



“PLAYING WITH FIRE”

Yes, they are young, they have a desire to experience strong feelings and to experiment with new things. Yes, they will be young and foolish, just like you may have been at their age. But there are risks involved.



POT

The problem with pot (or marijuana, or cannabis), is that in Quebec, it's stronger and harder than elsewhere. In fact, the type of growing here produces a very high level of THC (the main active ingredient of cannabis). This causes memory loss, speech problems, desynchronized movements, and with regular smoking, can even cause hallucinations or psychosis.

While in the 1970's, the THC content of pot was approximately 2%, today it can be as high as 20%. Therefore, a joint smoked today is approximately 10 times stronger than before.

BINGE DRINKING

Binge drinking entails drinking a large quantity of alcohol over a very short period of time. It is practiced by groups of young people for whom drinking a lot of alcohol represents a test or a challenge.

Binge drinking can cause a dangerous level of intoxication that can even result in death. The media frequently report cases of young people who have died as a result of acute alcohol intoxication.

Acute alcohol intoxication can cause death in less than one hour, which is why it is extremely important to closely watch a person who appears to have absorbed a great deal of alcohol over a very short period of time.

If you have any doubts about the severity of a person's intoxication, do not leave this person alone. Call 911, the Info-Santé service in your region, or the Centre antipoison (1-800-463-5060) for help.

THE NEW DRUGS

New synthetic drugs like GHB (the “rape drug”) and ecstasy, are gaining in popularity among young people. Their consumption is associated with major risks, among other reasons because the consumer can never be sure of the exact composition of the synthetic drugs, which are often cut with dangerous products such as cleaning solvents or PCP (a very powerful hallucinogen). It is also important to remember that any combination of drugs (including alcohol) can cause major complications and even death!

DRIVING A MOTOR VEHICLE

(car, motorcycle, scooter, four-wheeler, etc.)

By law, new drivers who have learner's or probationary licences must follow the “zero alcohol” rule (it is illegal to consume any amount of alcohol before setting out on the road).

Driving with weakened faculties is also a violation of the Criminal Code. Like alcohol, the consumption of cannabis (pot, hashish) or of any other drug, affects a person's ability to drive a motor vehicle. In fact, it reduces motor coordination as well as the driver's ability to follow a straight line and to be vigilant.

Add to the risks associated with driving with weakened faculties a context in which several young people are in the same car and in which speed and loud music are at play, and you have a recipe for disaster.

C'MON,
LET'S TALK



DRUG AWARENESS WEEK



THEY ALWAYS NEED YOU

It goes without saying that as they grow up, children demand more freedom, they want to distance themselves from their parents, and arguments are more frequent. But this behaviour is healthy and is part of a young person's development. It doesn't mean that you are no longer important in their life. They still need you, your advice, and your presence.

If you really feel that in spite of this, your child has stopped listening to you, it might be time to try out new communication strategies with him or her. Asking for his or her opinion might be a great way to start. Take the time to really listen. Present your opinion while making sure that you set the stage for a discussion that will take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

You could also use a current event to bring up a topic that concerns you and that you would like to discuss with your child without making him or her feel attacked (e.g.: talk about an accident caused by a drunk teen, a runaway, the increasing dropout rate among young people, etc.).

Finally, don't hesitate to learn about a topic that concerns you and that you know very little about. Information can sometimes help to diffuse a situation in addition to leading to a more effective discussion with a young person. But no matter what obstacles arise when communicating with your teen, always maintain the contact. Your teen needs you, and one day, he or she will thank you.

At one point or another, many parents feel overwhelmed by a situation. It may be a good idea to call an external contact who can bolster our efforts.

RESOURCES

Two telephone services can help and listen. Confidential. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

La ligne parents

at 1-800-361-5085
In the Montreal region, dial
514-288-5555

Drugs: help and referral

at 1-800-265-2626
In the Montreal region, dial
514-527-2626

You could also contact the resource person at your child's school, or the CLSC of the centre de santé et des services sociaux (CSSS) nearest you.

Web sites where you can find interesting information about alcohol and other drugs:

www.dependances.gouv.qc.ca
www.parlonsdrogue.com
www.toxquebec.com

The brochure entitled *Drugs... Let's Talk about it* can facilitate understanding about the phenomenon of alcohol and drug consumption by young people, and help to identify solutions to problems experienced by parents. The brochure can be downloaded or ordered from the Ministère Web site at www.msss.gouv.qc.ca (documentation/publications/dépliants).

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 19 TO 25, 2006



C'MON, LET'S TALK WITH OUR TEENAGERS

Santé
et Services sociaux

Québec



with the participation of:
• ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport