

It's a Whole New Dating World

People, including our children, are meeting in a whole new way! Recently, there has been a rise in the use of dating apps by both middle and high school students. While they all have the same purpose, to connect the user with another person, each app does it a little differently.

Hot or Not:



Hot or Not is appearance-based match-making using geo location technology.

Users upload a photo of themselves and the app locates other users that are in the same geographical location and displays their photos in the app.

The user then “votes” if the person is hot or not by either pressing the red heart icon or the blue x. Users collect fans of their picture and if both users indicate the other is “hot” then they may chat with one another using the meet me feature of the app. Only personal information shared by the user is displayed. There are no age restrictions for use on this app so any photo uploaded can be seen and rated by any age user, meaning that adults can see and rate teenager’s photos and communicate and vice versa. Additionally, there are no privacy settings that enable a user to have a limited or blocked profile.



Tinder:



Tinder, like Hot or Not, is appearance-based match-making that uses geo location technology, however, Tinder allows a user to set a specific radius from which their matches will come.

Additionally, Tinder differs from Hot or Not as this app gathers users basic information from social media such as Facebook & Twitter to match potential candidates who are most likely compatible. Once Tinder has identified those potentially compatible in the geographic radius, identified users anonymously like by pressing the green heart or reject them by swiping the picture away. If two users both press the green heart then they are “matched”. Matched users are then introduced by Tinder and they are allowed to chat. Tinder was created and targeted for college age users, however, there are no age restrictions to create an account. Photos/profiles on Tinder can be seen by any user in the set geographic radius.



SKOUT:



SKOUT is a location based social

networking app that is frequently used/referred to as a dating app. SKOUT uses the device's global positioning (location services) to connect users, though with this app users can opt out of

location service connections. SKOUT differs from most apps because it has two distinct communities: one for teens (ages 13-18) and one for adults (18 & over). Within these "communities" SKOUT allows users to instant message but does not allow adults to communicate with teens or teens with adults. SKOUT touts their dedication to keeping their communities safe with staff dedicated to community management, monitoring 24/7 communication, ensuring behavior is appropriate. According to the SKOUT website, they have a "zero tolerance policy for inappropriate behavior, banning over 40,000 devices each month for violations of our standards".



The global network for meeting new people.

Life is short, you are busy and people are having fun without you right now. So start Skouting and find your party, anytime, anywhere.



(Sources: <http://hotornot.com>; <http://www.gotinder.com>; www.skout.com)

Substance Use on the Rise Among Teens Playing Sports

According to a new University of Michigan study, teens who play high-contact sports — such as football, wrestling, hockey or lacrosse — are more likely to drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes or marijuana than student athletes who play non-contact sports, like swimming or track.

Data was used from Monitoring the Future, which surveys 8th, 10th and 12th grade students. The national sample included more than 21,000 teens who were asked about substance and illicit drug use during a 30-day period.

Questions were grouped into three categories: high-contact sports (continual violent contact that sanctions hitting, knocking, wrestling or tackling opponents to the ground); semi-contact sports (sporadic violent contact like baseball, basketball, field hockey and soccer that may be officially sanctioned within the rules of the sport); and non-contact sports (no contact between participants due to either official rules or the structure of the playing). The study also indicated that those who play competitive sports had higher odds of indicating early onset of getting drunk between 4th and 8th grades when compared to their classmates who don't play sports.



Phillip Veliz, assistant research professor at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, and the study's lead author, collaborated on the study with Carol Boyd, the Deborah J. Oakley Collegiate Professor of Nursing and a professor of women's studies and Sean McCabe, research professor at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

"Competitive sports participation can either inhibit or amplify substance use. It just depends upon which type of sport adolescents are involved with," said Veliz, adding that those who play contact sports see their body as an instrument that can be easily gambled with, even if it means permanent damage. On the flip side, minimal contact sports are glorified for their sustainability to participate in throughout life.

"It is also assumed that youth who are involved with noncontact sports will be the least likely to engage in substance use due to the emphasis placed on fostering a strategic orientation to maintain a level of fitness for both competition and future longevity," Veliz said.

Unfortunately, the belief that those who participate in any type of competitive sport are less likely to engage in risky behavior such as substance abuse, may not be true, according to this finding, added Veliz.

Additionally, another research study published in the Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse has indicated prescription drug abuse is also on the rise among high school football players in the United States.

The study's author, Bryan Denham, professor of sports communication at Clemson University, also utilized data collected from the Monitoring the Future survey, breaking up the data by gender and including two categories: race and competitive sports participation.

Male participants who played baseball, basketball, football, soccer, swimming and diving and track and field were interviewed. Female participants who played softball, basketball, soccer, swimming and diving, track and field and volleyball were interviewed.

The results found that student athletes used illicit substances more frequently than non-competitors, possibly due to competition among their peers. Out of all the sports surveyed, football players use the most illegal substances and males consume more than females. In addition, Denham found that white students use more drugs than African American and Hispanic students.

Most alarmingly, 12 percent of males surveyed and 8 percent of females reported using painkillers in the past year, an increase from previous surveys.

“I’ve studied the use of performance enhancing substances in sports for about 15 years and this study extended that line of research to mind-altering substances,” Denham said. “Alcohol has always been available, as has marijuana, but younger people also may look to stronger drugs for euphoric effects.”

“If prescription pain relievers are over-prescribed in certain regions, their use may trickle down to adolescents,” he went on. “Use of narcotic pain relievers may become a habit with some adolescent athletes.”

The study also found that at least half of students attending American high schools use alcohol. In addition, while the term “hard drug” often applies to substances such as cocaine or LSD, it now also pertains to prescription pain relievers or analgesics, such as methadone, opium, morphine and codeine.

(Sources: www.CADCA.org; <http://nu.umich.edu>)

Marijuana Harmless???

"The Stone Cold Facts"

Legal or illegal, marijuana, like alcohol, is one of the most common drugs of abuse among teens that has led to serious problems and consequences. Remember the 80's commercial, "this is your brain on drugs", with the egg in the frying pan? Well, that analogy might be more accurate than anyone truly knew at the time.

Today, with all the mixed messages kids receive about marijuana, regardless of a state's legal stance, knowing the facts about marijuana is imperative in addressing the topic. Here are some facts you should know:

Marijuana is Addictive: The main active ingredient in marijuana, THC, stimulates brain cells to release the chemical dopamine, which creates a feeling of pleasure. This effect is partly responsible for the "high" a person feels when he or she smokes marijuana. It is one of the main reasons people use marijuana again and again, which can lead to addiction.

Today's marijuana strands have a much higher amount of THC (delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol), the active ingredient in the drug, as compared to the versions available in the 1960's and 1970s. In fact, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports that, on average, today's marijuana contains almost 10 percent THC.

When marijuana is smoked, THC rapidly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream, which carries the chemical to the brain and other organs throughout the body. It is absorbed more slowly when ingested in food or drink. Regardless of how it enters the body, the THC targets receptors on brain cells, called cannabinoid receptors. These receptors are ordinarily activated by chemicals similar to THC that naturally occur in the body (such as anandamide) and are part of a neural communication network called the endocannabinoid system. This system plays an important role in normal brain development and function.

Teen Brain Development:

Unlike adults, the teen brain is actively developing and often will not stop until the mid-20s. Marijuana and other drug use during this period can have a huge and damaging impact, affecting a teen's ability to develop and grow emotionally, academically and socially.

Certain parts of the brain (hippocampus, cerebellum, basal ganglia and cerebral cortex) have a lot of cannabinoid receptors so those areas of the brain are most affected.

Learning & Memory: The THC in marijuana affects the way that sensory information is processed by the part of the brain that controls learning and memory (hippocampus).

How does this happen? The THC in marijuana affects the way that sensory information is processed by the part of the brain that controls learning and memory, as well as the combination of sensory experiences with emotion and motivation. The neurons in the learning and memory part of the brain (hippocampus) are suppressed by THC. The hippocampus part of the brain plays an important role in learning. Disruptions or changes in its normal functioning can lead to problems in studying and learning new things, as well as recalling recent events.

Coordination: The cerebellum is the area of the brain that controls balance and coordination, while the basal ganglia is the part of the brain that helps control movement. THC/marijuana can, and many times will, impair a person's balance, timing and agility/movement. This may lead to things such as diminished performance in athletics or cause impaired driving.

Judgment: Since THC affects the frontal cortex, the area of the brain involved in decision making, using marijuana may only add to risky behaviors and/or poor decision making teens often partake in because of their brain development.

As mentioned before, legal or illegal, marijuana, like alcohol, is one of the most widely abused drugs by teens. So the next time you are having breakfast with your kids, crack open some eggs and talk to them about marijuana.

For more information on marijuana use and the brain please visit the NIDA website www.drugabuse.gov.

(Source: www.drugabuse.gov)



The list of things that a parent has to accomplish on any given day can be purely exhausting, so the idea of adding one more thing to that list does not seem attractive! Talkaboutalcohol.org is packed full of resources on much more than just talking about alcohol. The website includes information on building a strong family, helping your child succeed and empowering you as a parent, all in one convenient place that you can visit any hour of the day that works in your busy schedule! One great resource that many families have found helpful is the “7 Keys to Heart-to-Heart Parenting” printable fridge list, which serves as a great reminder and source of encouragement to parents. Not sure what the heart-to-heart parenting style is? Learn more at: <http://www.talkaboutalcohol.org/parenting-styles>

7 KEYS

TO HEART-TO-HEART PARENTING

- 1 Listen with an open heart
- 2 Set clear boundaries and expectations
- 3 Enforce firm, fair consequences
- 4 Be consistent
- 5 Understand that every teen is different
- 6 Work toward solutions, not just fixes
- 7 Encourage your teen's independence

