A recent Gallup Poll showed that one in four American families is troubled by alcohol - the highest incidence of problem drinking in thirty-seven years. The government estimates that 10.6 million adults and 4.6 million teenagers are alcoholics. Problems related to drinking have escalated in this country, including crime and violence, lost productivity on the job, and many related health disorders.

The Community Resource Development program staff at Virginia Tech purchased **ALCOHOL: AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE DRUG PROBLEM** because it gives a realistic and objective view of how alcohol affects the body and how social drinking can turn into problem drinking or even alcoholism. The program developed and produced by Syndistar is suitable for both adults and adolescents. The video production gives facts based on some of the latest scientific research that shows how alcohol is related to specific health risks. One of the program's major objectives is to show that alcohol is a depressant drug as well as a highly acceptable social drink.
SUGGESTED USES:
To provide select audiences with accurate, current knowledge of consequences of alcohol and alcoholism. To provide an educational program to serve as an introduction piece for audience discussion and prevention activities.

RECOMMENDED FOR:
Community and corporate prevention and rehabilitation programs, schools, colleges, universities, and 4-H youth programs. In addition, Chambers of Commerce, merchant associations, industries and other support organizations.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q. IN ADDITION TO ALCOHOLISM, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ALCOHOL TODAY?

A. Studies show that increased family violence, sexual abuse, criminal acts, accidental deaths, murders, suicides, diseases, and lost productivity on the job are all related to alcohol.

Q. WHAT IS FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME?

A. Infants born of heavy-drinking mothers suffer from low-birth weight and possible physical or mental retardation.

Q. WHY DOES ALCOHOL AFFECT THE MIND-BODY SYSTEM SO QUICKLY?

A. From the moment it enters the body, alcohol is immediately absorbed by the bloodstream and, within five minutes, taken throughout the entire system.

PRODUCERS:
Syndistar, Inc.
125 Mallard Street
St. Rose, LA 70087
1-800-841-9532
Q. **HOW DOES ALCOHOL AFFECT THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM?**

A. The sedative action of alcohol blocks certain chemical reactions of nerve endings. Communication between brain cells slows or shuts down and consequently the functions of necessary muscles and sensory reactions are impaired.

Q. **WHY DO MANY DRINKERS THINK THEY CAN DRIVE WELL, OR EVEN BETTER, AFTER A FEW DRINKS?**

A. Reason and judgment begin to be affected early in drinking; the drinker consequently has an inflated idea of what he or she can do.

Q. **HOW MUCH ALCOHOL CAN A HEALTHY LIVER PROCESS OR OXIDIZE?**

A. A healthy liver can oxidize approximately one ounce of alcohol per hour, roughly the equivalent of one standard drink, one can of beer, or one glass of wine.

Q. **WHAT HAPPENS IF MORE THAN ONE OUNCE OF ALCOHOL PER HOUR IS CONSUMED?**

A. The alcohol accumulates in the liver and sludges up the bloodstream. Toxic poisons build up in the body, resulting in a hangover.

Q. **WHY IS ALCOHOLISM CALLED A DISEASE OF DENIAL?**

A. Typically, the alcoholic is the last to admit that he or she has a compulsive addiction that cannot be controlled.

Q. **WHY DO SOME YOUTHFUL DRINKERS BECOME ADDICTED WITHIN AS LITTLE AS SIX MONTHS OF DRINKING?**

A. A young person’s liver metabolizes alcohol more rapidly than an adult’s. Tolerance develops more quickly than it does with an adult, so more and more alcohol is needed to get the same effects.

Q. **WHAT DOES MODERN RESEARCH SHOW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEREDITY AND ALCOHOLISM?**

A. Studies show that children of alcoholics are three to four times more likely to become alcoholics than other people. Studies of twins who were adopted by different families at birth show this same genetic tendency toward alcoholism if the child’s biological parents were alcoholics.
CONCLUSION

ALCOHOL: AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE DRUG PROBLEM can be used as an overview video for many types of audiences and discussion groups. The Community Resource Development staff realizes that there are differences of opinion as to how much is too much, and as to the medical side effects of alcoholism. We do, however, feel Syndistar has produced a program to serve as a basis for a general discussion on alcohol and alcoholism.

Detailed questions concerning fetal alcohol syndrome, heredity factors, and one's individual metabolism are best discussed with one's own medical advisor. Questions concerning local law enforcement regulations should be directed to your local police or sheriff's department. Please consult your local Extension office for additional crime prevention resources made available by the Community Resource Development Program.

NOTES:

COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

A Public Service Program of Virginia Tech and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

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