

A 4-H/CRD Video Discussion Guide

THE DRUG KNOT

THE DRUG KNOT is a dramatic video about teenage drug abuse and its impact on the “user,” as well as the user’s family and friends. It features David Toma, the former vice squad officer whose life experiences inspired the television series “Toma” and “Barretta.” In the video, Toma reenacts his real life role as an anti-drug crusader who gives presentations and counsels teenagers and parents about the problems of substance abuse.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

For students in grades seven through twelve.

OBJECTIVES

- To give students the chance to discuss the problems of substance abuse.
- To illustrate the impact substance abuse has on the user, as well as the user’s family and friends.
- To explain reasons for “saying no” to drugs.
- To identify places and people who can help with drug-related problems.
- To demonstrate the importance of communication between parents and teenagers.

SYNOPSIS

DRUG KNOT focuses on Doug Dawson, a teenager who is experimenting with drugs. Communication with his parents has broken down and Doug and his father argue about his lack of responsibility and his use of money. Doug’s mother refuses to see any of the signs of drug experimentation. Doug tries to get a part-time job to earn money, but the effects of the drugs he is using cause him to make mistakes during his audition and he loses his chance at the job.

Doug’s girlfriend, Lori, is also trying drugs but becomes concerned about Doug and herself after attending a lecture at their school given by David Toma. After some counseling with Toma, she talks to Doug’s mother and begs her to go to Toma’s parent night lecture. With much resistance, Doug’s mother goes to the lecture and realizes that she has been blind to the signs of Doug’s involvement with drugs. Toma suggests that there are ways to deal with the communication problems in the home that could be contributing to Doug’s drug experimentation.

Up to this point in the story, Doug has maintained a good relationship with his younger brother, Louie. Louie looks up to Doug and wants to be like him. When Louie is left alone on parent night, he finds Doug’s cocaine and tries it with disastrous consequences.

Within the dramatic storyline is the no-nonsense, anti-drug presentation of David Toma. Toma’s presentation is taken from the straightforward lectures that he regularly gives to students and parents across the country. The presentation discusses some of the horrors of substance abuse, the problems it can cause to the individual and his/her family and friends, and the isolation and need to belong that teenagers feel.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some reasons why teenagers use/abuse drugs?
2. How does teenage drug use/abuse affect others?
3. Why do some parents and teenagers have trouble talking to each other?
4. What are some reasons for "saying no" to drugs?
5. Where can a teenager go to get help with drug-related problems?
6. Who is responsible for solving problems related to teenage drug abuse? Teenagers? Parents? Friends? Community Members? School Administrators? All of the Above?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to discuss the final scene in the video. Have them explore possible outcomes to the open-ended story.
2. Allow students to express feelings both about the video and about Toma. What did they think of Toma's presentation? Do they think this presentation would have an effect on someone using drugs? Why or why not? Was the dramatic story realistic? Do they know anyone like Doug or Lori?
3. Students should also discuss the preview questions posted at the beginning of the video. Refer to the "map" of locations in the community where help for drug-related problems can be found.
4. Have students role-play situations where they are being pressured to use drugs.

Walt Disney Educational Media
Length: 38 minutes

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Community Resource Development



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