

## BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. E-NEWS

### Text Messages Help Smokers Quit

Smokers who received daily text messages offering advice and encouragement as they attempted to quit smoking were twice as likely to succeed as others trying to quit, according to a new study conducted in New Zealand, Great Britain and Norway.

Four trials involving 2,600 smokers also gave smokers the option of texting for advice when they were struggling with a specific aspect of quitting, such as craving cigarettes.

Most of the subjects did not succeed in quitting, but the success rate after six weeks was doubled among the text-message group. A program in Norway that used a combination of texting, e-mail and a website achieved similar abstinence rates after one year.



Whittaker R, Borland R, Bullen C, Lin RB, McRobbie H, Rodgers A. Mobile phone-based interventions for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2009, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD006611. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006611.pub2.

## Teen Abuse of Prescription Drugs

Although the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs among youth has declined from 2002 through 2008, misuse of prescription drugs has increased, according to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health. In fact, prescription drugs are misused more by this age group than any illicit drug, except marijuana. The nonmedical use of these medicines - the very same drugs used to legitimately relieve pain, and treat conditions like anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, or ADHD in some people - is a growing and under-recognized problem that puts young lives at risk.

According to the 2007 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study conducted by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, dealing with pressures and managing school-related stress is cited as the number one reason teens use prescription drugs.

The statistics regarding teen drug use are startling. Consider these facts:

- More than 1 in 10 teens (or 2.8 million) have abused prescription drugs in their lifetimes <sup>1</sup>
- 1 in 3 teens report knowing someone who abuses prescription drugs <sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 3 teens surveyed says there is "nothing wrong" when using prescription drugs "every once and a while." <sup>2</sup>
- Every day, 2,700 teens abuse a prescription drug for the first time<sup>1</sup>
- 8 out of 10 teens who misuse prescription drugs get the drugs from friends or relatives through a number of means including stealing, buying or simply asking for the drugs <sup>1</sup>

#### Dangers of Abusing Rx Drugs

- Increase in blood pressure or heart rate
- Damage to brain and other organs
- Overdose / poisoning
- Physical dependence
- Addiction
- Disruption in breathing (respiratory depression)
- Seizure
- Death
- Risk associated with mixing multiple drugs or combining with alcohol

### Who Can Make a Difference?

Parents have the greatest influence on teens' drug use attitudes and decisions; teens whose parents talk about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to use drugs. Grandparents, older siblings and other relatives also play a big role in shaping teens decisions.

### 10 Things You Can Do to Make a Difference

1. **Listen up.** Doing so will help create a loving, safe and open environment for your teen to talk about everyday concerns - even tough topics like alcohol and drugs.
2. **Make time to talk.** Talking with teens on an ongoing basis can help motivate them to make smart, healthy choices
3. **Be observant.** Monitor your teen's use of the Internet and watch for unaccounted time away from home and other signs of trouble (for example, switching groups of friends or hangout locations, sudden mood changes, losing interest in activities or sports, lying, poor performance at school).
4. **Set limits.** According to experts, teens are less likely to engage in risky behaviors when parents set and enforce rules.
5. **Talk to parents of other teens.** Make sure other parents are aware that prescription drug abuse is a growing problem.
6. **Dispel myths.** It's important to set the record straight about the dangers of

prescription drug abuse and present the facts.

- 7. **Help give teens an escape route.** Talk to them about alternative ways to say “no” so they don’t feel “uncool” when talking to their peers. Here are some examples:  
 “I don’t want to ruin my season/get in trouble with the coach.”  
 “I have to do something with my parents really early tomorrow morning.”  
 “I’m the designated driver.”
- 8. **Encourage healthy alternatives.** Offer guidance on dealing with life’s stressors. Empathize with the pressures at school, with friends and even at home. Give positive reinforcement for healthy choices and draw attention to their skills and talents to help boost self-esteem.
- 9. **Practice good medicine safety and disposal.** Be aware of how you and others use prescription drugs in front of teens and younger children. If you take medications, explain why and stress that these are powerful medications that are only safe to use under a doctor’s care. Talk about why it’s not safe to use someone else’s medications. Keep tabs on the medications, both over-the-counter and prescription drugs, that you and other relatives have in your homes.
- 10. **Team up with your school, the guidance department or Parent Teacher Association.** Champion the issue of preventing prescription drug abuse among teens in your community.

<sup>1</sup>SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health

<sup>2</sup>The Partnership for a Drug-Free America's 2007 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study



**Commit to Make a Difference!**



I pledge to help prevent teen prescription drug abuse in my community by:

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Keep this card in your wallet as a reminder of the important role you play in helping teens make positive life choices.

*Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: What You Can Do to Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse*

# iPhone App for 12-Steppers

A new application program for the Apple iPhone connects people in recovery with a support network of peers in the 12-step community. "The *ann-e* app provides a vehicle for a safe and anonymous way to stay connected with other recovering addicts, no matter where you are," according to the application's inventor. "Whether you've missed your plane, at a conference, walking down the aisle of a big box store, or in your own backyard, there is someone not far from you who will understand and anonymously support you to do the next right thing."



The application allows users to register their affiliation with a 12-step program and create an anonymous user name. Users who want to be available to help others can list themselves as "on call," and will be notified when other users need help. Communication starts with text messages but can be moved to a voice conference.

Users also can exchange contact information with others they trust so they can stay in contact. GPS technology lets users know if others on the *ann-e* network are nearby in case they need a face-to-face meeting. The application also can provide the location of local 12-step meetings..

## What's the Secret to Keeping the Cheer in Christmas? A Christmas planner!

Command central for holiday planning, a Christmas planner is a dedicated, portable place to keep gift lists, menus, recipes and Christmas card lists. Using a Christmas planner, you'll save time, cut stress and create the holiday of your dreams.

To create your personalized Christmas planner, pick and choose from these free printables from the Web. Offered in a variety of colors, formats and sizes, these printable forms will stock your Christmas planner for the cost of ink and paper, so browse these pages for links to the Web's best free printable Christmas checklists, planner pages and forms: <http://christmasplanner.com/print-christmas-planner>.