

# Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Drug Prevention & Education for our Community

## Santa Cruz County Children's Mental Health Prop. 63 Mental Health Services Act Family & Youth Input From Watsonville Digital Bridges Academy Surveys

One of the strengths of our local Children's Inter-agency System of Care is the on-going needs assessment, quality improvement, and strategic planning engaged in by all partners. This community input is included as a key part of our local Prop. 63 planning.

The Watsonville Digital Bridges Academy assists youth and adults at-risk in successfully "bridging" the transition to college and the workforce. The following information has been used to help identify key needs and issues in the area of Dual Diagnosis Mental Health/Drug Abuse Prevention and Education, from the viewpoint of community members.

### Background

- Surveyed 170 people
- Age Distribution
  - 63% were youth who used drugs
    - 25% of the people were 13 to 15 years old
    - 38% were 16 to 18 years old
  - 18% were 19 to 25 years old
  - 17% were 25+ years old
- Ethnicity
  - 88% - Mexican-American
  - 10% - White
  - 2% - Asian
- Gender
  - 30% - Female
  - 70% - Male
- Marital Status
  - 86% - Single
  - 12% - Married
  - 2% - Divorced
- Income Range
  - 72% - \$0 to \$8,000
  - 15% - \$9,000 to \$20,000
  - 13% - \$20,000+

### Data Collection

- Surveyed 170 people

Santa Cruz County Children's Mental Health  
Prop. 63 Mental Health Services Act  
Family & Youth Input  
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- 54% - drug users
- 18% - reformed drug users
- 28% - family members of drug users
  
- Surveys distributed to and collected from:
  - New School (alternative school)
  - Renaissance High School
  - Pajaro Valley High School
  - Watsonville High School
  - Watsonville / Aptos Adult School

## Project Goal

- To collect information and data about:
  - Drug abuse
  - Youth in our community
  - Resources on drug abuse prevention
  
- To create solutions that will address:
  - Drug use in our community
  - Drug prevention
  - Education for parents

## Research Questions

- Are drugs a problem in our community?
- Who do youth use drugs?
- When do youth begin using drugs?
- With whom do youth use drugs?
- Do drug users know where to go for help?

## What is the need?

- People use drugs for different reasons:
  - To forget personal problems
    - 41% - Used due to stress and depression
    - 4% - Used to seek attention and suffered from low self-esteem
  - To satisfy their curiosity
    - 19% - Felt the need to experiment
  - To combat boredom
    - 19% - Responded they had nothing to do

## What drugs are being used?

- Most used drugs:

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- 40% - Marijuana
- 34% - Crystal or Crank
- 20% - Cocaine
- Some people use more than one drug:
  - 74% - Indicated that marijuana and methamphetamines were their choice of drugs.

## When do they start using drugs?

- Some as early as 11 years old
- Average is around 13 years old
- We have discovered that the youth use drugs with their family and friends:
  - 16% - Use drugs with family members
  - 43% - Use drugs with parents
  - 41% - Use drugs with friends

## When is the need evident?

- When people are depressed
  - 41% - Expressed they were experiencing feelings of depression and sadness
- When there is peer pressure
  - 71% - Were influenced by the wrong crowd
- When the youth don't care
  - 86% have not tried to stop

## How do drugs affect performance in school and jobs?

- 41% - Responded that their grade point average goes down
- 36% - Replied that they forget important things
- 24% - Indicated that they dropped out of school or quit their jobs

## Family members offering help?

- 25% - Reported they were offered help
- 50% - Replied that they were not offered any type of help
- 25% - Responded that their families are not aware of their drug use

## Why does drug use occur?

- It happens when youth aren't offered help
  - 75% - Replied that they either don't know where help is available or no one has offered to help
- When youth have problems
  - 41% - Responded they use drugs due to depression and stress
  - 29% - Reported they experienced peer pressure

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## How do they support their habit?

- 38% - Receive an allowance from their parents
- 31% - Indicated they work or are “fronted” drugs from their drug connections
- 20% - Report they steal and sell items of value to support their habit

## Do they have any children?

- 20% - Indicated that they have kids
- 80% - Reported that they don't have kids

## Evidence of the Problem

*“...Although statistics are available, the number of teenagers using meth is increasing... according to:*

- Drug abuse and counseling agencies;
- Police task forces;
- Juvenile Hall employees;
- Court officials;
- Rehab centers;
- Teachers, counselors, school principals and school district officials”.

Reference: Laura Norton, Register Pajaronian Article – Sept. 2, 2004

## What are the consequences of meeting the need?

- Productive members of society
- Less crime
- Happier families
- Better future for the next generation

## Do they drink beer and smoke cigarettes?

- When asked if they smoked they replied:
  - 63% - Yes
  - 37% - No
- When asked if they drink beer they responded:
  - 90% - Yes
  - 10% - No

## Are they satisfied with their lifestyle?

- 10% - Reported they are satisfied with their lifestyle
- 90% - Indicated they are not satisfied with their lifestyle

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## Consequences of NOT meeting the need

- More of our youth will be lost in drugs
- Higher death rates and diseases
- Increase in violent crimes and burglaries
- Climb in unemployment statistics
- Broken homes, families and unhappy people

## Has doing drugs slowed down your thinking process?

- 85% - Yes
- 15% - No

## What do drugs mean to you?

- 7% - Reported drugs are to have fun and party
- 67% - Replied drugs are an unhealthy habit
- 26% - Use drugs to relax

## What youth need to not experiment with and to stay off drugs

- Youth need better drug education to handle peer pressure
- Effective drug prevention programs
  - Deal with boredom
  - Coping with family problems
  - Engage with the community to address social justice issues
  - Support in dealing with peer pressure
- Preparation for high-wage jobs
  - Motivation to seek high-wage jobs with a future
  - Training and education in skills required for these jobs
  - Internships and mentoring

## Drug Prevention: Three Solutions

- Provide better drug education and activities to address:
  - Peer pressure, depression and stress
- Create prevention methods for dealing with:
  - Boredom and family problems
- Develop job preparation program to:
  - Give youth hope by educating them for jobs with a future
  - Help youth to explore and help find a career
  - Work closely with youth and help them along the way

## Goals of our Solution

# Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Drug Prevention & Education for our Community

- ✓ To see youth take an active interest in their future
- ✓ To watch them turn away from drugs and turn to their education and careers
- ✓ Test the program in 5 years and determine if it is successful

## **Solution Outcomes**

- ✓ Less drug flow into the community
- ✓ More people in the community getting involved in helping change the minds of teenagers
- ✓ Teenagers feeling like they are in control of their lives

## **Relevance to Children's Prop 63 Recommendations**

- ❖ **Increased Dual Diagnosis Mental Health/Substance Abuse services for youth in our community (including Probation, Child Welfare, School, and Community referrals).** *(Identified in recommendations by each subcommittee)*
- ❖ **Increased Dual Diagnosis Mental Health/Substance Abuse services for parents of children/youth in Child Welfare** *(Child Welfare recommendations # 1 and 2)*