

# **DOL/ETA YouthBuild Region 3 Peer to Peer Forum**

**May 23-24, 2013**

**Substance Abuse  
Prevention and  
Intervention Best Practices  
for YB Programs**



**YouthBuild**



# Training Goals

- To have all participants leave with a working knowledge about the risk factors, newest trends, commonly used drugs, and negative effects of student substance use/abuse;
- To introduce some *proven* screening and assessment tools that YB programs can use to gauge a student's level of involvement with drugs and alcohol;
- To share recommendations and best practices for *effective* substance abuse policies and procedures in YouthBuild programs;



# Introduction and Context

- One of the historic challenges at most YouthBuild programs is how to identify and address the challenge of alcohol and drug use among students.
- A significant number of programs have been reporting that substance use/abuse serves as an impediment to the in-program retention of students, a safety issue on the worksite, barriers to achieving outcomes in the classroom and most importantly, successful post program placement in the workplace.



# Substance Use/Abuse in YB

- Historical research estimates that approximately 65% of the youth that enter all YouthBuild programs have a problem with substance use/abuse;
- The most commonly used drugs in YouthBuild programs mirror the general (16-24 year old) population of the country (Alcohol, Marijuana, Non-prescribed pills, Tobacco);
- YouthBuild students that use/abuse substances are generally masking hidden problems and use the drugs as a “coping” mechanism;



# Substance Use/Abuse in YB

- Alcohol and marijuana use amongst 16-24 year olds is rampant throughout every segment of our society, including YouthBuild programs; (New: State Laws permitting use)
- The vast majority of YouthBuild students that use substances are not “addicts”, but are demonstrating risky behaviors and habits that could *lead* to addiction.
- YouthBuild programs that “ignore” substance abuse within their programs will predictably have problems with student in-program retention and successful post-program placement;



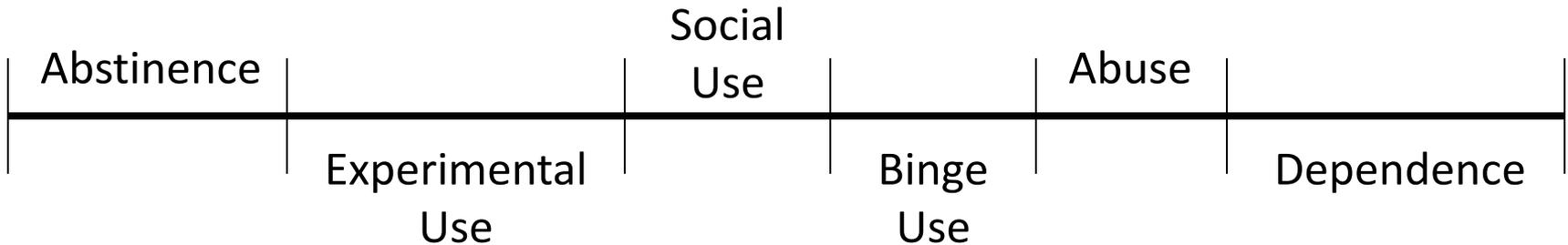
# Use, Abuse and Addiction

- Most students that are using or abusing substances are doing so before they come to the program or after they leave the program. They may feel like following this routine is okay and does not hurt anyone.
- However, the safety risks of using or abusing a substance before they come to YouthBuild is evident and can be a significant risk to others in the program.
- The vast majority of YouthBuild students that use substances are not “addicts”, but are demonstrating risky behaviors and habits that could *lead* to addiction. Abusers are likely to not be able to successfully complete the YB program.



# Use, Abuse and Addiction

- Where do the majority of YouthBuild students fall on this continuum of Substance Use?



# Why are students using?

- Coping mechanism for problems
- Escape from school and family
- To be accepted by their Peers
- Family influence/environment
- Everybody does it
- Curiosity/Just Bored
- Teenage Rites of Passage
- Pill-popping society
- Gang influence
- MTV & Hip-Hop culture
- To get “normal”
- Ethnic culture influence



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# Commonly Used Drugs

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- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Non-prescribed (Prescription Meds, pills)
- Cocaine (or crack)
- Club Drugs (Ecstasy)
- Methamphetamine
- Inhalants
- Tobacco
- Other (Heroin, SPICE, Bath Salts, etc.)



# The Alcohol Problem

- Excessive Drinking is a significant problem and is often combined with use/abuse of other drugs. This issue leads to many of the problems and risky behaviors that some YouthBuild students encounter.
- Binge drinking is common amongst the YouthBuild age group on weekends and affects program attendance, focus, behavior and classroom performance.



# Combining Marijuana & Alcohol

- Combined marijuana and alcohol users are 4 to 47 times more likely than non-users to have a wide range of dependence, behavioral, school, health and legal problems.
- Marijuana and alcohol are the leading substances mentioned in arrests, emergency room admissions, autopsies, and treatment admissions.



# Substance Abuse Policies

- **Substance Abuse Policies:**
  1. Should be clear and concise
  2. Should be vetted and approved by parent organization
  3. Should be practical given the population being served
  4. Should state the agency's position on substance use/abuse by YouthBuild students
  5. Should take into consideration that YB students are not "employees"
  6. Should be understood and supported by all staff



# Substance Abuse Policies

- **Substance Abuse Policies:**
  7. Should make it clear that illicit drug use is not acceptable
  8. Should be clear that responsible alcohol use and moderation are paramount for those students of legal age
  9. Should support “zero tolerance” for minors
  10. Should be progressive regarding sanctions and disciplinary actions
  11. Should clearly state the repercussions in regard to student violations of the program’s Substance Abuse Policy



# Screening

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## Screening Provides:

- A context for a discussion of substance use.
- Information on the level of involvement in substance use.
- Insight into areas where substance use is creating problems.



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# Screening

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Screening Does NOT Provide:

A DIAGNOSIS



# Screening

## Screening Tools

### **AUDIT** - Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test

- Ten Questions
- Five possible answers to each question
- Alcohol Specific
- Provides information on frequency of use
- Provides information on level of use
- Provides abuse and dependence symptoms
- Preface: In the past 12 months.....



# Screening

## Screening Tools

- **AUDIT** – Based on scores for each answer to ten questions (related to alcohol use), each student is given a cumulative score that will place him/her anywhere from (Zone 1 – Low Risk) to (Zone 4 – Very High Risk).
- Each zone comes with its prescribed procedures for the student's next steps based on this simple assessment, where appropriate.



# Screening

## Screening Tools

### **DAST 10** – Drug Abuse Screening Test

- Ten Questions
- Yes/No Format
- Drug Specific
- Provides information on level of use
- Provides abuse and dependence symptoms
- Preface: In the past 12 months...



# Screening

## Screening Tools

- **DAST 10** – Once again, based on scores for each answer to ten questions (based on drug use), each student is given a cumulative score that will place him/her anywhere from (Zone 1 – No Problems) to (Zone 4 – Substantial Problem/Intensive Assessment and Referral Needed).
- Each zone on the DAST 10 also comes with its prescribed procedures for the student's next steps based on this simple assessment, where appropriate.



# Program Integration

Any substance abuse prevention/intervention strategy must be a part of a continuum of services ...

- Drug Testing
- Drug Education Seminars
- Counseling/Intervention
- Case Management
- Behavior Modification Plans (Disciplinary)
- Student Safety
- Post Program Placement

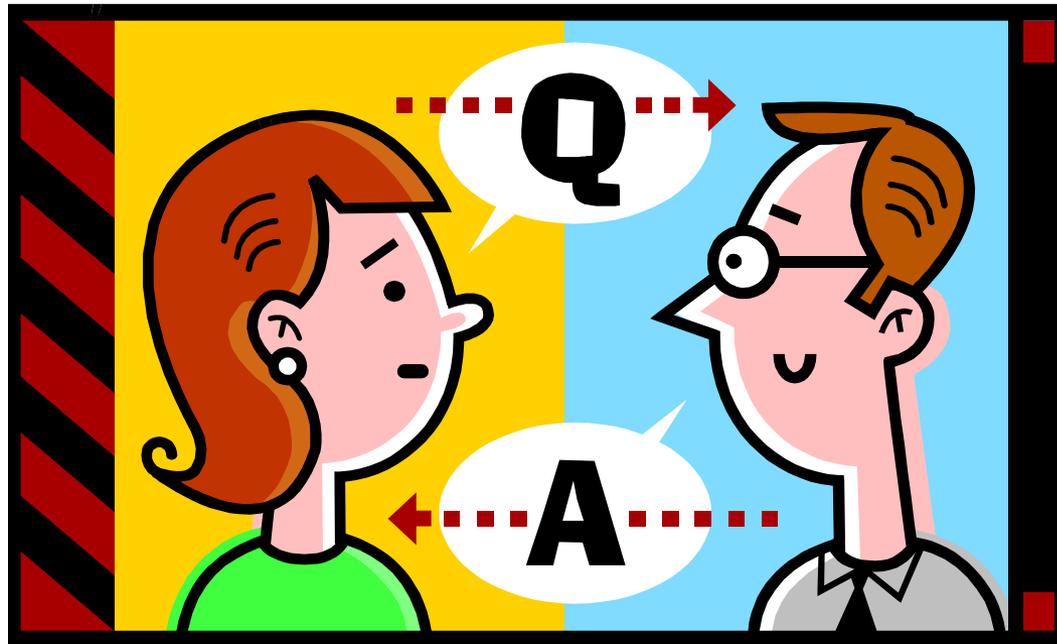


# Best Practices

- Build relationships with students (and their family) early on
- Provide drug education seminars for (ALL) students
- Staff training and cross-training is a must
- Develop a program-wide strategy
- Do not use drug testing to screen out applicants
- Use available substance-abuse training to educate and orient staff
- Foster staff-wide agreement on the program's approach
- Seek and secure local in-kind services for drug education classes and other needed services
- Resources and tools available on the DOL YouthBuild CoP
- Use your DOL YouthBuild TA Collaborative Coach
- Work closely with your FPO and think of him/her as a resource!



# Question and Answer Session



# Resources

- Resources and tools available on the DOL YouthBuild CoP
- DOL YouthBuild TA Collaborative – Contact your Program Coach
- Work closely with your FPO and think of him/her as a resource!
- For more information contact :
  - Pat McNeil, M.Ed., CPS
  - YouthBuild USA, Inc.
  - DOL YouthBuild Technical Assistance Collaborative
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