

Changes for a drug Free Future

Too many teens all over the Hawaiian Islands struggle with drug abuse. It's a serious problem found in both public and private schools. Sometimes the reason is that kids are simply bored, trying to get attention, or just following their friends to be 'cool' and accepted. Unfortunately, youths who experiment with drugs don't understand the serious long-term consequences of substance abuse. Drugs are harmful to our health, threaten to destroy our futures, and represent serious threats to the well being of local communities, the State, and our country. What can be done to save teens from making bad choices?

Helping teens lead drug free lives, involves schools and parents balancing their responsibilities. When both parents are working, unsupervised teens get into trouble too easily. Ideally, communities and families should both invest resources in supporting and encouraging teens to participate in extra curricular activities such as sports, art programs, or community volunteer projects. Administrators need to communicate with families when they notice a student is frequently missing class and or their grades are slipping. These are red flags that may alert parents to a potential problem. Parents suspicious of substance abuse would be wise to request that their teen to take a drug test. In this way, schools avoid the unnecessary expense of randomly testing all students, as well as straying from the role of educators and becoming policemen. It also eliminates privacy issues and leaves this sensitive area to families and physicians.

Education plays as big role in prevention as oversight. Schools are perfectly positioned to organize speaking events for students and families about the dangers of drugs. It's important for people involved in fighting drug related social issue. Speeches from police men, former prison

inmates, counselors, and parents who lost their child to drugs to share their experiences. Personal stories of hardship and beating drug problems make a deep impact.

The good news is that schools and families care about the young generation. Together they will continue to find a solution so that Hawai'i's teens overcome these obstacles and grow up to be prosperous and happy.