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Why do young people use drugs?

Young people use drugs for many different reasons: there may be one drug to drug, from person to person, and from situation to situation. A person may start using a drug for one reason but may continue using it for quite another reason. Not all young people will experiment with alcohol and other drugs, and only a small percentage will develop a serious problem.

Adolescence is a period of great change. Young people experience a dramatic transformation: they change schools, their bodies change, their relationships with friends and family change, and their needs and desires change. This can be exciting as well as stressful and awkward.

The teen years are also a time of making decisions and of discovering one's own values and beliefs around a variety of issues, including health and lifestyle choices. Friends and other outside sources can also influence decisions. The decision to use drugs is therefore influenced by many different individual and environmental factors.

Unfortunately, many school messages around these issues, and our culture in general, can be confusing as to what is acceptable and what is not. For example, tobacco and alcohol publicity shows teenagers people in control and cool. What is even worse, tobacco and drugs are available and accessible anywhere and anytime more than ever.

We know that if we delay young people from trying alcohol, tobacco and other drugs until they are older, we can help them develop better life-style choices and to learn to cope with difficult issues more constructively.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. Are these statements true or false? Justify from the text

1. Only some young people can have serious problems with alcohol and drugs.

2. Adolescence is a difficult period for young people.

3. It is difficult for young people to find tobacco and drugs.

B. Answer these questions from the text

1. What are the major changes in young people's life during adolescence?