A 4-H CRD Video Discussion Guide

AMERICA HURTS:
THE DRUG EPIDEMIC

The drug epidemic is one of the major problems facing our country today, according to national opinion polls. In spite of the fact that drug use has dropped slightly among youth, the problem still pervades our society — and hurts all of us.

How do drugs harm individuals, families, communities, and the world? What drugs pose the greatest dangers to our society? AMERICA HURTS takes a close look at how the drug epidemic is hurting America.

INTENDED AUDIENCE
Middle School and Senior High School students.

OBJECTIVES
The viewer will:

• Hear users and their families describe how drugs destroy relationships, human potential, and hope for the future.

• See how America's appetite for illegal drugs directly causes suffering, violence, and corruption here and in other countries.

• Learn more about the horrifying dangers of widely-used drugs like marijuana, cocaine, crack, and so-called “designer” drugs.

SYNOPSIS
Drug abuse hurts our society. The dollar costs alone run into the tens of billions of dollars each year. Drug abuse escalates health care costs, causes lost productivity on the job, and directly
stimulates crime and violence. Even more serious than the financial costs, however, is the pain from several different viewpoints:

1. Drug use increases and intensifies individual depression, loneliness, and hopelessness.
2. Families of drug users are often torn apart by the hate and rage that boil up around drug use.
3. Communities are destroyed by the violence and apathy of the drug culture.
4. Other countries are caught up in a web of violence and corruption that is fed by America’s insatiable appetite for drugs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do people take drugs? Some common rationalizations are listed below. Discuss them, and add any others you have heard.
   a. If I use drugs, I’m not hurting anybody else.
   b. The world is so messed up, I have to take drugs to deal with it.
   c. Practically everyone uses some kind of legal drugs like alcohol or prescription pills, so why are pot and coke any different?
   d. There’s no future for me anyway, so I might as well feel good for the moment.
   e. A little recreational drug use helps me relax and doesn’t hurt anything.
   f. Everybody else does it, so what’s the harm?

2. Do you think parents are responsible for their children’s drug use? Why or why not?

3. What can parents do to keep their kids from getting involved with drugs?

4. Do you think some drug experimentation is “normal?” If so, where would you, as a parent, draw the line?

5. What would you do if you thought your child was using drugs?

6. Do you think that most drug users are aware of the violence and corruption their habit supports? Do you think it would make a difference if they knew?

7. Why do you think drugs are more widespread in America than in other countries? What can be done about it?

Coronet Film and Video
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