

COMMUNITY OF CONCERN

TEEN BRAINOLOGY

DECEMBER 2017

WEEK 1

Situation: It's Sunday night – pizza night! Your children start talking about the tricks that one of their friends can do with the smoke from a vape pen. You ask if there is any nicotine in the juice and immediately your children explain how safe vaping is, describing the liquid as only flavored water. Something still leads you to believe this is not a good thing. You are right!

Fact: A typical, main ingredient in vape juice is Propylene glycol, a synthetic organic compound that lowers the freezing point of water. It is used to de-ice airplanes, producing plastics and polyurethane and an ingredient in environmentally friendly antifreeze. Diacetyl is the chemical used for flavoring in many popular e-juice. Research shows a direct correlation between diacetyl and popcorn lung, an irreversible condition of the swelling of the small capillaries in the lung. Symptoms are similar to COPD – shortness of breath. These electronic devices are illegal in the State of Alabama for anyone under the age of 19 to buy, possess, use or sell.

Solution: Have that very important conversation with your child. Use facts to explain that this is a dangerous risk. Preliminary research shows that this is an introduction to smoking for young people. Draw a hard line that vaping is unacceptable in your home. Set consequences and be committed in enforcing them.

WEEK 2

Situation: Your teenager is upstairs studying for upcoming exams. You knock on the door, enter and find him/her with phone in hand texting, the computer playing music and the only thing resembling studying is the open math book, on the other bed. Their grades are good, homework complete – but is this really ok?

Fact: We are hurtling through the Age of the Internet at lightning speed and teens today have a full-time job consuming technology with laptops, cell phones, tablets or other mobile devices. As a reminder their brain is not fully developed until about the age of 25. Processing an overload of information is taxing.

Solution: Keep the balance

~Ask what they are interested in online

~Encourage digital literacy; TALKING about the Internet as a tool for learning, creativity and participation

~ Enjoy media as a family together – share YouTube videos, movies, TV shows

~Set expectations before introducing new devices. ie – limit TV time

~“Unplug” during meals in order to connect with each other

~ Limit multitasking when deep focus/concentration needed ie: study time

WEEK 3

Situation: Christmas Holidays are just around the corner. You are looking forward to a more relaxed time with the children instead of feeling as if you are always in a hurry. But with this relaxed time also comes unsupervised time

Fact: A recent U.S. study appears to confirm adult fears that teens who spend more than the average amount of unsupervised time "hanging out" with peers have higher odds of smoking cigarettes and marijuana and drinking alcohol.

Solution: Set a loose schedule with full, planned activities with your children and provide plenty of adult supervision during the holidays. They may roll their eyes, they may complain, but be strong; in the end your perseverance will make your child stronger and create good decision-making habits

WEEK 4

Situation: There is a news story on TV about marijuana and you suddenly find yourself in a discussion with your 2 teenage children who believe that marijuana is safe and that you don't even have to smoke it anymore – there are edibles – cookies, candy and other foods that contain marijuana – a great safe delivery with no smoke in the lungs.

Fact: The market for marijuana edibles has grown immeasurably and continues in that path. One can purchase food that contains THC in states that have legalized recreational marijuana and law enforcement officials report edibles are being seen and used in our area. The THC (psychoactive ingredient) content in edibles is extremely high with directions that include – eat 1/6 of a cookie every 8 hours or eat 1 gummy bear every 6 hours. There have been deaths attributed to THC intoxication.

Solution: Talk to your child before he/she is in a situation in which he is offered marijuana edibles or anything that he/she is unsure of what the substance actually is. Some youth see this as a safe way to try marijuana – use facts to let them know this is not the case. Give them ideas of other good, safe risks to take 😊