

Connections Connections

The Parent E-Newsletter of New Outlook Teen Center



October 2008

New Outlook Teen Center (NOTC)

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Keep An Eye Out For: Strawberry Quick

Despite its sweet-sounding name, Strawberry Quick is nothing to be tempted by. Strawberry Quick is a form of crystal methamphetamine ("crystal meth") that looks like strawberry Pop Rocks (the candy that sizzles in your mouth). It also smells like strawberries. Strawberry Quick is being handed out to kids in schools across the country. Children are generally not told that this is a powerful illegal drug, and are consuming it, believing it to be candy. Strawberry Quick also allegedly comes in chocolate, peanut butter, cola, cherry, grape and orange flavors as well.

Crystal meth is a kind of stimulant, or upper drug, that is made from a variety of dangerous ingredients. It is called "crystal" because of its clear appearance. It is an addictive chemical that has a very strong and dangerous effect on the user's central nervous system. Users feel a short but intense rush from using it. The long-term effects of crystal meth use include heart problems, convulsions and seizures, insomnia, respiratory problems, brain damage, and psychological problems like uncontrollable anger, paranoia and anxiety. Crystal meth is highly addictive.

While crystal meth is not generally one of the most common drugs used by teenagers (the 2007 Monitoring the Future study found that 1.1% of high school seniors used methamphetamine, compared to 31.7% who used marijuana), the danger of Strawberry Quick is that it is being marketed toward children specifically. It is sweet, is nice to look at, and shares a name with a harmless product (Strawberry Quik milk) that many children enjoy. The name makes the substance seem less dangerous to potential customers — including kids.

In September, the Superintendent of York, Maine, schools felt there was sufficient danger to warn all parents and teachers in his district about this dangerous drug. Despite the fact that it does not appear that Strawberry Quick has made it to the East Coast as of yet, it is crucial that parents and educators be forewarned about this drug in the event that it does become an issue here in New England.

For more information:

www.drug-free.org/Portal/DrugIssue/MethResources/default.html



Agency Spotlight: Seacoast Youth Services

Location: Seabrook, New Hampshire

Contact Info: (603) 474-3332 or www.seacoastyouthservices.org

Seacoast Youth Services (SYS)'s mission is to offer education, prevention, and timely intervention programs concerning alcohol and other drug abuse, as well as other at-risk behaviors for youth and families in the lower seacoast area of Rockingham County, New Hampshire. SYS strives to help the participants and their families develop positive self-esteem and strong communication skills.

SYS provides a variety of programs, including the Adolescent Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), parent support groups, a drop-in program, a summer adventure program, youth action group, and youth leadership program.

SYS also works in the greater Seabrook-Hampton community through involvement in Lower Seacoast Youth and Family Coalition, and is an active participant in local substance abuse prevention endeavors.

Interesting Links and Online Resources

- < **Life After: Stories of Hope and Recovery:** The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has created this new site to document and share the stories of people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. Even for those who are not struggling with recovery, this is an inspirational and informative site. www.drugfree.org/LifeAfter/Default.aspx
- < **Don't Be a Patsy:** Meet Patsy. She's a well-intentioned, caring mom who wants to protect her children from drug and alcohol abuse. Patsy has done everything from buying a drug-sniffing dog to patting down her children for drugs. Like so many parents, Patsy needs a little help and advice as to how to effectively talk to her kids about drugs and alcohol. Learn more about Patsy at www.drugfree.org/Parent/ConnectingWithYourKids/
- < **Does Your Drug Talk Include These Drugs?:** This is a new resource on preventing prescription drug abuse from Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Includes information on prescription drug abuse, steps parent can take, and understanding the teen culture behind this new and dangerous phenomenon. www.drugfree.org/NotInMyHouse/default.aspx
- < **Red Ribbon Coalition:** October 23rd-31st is Red Ribbon Week, a national campaign to raise awareness of the need for alcohol, tobacco and other drug and violence prevention, early intervention, and treatment services. Red Ribbon Week is in memory of Enrique Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officer who was kidnapped and murdered by drug dealers in Mexico in 1985. For more information: www.redribboncoalition.com
- < **Do You Know the Signs?:** Warning Signs is a site dedicated to educating parents about seeing the warning signs of a variety of high-risk behaviors. Topics include drug and alcohol use, gang violence, and internet safety. In addition to information about the warning signs for each high-risk behavior, the site also provides a clearinghouse of other online resources on the topics. www.warningsigns.info

Upcoming Events

- < November 6-November 20, 2008 (Thursdays): **Destination: Sanity. Survival Tips for Solo Parents.** Join others in similar parenting situations to build a support network, learn creative solutions, develop coping skills, and more! 6-7:30pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or info@familiesfirstseacoast.org. Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Tuesday, November 11, 2008: **Why Punishment Doesn't Work.** When children misbehave, they are not being a problem, they are having a problem. It doesn't mean they're being bad. It means something is in their way. Negative behavior is only exacerbated by punishment, leading to worse behavior. Bonnie Harris will reveal a new and better way to discipline children. Free of charge! 7pm at the North Conference Rooms at Exeter Hospital. Part of the T. Elliott Young Lecture Series through Exeter Health Resources.
- < Wednesday, November 12, 2008: **Building in Protection from Risky Teen Behavior.** Part of the Families First *Living with Teens and Preteens* series. 6-7:30pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or info@familiesfirstseacoast.org. Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Wednesday, November 12, 2008: **Workshop for Parents of Children with Special Educational Needs.** 5:30-8pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. Co-sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center and Parents Information Center. For more information: (603) 224-7005.
- < Monday, November 17, 2007: **Raising Resilient, Responsible Children.** Stan Davis presents a practical, research-based look at what parents can do to raise children who can manage stress and who take responsibility for their own behaviors. This presentation will give parents specific tools for helping their child have a better life. It will also focus on what works in bullying prevention. At the Cooperative Middle School in Stratham from 6-8pm. Sponsored by the SAU-16 Cooperative Middle School Guidance Department.
- < November 18-December 9, 2008 (Tuesdays): **Anger Management for Everyday Parenting.** Understanding anger; common and personal anger triggers; why kids "push our buttons;" strategies to reduce outbursts. Learn ways to reduce and handle anger so you can be the parent you would like to be. 6-7:30pm at the Portsmouth Community Campus. To register or for more information: (603) 422-8208 (press 2) or info@familiesfirstseacoast.org. Sponsored by Families First Health and Support Center.
- < Ongoing: **Making Change: A Substance Abuse Support Group for Young People.** Free and confidential. Every Thursday evening from 6-7pm at OdysseyNH Academy in Hampton. For more information: Barry T. at (603) 758-1550.
- < Ongoing: **Families Advocating for Substance Treatment, Education and Recovery (FASTER) Support Groups.** Are you concerned about your teen or young adult? Do you suspect your teen is using drugs and alcohol? You are not alone! Come to a parent support group and meet other parents experiencing the same issues! Drop-in meetings are free and confidential. Local meetings are held at the Portsmouth Community Campus Library on the first Thursday of every month from 6-7:30pm. For more information, call Abby Aldous at the Community Diversion Program at (603) 430-8570 x11. Childcare is available for \$5/ family with 24 hours advance notice. To sign up for childcare please contact Families First at 422-8208.
- < Ongoing: **Inhalant Abuse On-Line Training for Adults.** A free and easy fifteen minute training for adults on the dangers, signs and symptoms of inhalant abuse, developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the New England Inhalant Abuse Prevention Coalition, and published by the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities. To take the training, go to www.inhalantabusetraining.org.



Understanding Prescription Drug Abuse

While most parents are worried about their children abusing alcohol, marijuana, and other well-known drugs, a new problem is right in their own medicine cabinet; prescription drugs. Prescription drug abuse is steadily becoming more of an issue with teenagers today; one in five teens have abused a prescribed medication and one in ten have abused cough medicine. Abusing a non-prescribed medication or not taking it correctly can be as dangerous and addicting as illegal drugs.



The National Survey on Drug Use and Health has reported that kids as young as twelve have started abusing prescription drugs. The four most commonly abused medications are pain relievers, stimulants, sedatives and tranquilizers. With these drugs so easy to obtain, the rate at which they are abused is rising at a rapid pace. Numerous homes keep old prescription bottles that contain leftover pills in a drawer or just in the house, and that can make it even easier for teens to get hold of them. Because these drugs are normally prescribed by doctors, teens tend to believe they are not as dangerous as illegal and illicit drugs. However, in reality, they can be just as deadly as heroin or cocaine. Taking a medication for reasons then other prescribed by a physician can result in long-term damage to the central nervous system, cause paranoia, high body temperatures, and an irregular heartbeat.

A common drug, being prescribed by doctors on a regular basis, is Ritalin. Ritalin is usually prescribed for children who are diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, but it is also becoming one of the more common drugs abused by teens along with cough medicine and Oxycontin.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has written specific guidelines on how to properly dispose of prescription drugs:

- < Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers
- < Mix the prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, like used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and put them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, further ensuring that the drugs are not diverted or accidentally ingested by children or pets
- < Throw these containers in the trash
- < Flush prescription drugs down the toilet only if the accompanying patient information specifically instructs it is safe to do so
- < Return unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs to pharmaceutical take-back locations that allow the public to bring unused drugs to a central location for safe disposal. (Visit <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov> for more information on prescription drug disposal).

Correctly disposing medications or frequently counting and watching the quantity in prescription bottles can significantly help reduce the likelihood a teen will abuse a drug found in their own home.

—Contributed by Janet Barber, NOTC's Prevention/Homework Help Intern

Related Program Note: On November 17, Detective Michael Munck from the Exeter Police Department will be conducting a workshop with our participants on the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Please encourage your child to participate!