Hello LIVE REAL Mentors,

Happy New Year! I hope you have enjoyed the break and look forward to the start of Spring semester.

Recently, several articles have run in local and national publications discussing the rise in marijuana use among teens. This information is based on the Monitoring the Future Study (2011), a national survey of 8th, 10th and 12th grade students, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The study found that marijuana use among teens rose for the fourth year in a row, with daily marijuana use reaching a 30-year peak among 12th grade students. Among 12th graders, 22.6% report using marijuana in the past 30 days and 36.4% report using marijuana in the past year.

Knowing that college students were 8th, 10th and 12th graders at some point, it seems logical to assume rates among college students are consistent with teen use rates. The most recent national data available from the CORE Institute confirms this hypothesis: In 2009, 17.2% of U.S. college students reported using marijuana within the past 30 days, and 30.2% reported using in the past year.

These national trends in marijuana use raise several questions:

**What is the situation at NDSU?**

Similar to the national trends, we have also seen an increase in marijuana use among NDSU students recently. However, it is important to note that marijuana use rates at NDSU are still far below the national averages. The 2010 NDSU CORE data show 11.4% of NDSU students have used marijuana in the past 30 days and 21.5% have used in the past year, up from 7.5% and 20.4%, respectively, in 2008.

**Why do we think use is rising?**

According to the Monitoring the Future Study (2011), fewer teens report seeing danger in using marijuana, even in using it regularly. “Perceived risk” of use has been shown to be closely related to actual use of a drug, and perceived risk of marijuana, along with teen disapproval of use, has been declining among all age groups in recent years. As more individuals believe that marijuana use is harmless or even beneficial, use of the drug continues to rise.

**What can we do about it?**

Though the perceived risk of using marijuana is declining, the actual risks associated with use are significant. Marijuana can cause major health, safety, social and learning problems, not to mention the legal consequences individuals may face. At NDSU, marijuana users (even infrequent users) are far more likely to engage in a wide variety of harmful behaviors than non-users, including binge drinking, driving under the influence, getting hurt or injured, experiencing memory loss, getting in trouble with authorities and seriously thinking about suicide.

Challenging the myths related to marijuana is essential in order to provide an accurate view of the harm related to use. Marijuana: The Basics can help mentors address a variety of myths regarding marijuana.
Copies of this guide are also available upon request by emailing Erika.Beseler@ndsu.edu or calling 231-5478.

Want to know more?

Mentors interested in learning more about the basics of marijuana, use at NDSU, and how to challenge myths and assist those struggling with use are encouraged to attend the LIVE REAL Mentor – Marijuana session on February 14th at Noon in the Arikara Room, Memorial Union.

Spring 2012 LIVE REAL Mentor Training Sessions:

- Tuesday, January 31 @ Noon – Prairie Room
- Tuesday, February 14 @ Noon – Marijuana-specific training session – Arikara Room
- Wednesday, February 29 @ Noon – Prairie Room
- Thursday, March 29 @ 4pm – Room of Nations
- Wednesday, April 25 @ 4pm – Room of Nations

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions and have a great Spring semester!

Best,

Erika