



Drug Endangered Students and the School Nurse's Role

Virginia Association of School Nurses, Inc.

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Impact of Substance Abuse

- Substance use and abuse impacts children from preschool to high school
- Living in a home affected by drug &/or alcohol abuse adversely impacts students
- Personal use & abuse result in legal, physical and social consequences



Impact by the Numbers



- 27.2% of students nationwide had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in last 12 months (CDC, 2010)
- 36.8% of students nationwide had used marijuana at least once (CDC, 2010)
- 4.6% had used marijuana on school property more than once during last 30 days
- Abuse of prescription drugs accounts for 8% of illegal drug use among adolescents (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2010)



How It Presents at School

- Increase in behavioral problems
- Drop in academic performance
- Reduced attendance
- Evidence of neglect, abuse
- Increase in health-related concerns



Prevention & Intervention



The Professional School Nurse (RN):

- Provides health counseling and education to individual students, classroom group, faculty and parents/guardians
- Communicates knowledge and skills in decision making, personal values identification, problem-solving, communication which strengthen self-esteem and coping
- Uses proven interactive approaches to enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors
- Is trusted, approachable, and educated health care professional

Prevention & Intervention



- Makes appropriate referrals to agencies like social services, drug/alcohol treatment services, behavioral health services and child protection teams
- Respects confidentiality of student
- Problem solves ethical dilemmas often associated with substance abuse and use issues
- Assesses, supports, and participates in community prevention efforts surrounding substance abuse
- Identifies and supports students impacted by substance abuse and/or recreational use

Drug Testing



- The AAP (2007) states that the primary care physician should be the first contact by parents suspecting adolescent drug abuse
- The Association of Addiction Professionals (2010) views the health care setting as the appropriate venue for drug testing
- When positive drug tests occur, the School Nurse assists students and parents via referral to primary care health providers and addiction professionals

Free Educational Resources



1. VASN's Community Resources Page

<http://www.vasn.us/>

2. National Association of School Nurses

<http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/DrugsofAbuse>

- *Unintended Consequences: Prescription Drug Abuse in Our Schools and Communities (free)*
- *The Current State of Teenage Drug Abuse: Trend Toward Prescription Drugs*
- Home to Homeroom
- Smart Moves, Smart Choices
- Help Families Fight the Abuse of Rx and OTC Drugs

Educational Resources



3. National Library of Medicine

<http://druginfo.nlm.nih.gov/drugportal>

4. McNeil OTC Literacy/Scholastic

<http://www.scholastic.com/OTCliteracy>

What You Can Do



- Talk to your Professional School Nurse
 - Is your School Nurse a Registered Nurse in Virginia?
 - What is the School Nurse's educational background?
 - Is the School Nurse employed to serve in the school building all day every day?
 - Who provides student health care in the absence of the School Nurse?
 - Find out how you can collaborate with the School Nurse.
- If your school does not employ a Registered Nurse, then ask who coordinates and provides student health services and referrals



References

National Association of School Nurses. (2011). *Drug testing in schools: Issue brief*. Accessed April 7, 2012 from <http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNIssueBriefsFullView/tabid/445/smId/853/ArticleID/118/Default.aspx>

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