a previous column but a review might be in order. Balance is an important concept in imposing discipline. To have a positive influence, controls must be: firm, without being inflexible; consistent, without killing joy or spontaneity; and clear without being oppressive.

Adolescents may protest from time to time, but they want and need controls.

(6) *Drug Policy In The Home*

Another repetition here from the previous article, but it should be clear that parents expect the home to be a non-drug-storage and using zone.

For this position to be credible, of course, the parents' use of alcohol, sleeping pills, aspirin, etc. must be moderate and responsible. Actions speak much louder than words.

This article concludes this particular series. In the future, we will provide a series giving a first-hand look at what it is to be addicted.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments, just write to the Addiction Research Foundation, 104-1265 E. Arthur Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7E 6E7 or phone 622-0607

Club news

By Terry Robinson

On Oct. 1 the Terrace Bay Dairy Queens number one 4-H Club held their third meeting of the year.

We started the meeting by saying our 4-H pledge and after that we went straight to work in the kitchen. We made cheese souffle and mini-cheese cakes. Bou, were they good.

After we ate, we held the meeting. We talked about all the different kinds of cheeses and we also taste tests. My assistant and I ended up doing the dishes.

By Lee-Anne Fenton

On Saturday, Oct. 4, the second 4-H Milk Makes It group meeting was held in Terrace Bay. Executive officers were elected, and they are as follows:

President, Paula Dodd; Vice-President, Pam Metcalf; Secretary, Sherri Metcalf, Treasurer, Jennifer Gould, and Press Reporter is Lee-Anne Fenton.

We had discussed the different milks and tasted some too. We had also made hot cocoa, cheese fondue dip, and creamy pasta. They were all delicious and were enjoyed by almost everyone. All 4-H members are anxious to try next week's cheesecake.

4-H meet

The annual 4-H and Junior Farmer Awards Night will be held on Oct. 17 in Thunder Bay at the Valhalla Inn with approximately 270 youngsters scheduled to be in attendance.

Group leaders are to be presented with awards for their years of service to the program. Members will also be awarded for their various achievements during the past year.

Cynthia Payne, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Rural Organizational Specialist in Thunder Bay noted in a news release that the night will include highlights of both the 4-H and Junior Farmer programs will be given during the evening.

The guest speaker will be Christine Brohart, Public Relations Officer of the New Liskeard College of Agricultural Technology. Her talk will centre on the facilities and agricultural courses offered at the college.

Tickets for this event are on sale from leaders and members throughout the Thunder Bay District. For information, contact the Ministry of Agriculture and Food office at 475-1631



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