

Drug possession and use

Offense: Possession of controlled substances, “under the influence of,” DUI

Account for a lot of juvenile justice contact

A relatively large number of juvenile offenses are related to recreational drug use by juveniles who are *not* addicted to the drug and do not become involved in more serious crimes. Chief among these drugs are marijuana and club drugs (ecstasy and hallucinogens). On the other hand, a near epidemic of meth use, in both rural and urban communities is tied to arrests for violent crimes by both juveniles and adults. Illegal use of prescription drugs, and steroids, may be as widespread, but rarely result in contact with the juvenile justice system, unless identified as factors in other crimes. *The key to use of Ripple Effects software as part of an effective treatment program is to target the drug that is the presenting problem; then have youth identify the underlying reasons prompting use.*

Marijuana - what Ripple Effects has been shown to do

There is near unanimous agreement among experts that arrests for possession of marijuana, unrelated to other criminal activity, clog the courts, don't – and shouldn't – result in incarceration, but also often don't – and should – result in other sanctions. Every time there are no sanctions for breaking the law, disrespect for the law is reinforced and an opportunity for early intervention is missed. Research shows that Ripple Effects training software does not significantly increase the perception of harm of marijuana. However, it has been proven effective in strengthening norms against the use of marijuana, has been shown to successfully develop other protective internal factors, and has been shown to result in reduced discipline referrals for drug related offenses in school settings.

Heroin and Methamphetamines

OJJDP reports that a relatively small group of serious and violent juvenile offenders who are also serious drug users accounts for a disproportionate amount (more than half, according to one national study) of all serious crimes committed by delinquents. Some is crime to support a habit, such as with heroin addicts. Some is social crime related to heightened aggression, as with methamphetamine and steroid users.

How Ripple Effects fits with treatment programs for addiction

Severe drug addiction and the attendant crimes that arise out of it, need more intensive treatment than the Ripple Effects software training program can provide. However, the cognitive-behavioral training, norm setting, social skill development and emotional regulation that Ripple Effects promotes can be a powerful supplement to many other kinds of programs, especially “talk groups,” which have low rates of success on their own.

Goals of intervention

Youth will:

- Strengthen norms against use of drugs or alcohol
- Improve social skills, especially in assertiveness
- Master cognitive-behavioral techniques for controlling self talk
- Learn stress management techniques
- Develop stronger bonds to community
- Develop decision-making skills and problem-solving strategies
- Adopt an exercise program matched to their temperament and body type

A suggested scope and sequence

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS

Self awareness

Goals
Strengths
Risk factors
Resilience
Norms

Assertiveness

Refusing
Resisting pressure
Standing up for beliefs

Decision making

Predicting consequences

Managing feelings

Physical sensations
Self talk
External triggers
Relaxing
Quitting habits

Connecting to community

Choosing friends
Making friends
Getting help

CHALLENGE TOPICS

Alcohol

Drugs (by street & technical names):

antidepressants, date rape drugs,
depressants, designer drugs, hallucinogens,
inhalants, marijuana, opiates, ritalin,
stimulants, ice, meth/crank, oxycontin,
ecstasy, crack, cocaine, steroids

Alcoholic

Alcoholic parent

Depression

Driving drunk

Nervous habits

Nail biting

Quitting drugs

Relapse

Recklessness

Stress

Smoking, chew

Selling drugs