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## Substance Use Education for Youth

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**Substance Use Education for Youth**

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Collaborative Health and Human Services

May 8, 2023

## Appendices

### Scope of Work

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines
Design knowledge survey	First survey; This survey will be created to fully understand what youth are already aware of regarding substances	February 13, 2023
Distribute the survey	Youth were given a paper-printed survey	February 17, 2023
Get in contact with PVPSA speaker (1st workshop session)	Shared the results with PVPSA speaker to create a presentation based on the survey results	February 21, 2023
Meet with staff members/ Get them prepared	Inform staff about the sessions that will take place. In need of assistance: keeping youth engaged and participating	February 24, 2023
Substance use Awareness sessions	<p><b>1: PVPSA Speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identifying types of drugs</li> </ul> <p><b>2: Sobriety Test Workshop:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Straight Line (Weights 5, 20 Lbs)</li> <li>● Cones Walk through (No Weight)</li> <li>● Stand on one-Leg (Weights 5, 20 Lbs)</li> </ul> <p><b>3: (Substance Awareness) Presentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identifying infused snacks (Original Vs. Infused)</li> <li>● The impact drugs have</li> </ul>	<p><u>1st March 8, 2023</u> (3:30-4:30)</p> <p><u>2nd March 15, 2023</u> (3:30-4:30)</p> <p><u>3rd March 22, 2023</u> (3:30-4:30)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Healthy ways to stay away</li> <li>● How to say no to Peer Pressure</li> <li>● Activity : Which is infused and which is original?</li> </ul>	
Final survey for youth	After all sessions were completed, youth took the post-survey, which allowed us to better understanding of what they were able to learn from the sessions	March 22, 2023
Review final survey	Review theresults	April 10, 2023

### Abstract

The City of Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department offers community members a variety of different activities aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle. One of the locations within the department is the Gene Hoularis and Waldo Rodriguez Youth Center, primarily focusing on youth. Due to a lack of information, it is essential for youth to become well informed about the impact drugs can have on their future. For this project, we raised awareness about substance use through a total of three workshops. The purpose of this project was to allow youth to build on their knowledge regarding substances and guide them towards good decision-making. Based on project results, youth have expressed that the information covered helped them become well informed and would allow them to stay away from substances. Future steps may include an increase in promoting the workshops, which would help attract a higher number of attendees.

*Keywords:* Youth, Substance Use, Drugs

### **Agency & Community Served**

The Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department provides the community with a variety of services, programs, and facilities. For different populations of youth and adults to be a part of, such as sports, enrichment programs, and camps during the summer. For the Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department, it is important to keep the community safe and healthy. The department has plenty of locations within Watsonville. The Gene Hoularis and Waldo Rodriguez Youth Center is a place where middle school and high school students, ranging in age from 13 to 17, can have fun and participate in recreational activities. The youth who attend are Hispanic (218), White (12), and African American (1). “The City of Watsonville is committed to providing residents a high quality of life, including parks, playgrounds, libraries, and access to safe, clean open space (*Keeping Our Community Safe and Healthy | Watsonville, n.d.-b*)”. By allowing youth to become engaged in community activities through many programs like the after-school program, anti-gang activities, and recreational programs, it will help keep the youth and teens off the streets, out of trouble, and away from drugs and gangs (*Keeping Our Community Safe and Healthy | Watsonville, n.d.-b*). Citizens in the Watsonville community deserve appropriate access to safe spaces and recreation opportunities in order to live a healthy lifestyle.

### **Problem Definition**

In the state of California, drug rates among youth have been increasing rapidly when compared to other states in the United States. According to research from the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, teenagers in California are 24.46% more likely to have used drugs in the

past month than the average American teen. Of 12- to 17-year-olds, 314,000, or 10.37%, report using substances within the past month (Bustamante, 2022).

### **Contributing Factors**

#### **Peer Pressure**

Those with whom youth are surrounded may have an impact on the use of substances. As explained in the research from Karunaratne (2021), another reason that was stated by teenagers for why they started smoking was peer pressure. Youth have been offered cigarettes by friends, and in order to feel that acceptance, they will accept the cigarette. Since friends are offering the drugs, youth may be encouraged and under pressure to experiment with the various types of drugs.

#### **Parental Substance Use**

A child's actions may be greatly influenced by their parents. According to Lester et al. (2009), adolescent marijuana use was linked to parental marijuana use. Teenagers showed a higher probability of smoking marijuana when their parents used it actively. Those who have a family member who has developed substance abuse issues have a higher chance of developing personal substance abuse issues themselves. In research, it has been stated, "Children of parents with alcohol and drug use disorders (COPADs) suffer from physical, mental, and behavioral problems at higher rates than other children and are more likely to develop their own SUDs in adolescence" (*A Review of Recent Literature on the Impact of Parental. . . : Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, n.d.). When someone at home is engaged in drug use, young people observe, allowing them to feel encouraged to follow those similar actions.

#### **Lack of Information**

Youth are at increased risk of attempting to try new things when they lack the appropriate education. In research from Geleta (2021), "In the interviews conducted with the youth, it was identified that personal factors can possibly contribute to substance use. The main individual factors reported were a lack of knowledge and awareness about the effects of the substances." Early intervention regarding drug education will enhance the lives of plenty of youth; it is important to know where to seek help.

## **Consequences**

### **Incarceration**

The more youth engage in substance use, the higher the probability they have of becoming incarcerated. In research from Funk et al (2020), "Approximately 70% of arrested juveniles have had prior drug involvement, over half of those entering community supervision currently have a substance use problem". Substances can have a huge negative impact on the future of these young individuals. It has been found, "85% of the prison population has an active substance use disorder or were incarcerated for a crime involving drugs or drug use." (*Criminal Justice DrugFacts* | *National Institute on Drug Abuse*, 2023). The prison population has a strong connection to substance-related crime.

### **Poor Academic Performance**

Academic performance can be influenced in a poor manner due to substance use. According to *Get Smart About Drugs*, there is definitely a connection between teen substance misuse and academic performance. Teens who take drugs perform poorly academically. Teens who are using drugs tend to have lower grades. This results in drug use having a negative impact on academic learning because it impairs one's ability to process information, makes it difficult to concentrate, and causes issues with "working memory" (Malone, 2022). There is a connection



between youth substance use and how well a child is doing academically in school.

### **Drop Out**

When youth are utilizing substances, they have a higher probability of leaving school and dropping out, which can affect their overall education. In the research, it is explained how a significant amount of evidence indicates that substance abuse is a risk factor for school dropout (Pedersen et al., 2021). Those who use substances are most likely to have higher dropout rates compared to students who do not engage in drug use. According to the study, "teens in the 12th grade (16–18 years old) who dropped out of school before graduation are more likely than their peers to use cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit drugs." Illicit drug use among dropouts was higher than for those in school (31.4 percent vs. 18.2 percent) (*Get Smart About Drugs*, 2021).

### **Address Problem**

Organizing workshops to help young people understand the significance of drug use and its long-term consequences. By providing different sorts of slideshow presentations about how substances may impact one's life. The purpose of the project is to educate youth about the dangers of illegal drug use. Youth must become informed when it comes to their own decision-making. Allowing youth to become aware of this ongoing problem of drug addiction is essential. Helping them expand their knowledge and decreasing the rate of involvement. As such, they may have a better perspective on what to look out for when it comes to drugs..

**Problem Model:**

<b>CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:</b>	<b>PROBLEM:</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Pressure</li> </ul>	Drug Usage Rates on Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incarceration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental Substance Use</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor Academic Performance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop out</li> </ul>

**Project Implementation**

The youth took a presurvey about the different types of drugs that they are aware of. Through this survey, we gained a better understanding of what the youth already know. We covered new information that youth were not yet aware of. We had a total of three workshop sessions; all workshops took place at the Youth Center located in the gym. During the first session, we had a speaker from the Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA). He identified the two main substances that youth expressed through the survey that they were not fully aware of, which were heroin and methamphetamine. During the session, the speaker provided visuals such as; pictures, films, statistics, and stories. Once the presentation was done, the youth had the chance to ask any questions. For the second workshop, we had a sobriety test activity where youth engaged in similar activities as when under the influence. They interacted in a drill by utilizing "drunk goggles." There were a total of three stations. The final workshop was a substance awareness presentation, which covered information like identifying the difference between original and infused snacks, the effects of drugs, tips for staying away, and how to say no when offered drugs.

**Participants**

Those who were involved are the recreation specialists. He and the intern often communicated regarding setting times and dates for the workshops, as well as any changes or new ideas that had to be made during the process. We also had recreation leaders who helped ensure that youth were engaged and respectful in each session. We also had the PVPSA guest speaker, who introduced new substances to youth during the first session. Finally, the intern engaged in each of the sessions, presenting information and leading activities.

**Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to decrease the number of youth engaging in substance use by providing them with the most relevant information. The earlier that youth are spoken to about drug risk, the less likely they are to use substances. Education can allow youth to think about their actions and become well informed when making decisions. Supporting and educating individuals within the session will allow for the prevention of drug misuse.

**Project Justification**

Numerous young people have used drugs throughout history, which has had a severe effect on communities. Youth who participate in such activities suffer long-term effects. According to research, "drug education helps children and young people understand that all drugs, legal and illegal, have the potential to cause harm, and that the drug experience is because of many factors, including the person, the drug, and the environment (*Drug Education*, n.d.)." As youth become better informed, it allows them to make healthy personal choices. It has also been found that youth are more likely to use substances. In research from Geleta et al., "most young individuals began using drugs due to a lack of awareness."

**Expected Outcomes**

The expected outcome is for youth to be able to fully understand the impact of substances and to stay away. It is important that the youth build on the knowledge that will most definitely be gained from the workshop sessions. The ultimate goal is for drug use rates to decrease and for youth to be able to take on this information to have a successful future. Once all workshops are finalized, 60% of the youth will have a better understanding of different substances, tips on how to stay away, and how to make appropriate decisions. Expecting youth to increase their knowledge by 10%. Education is essential since many young people are exposed to strong influences.

**Assessment Plan**

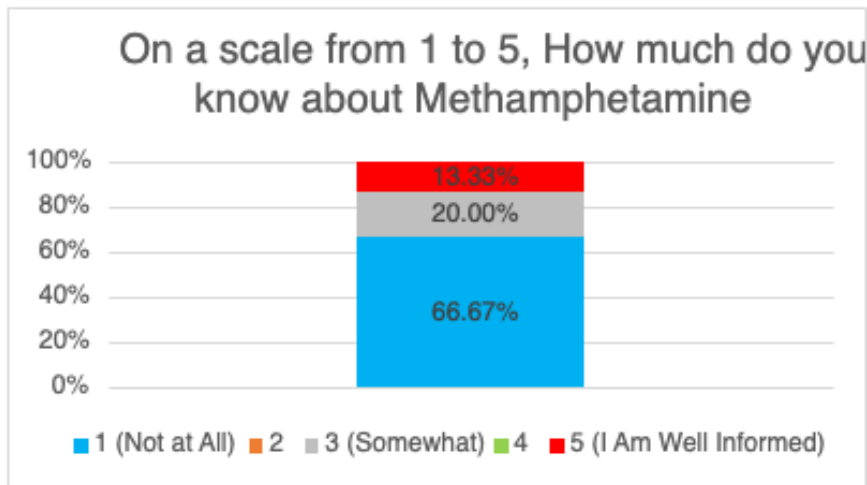
The expected outcome was measured through surveys. We had youth complete a presurvey and a postsurvey so we could have a better understanding of the impact the overall project had. Once the three sessions are finished, assess the expected outcomes and determine whether they received appropriate education during the sessions.

**Project Results**

The overall expected outcome of this project was for youth to become better aware of these substances. Youth to fully understand the negative consequences of engaging in drug use. Based on the knowledge they were able to gain, they will stay away from any substances. The expected outcomes can be determined based on the substance awareness workshops; there is a possibility that there was an improvement in knowledge when comparing both surveys. We can see a big difference in the methamphetamine and heroin percentages. Youth also expressed that the information covered was helpful and would allow them to stay away from such substances.

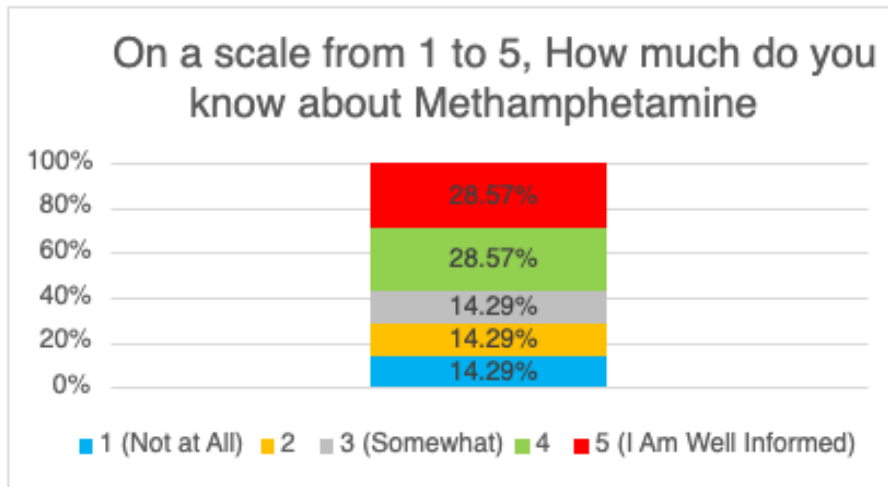
The method by which the data was collected was by surveying the youth. Through surveys, we were able to have a better understanding of what youth were able to take away from the workshop sessions and determine if we made progress towards the outcome that we were expecting. We initially wanted to have a better understanding of the substances that our youth were and were not yet aware of, as well as what they would like to get out of the workshop sessions. In doing so, we created a pre survey for participants to complete. Once all workshops were completed, we conducted a post-survey to measure the project outcome.

**Presurvey:**



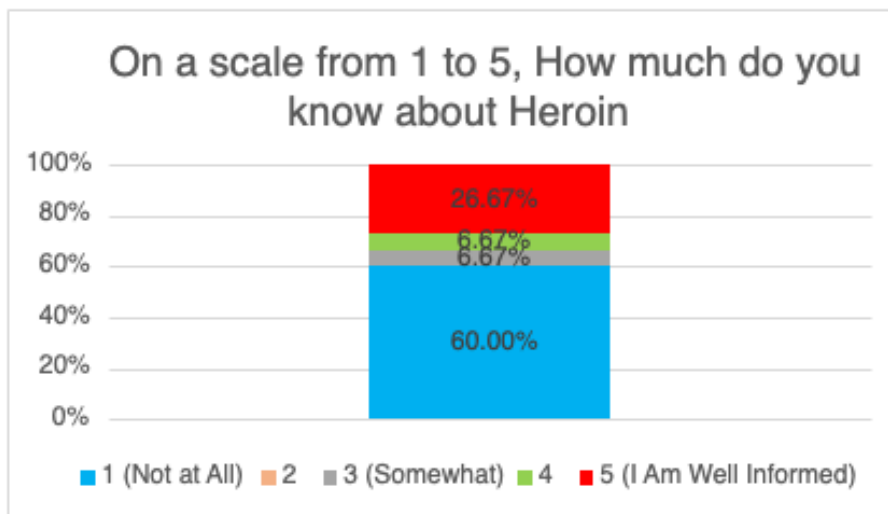
Youth were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you know about methamphetamine" We found that 66.67% of youth did not know any information about methamphetamine.

**Postsurvey:**



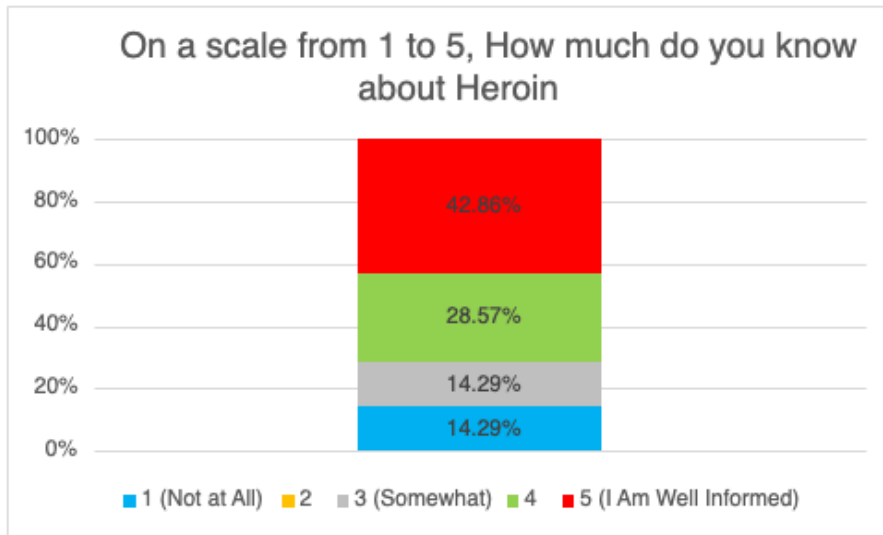
Youth were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you know about methamphetamine" We now found that 14.29% of youth did not know any information about methamphetamine. 28.57% of youth reported that they were well informed about methamphetamine; additionally, another 28.57% of the youth responded that they were near being well informed.

**Presurvey:**



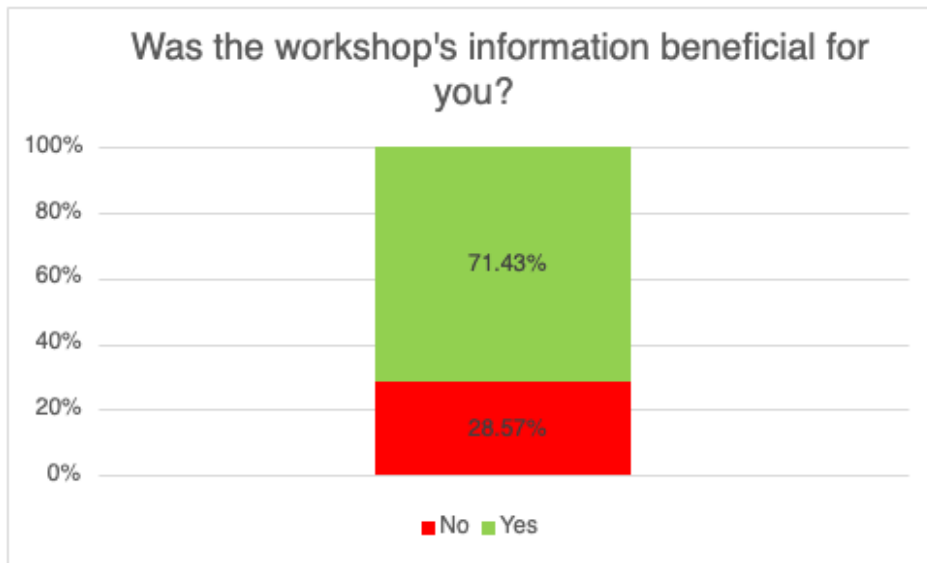
Youth were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you know about heroin" We found that 60% of youth did not know anything about heroin.

**Postsurvey:**

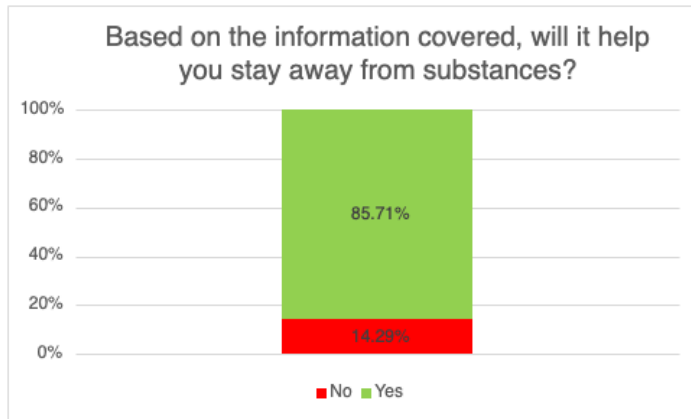


Youth were asked, "On a scale from 1 to 5, how much do you know about heroin" We now found that 14.29% of youth did not know anything about heroin. There was an increase, as now we have 42.86% of youth who are well informed about heroin.

**Postsurvey:**



Youth were asked “Was the workshop's information beneficial for you?” We found that 71% of youth did believe that the information covered during the different workshops was beneficial for them.

**Postsurvey:**

Youth were asked “Based on the information covered, will it help you stay away from substances?” We found that 85.71% of youth will be staying away from substances due to the information addressed.

The expected outcome was achieved as youth expressed during the survey that they became well informed about drugs so that when they are in the adult world, they have tips and ideas as to how to stay away from drugs and make appropriate decisions. The overall project did achieve the expected outcomes. What was expected from this project was for youth to walk away with a better understanding of the harm and impact drugs have. During the final survey, we did have some complications with some of the youth attendees. Hopefully, with the new knowledge they have gained, they will stay away from these substances.

**Conclusion & Recommendations for the agency**

When comparing the results from the two surveys, it's possible that the workshops helped increase knowledge. The percentages of heroin and methamphetamine have increased. As youth stated during the survey that they got well-informed about drugs so they have guidance and concepts when they encounter any situation regarding how to avoid using drugs and make the right decisions, I believe that the desired objective was achieved. Research has shown that this



project should be continued, as youth can truly benefit from receiving information about different kinds of substances. I would recommend that the agency do more promotion for each workshop session to motivate youth to come to the workshops. This will allow more attendees to be present.

Based on the pre-project surveys, I was able to learn that many youth lacked information regarding substances. With this project, we were able to better educate youth about different factors in substance use. For the Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department, it is essential to provide quality of life and a healthy lifestyle for the community members with different activities to keep them motivated and involved. Through these substance awareness workshops, youth were able to interact with different substance use awareness activities.

Some strengths of the project were: During the three workshops, youth participated by answering questions as the presenter asked them while he was presenting different questions to keep them engaged. Also, when the presentations were finalized, they would ask the presenter questions that they might have had about the overall information that was covered. By asking questions, it allowed the youth to have a clear understanding of anything that was shared during the presentation. Attendance was a challenge that I faced during the project. For the first workshop, I had a total of about 16 students; for the second and third workshops, there were about 6 students present. However, because it was a much smaller group, I felt that I was able to provide more one-on-one opportunities, meaning that we were able to answer more questions and engage with the students. Some advice I would give to future interns is to build strong relationships with the population they are serving within the agency.

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