



Rand Park High School

Integrity and Commitment

Asgaai Avenue, Randpark Ridge • 011 793 1246 • www.randparkhigh.co.za

COUNSELLING NEWSLETTER DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

7 December 2018

Dear Parents, Guardians & Learners

With the upcoming holidays in mind and knowing how easily teenagers get bored with extra time on their hands and consequently risk getting involved with unsavoury activities, we would like to provide more information on the growing issue of drug and substance abuse. The media has recently published and broadcast several disturbing stories and videos of teenage drug experimentation and new forms of drugs available to our children.

Drug abuse is an ever-increasing crisis across all generations. For our teenagers, it is especially problematic as adolescence is a time when they are most vulnerable to temptation and peer pressure. More and more of our youth today are being targeted and influenced by this issue and statistics show that even younger children are getting caught up in this entangling web. It is no longer an issue that is limited to high school learners and older students.

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The transition from primary school to high school poses many challenges for young teenagers. Not only are they trying to adapt to the more demanding academic requirements; they are also trying to fit in and be accepted by their peers. The pressure to fit in and to be "cool" can be very strong. Sadly, several teenagers succumb to this pressure and give in to temptation. In an attempt

to be accepted, young teenagers sometimes get involved with the wrong people and activities, often exposing them to substances like alcohol and various drugs. Unfortunately, the problem lies largely with their mindsets as they believe that drinking alcohol at parties and social gatherings or only smoking a "joint" occasionally does not constitute a problem. This is where you, as the parent, must be vigilant and mindful regarding your child's appearance, behaviour and social interaction.

Here are some practical things you can do to protect your child:

- Be present at parties that your child hosts at your home and be visible. (They will try and find a way to hide things if you are not paying attention.)
- If your child is attending a party or visiting at a friend's house, make sure there will be parental supervision by parents you trust.
- Get to know your child's friends and their parents. (Trust your gut-feelings; if you believe a specific friend and their family does not provide a safe environment for your child, then you're probably right.)
- Monitor your child's social networking activities and be aware of new or strange friends and behaviours.
- Do not let your child 'hang out' at shopping malls or other public areas for extended hours without being monitored. You do not need to watch them constantly, but be around. This should help to inhibit their activities to some extent.
- Be awake when your child gets home from a party. Talk to them, watch them closely and be aware of any signs that could indicate substance use.
- Set the right example – do not abuse drugs or alcohol in the presence of your child.

COUNSELLING NEWSLETTER

DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE (continued)

Herewith a few signs and symptoms that suggest drug abuse:

Physical symptoms:

- red eyes, droopy eyelids or changes in pupil size
- appetite decreases or increases
- hypersomnia or insomnia
- stains (nicotine-like) on hands and fingers
- deterioration in personal grooming and care
- bad skin
- poor attention span
- a tremor or fidgety demeanour
- general central nervous system irritability
- an unexplained sniff or cough

Emotional or psychological symptoms:

- moodiness or irritability
- excessive emotional sensitivity
- suspicious behaviour and dishonesty
- emotional outbursts and temper tantrums
- depressive episodes

Behavioural symptoms:

- a decline in academic performance
- a defiance of authority
- rejection of parental values
- petty theft and/or an unexplained need for money
- frequent clubbing
- dropping of cultural/sport activities
- impulsivity and poor decision-making and problem-solving capacity
- secretiveness about friends and whereabouts
- involvement with a deviant sub-culture (e.g. satanic groups)
- regular truancy

Please familiarise yourself with these signs and symptoms and should you observe any of them in your child, do not hesitate to investigate further. A random drug test could be the most accurate way of establishing possible drug use. Should you be concerned or suspect drug abuse by your child, you are welcome to make an appointment with your child's Grade Tutor or the School's Educational Psychologist who will be able to guide and assist you in seeking treatment and an appropriate rehabilitation program.

SOME USEFUL CONTACTS:

Drug testing and counselling:

SANCA Phoenix House (Auckland Park):
(011) 673-0400; Fee: R200

SANCA West Rand (Florida): (011) 472-7707; Fee: R60
for one specific drug test or R160 for multiple drugs

Crescent Clinic: (011) 792-9400 (ext. 416) & Akeso
Clinic (Parktown): (011) 590-9500; Fee: R150

DisChem clinics: Fee for consultation and drug test:
R100 – R200 (Only testing; no counselling)

Counselling for Parents:

Tough Love 0861 868 445
Mighty Wings Support Group (011) 465-0595
or email carol.keyzer@vodamail.co.za

Only counselling – no testing:

Healing Wings 076 781 2720
or call Jody on 072 116 3853
Family Life Centre (011) 788-4784

Houghton House (Ferndale) (011) 787-9142
Ministry Against Drugs (MAD) Office: (011) 478-2092
or call Justin on 083 864 0648

Drug abuse destroys lives and families. It is so important not to be ignorant but to rather deal with the issue. As a school and as parents, we are given the task of guiding and protecting our youth. This task includes the responsibility to be vigilant and attentive in observing and monitoring the activities and behaviour of our children and teenagers. Knowledge is power; we trust that the content of this newsletter will assist you to be better informed, equipped and empowered.

Have a blessed festive season with your families and best wishes for 2019.

Yours sincerely

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