



Social Issues

Substance Abuse



Definition:

Some people use legal substances in an unhealthy way and may suffer ill health [either mental or physical] because of this or they use illegal substances. The substances are illegal because they are dangerous to the health of individuals.

Examples:

- Misuse of drugs
- Alcoholism
- Smoking
- Solvent abuse

Why the situation occurs?

Very often people misuse substances because they wish to escape from their everyday lives. They believe that they have more enjoyable experiences because of the substances.

Other reasons why people try out substances may be:

- Pressure from friends
- Stress or depression
- Boredom
- Wanting to try new things
- Being addicted to the drug

How you can make a difference:

Tackle the issue – learn what goes on in your community and how these issues are tackled. Educate each other about the risks and try to educate those who may be at risk. Explore ways of supporting those who may need help and what circumstances in life may lead to substance abuse.

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identify the problem
2. Develop Awareness and empathy
3. Take action
4. Measure the change

Resources and links:

The World Health Organisation's website contains information on how to manage substance abuse (English, French and Spanish):

http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/en/

Information on this subject is available on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) website: <http://www.unicef.org>

World Scout Conference Resolution 16/93 on Substance Use and Abuse

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