

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE, ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAM

ESSAY - 4

COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY READING - Part 1

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

MODULE - 15

Chapter 1: Alcohol, Drugs and Addictions

Chapter 2: "Peer (Steer) Pressure"--By Leesa Byman

Chapter 1: Alcohol, Drugs and Addictions

Condensed from the BBC Educational Web page

www.bbc.co.uk/education

Chapter 1: Alcohol, Drugs and Addictions

Alcohol

Chemical name: Ethanol

Slang: Booze, drink, sauce, bevvy

Form: Beer, wine, spirits

Effects: Alcohol is a depressant, which works by slowing down parts of the brain. Although it enters the bloodstream within a few minutes, its effects last for several hours. As the alcohol begins to depress different parts of the brain, you might experience blurred vision, slurred speech and a loss of balance and coordination. Alcohol can act as both a relaxant – making you feel drowsy – and a stimulant, reducing self-consciousness and making you talkative and liable to do things you would not consider while sober.

Risks: Many people are able to drink casually without serious damage to their health – but many others may find themselves facing physical, emotional and financial problems as a result of a drinking habit they can't control. Even casual users are subject to the pain of hangovers – a result of irritation to your central nervous system from the night before. Mixing alcohol with other drugs is very dangerous and seriously increases the risk of a drug overdose. Regular consumption of large amounts of alcohol can lead to liver disease, ulcers and brain damage. The number of people who die as a result of alcohol is 50 times greater than the amount of deaths from all illegal drugs put together.

- The amount of alcohol in your body depends on many factors, including how much you have drunk, whether you have eaten, and what you have been drinking.
- Drinking too much alcohol can increase the risk of raised blood pressure, weight gain, accidents, liver damage, cancers of the mouth

and throat, digestive problems, problems in pregnancy, psychological and emotional problems.

- The recommended limits are 3-4 units a day for men and 2-3 units a day for women.

Alcohol: The Facts

Okay, so you've woken up and slowly the memories of the night before drift back.... You had ten pints too many, you were loud, you couldn't walk, you couldn't see, you insulted your mates who insulted you back ... you swore blind you'd never go anywhere near in a million years.

Now you've got a headache from hell, your stomach's about to explode and you're still wearing clothes covered in last night's vomit (but whose vomit is it?). Whatever – you still feel like throwing up some more....

And chances are you'll go through exactly the same thing again next weekend.

- Which statement is the most accurate?
 337. Alcohol is a depressant; it works by slowing down parts of the body. Although it enters the bloodstream slowly, its effects last for several hours. Alcohol depresses different parts of the brain, causing you to experience blurred vision, slurred speech, and a loss of balance and coordination.
 338. Alcohol affects everyone differently. For some it can act as a relaxant, making one feel drowsy. For others it acts as a stimulant, making them talkative and often making them do things they would not consider doing while sober.
 339. Mixing alcohol with other drugs is very dangerous and can lead to liver disease, ulcers and brain damage.

340. Drinking alcohol increases the risk of high blood pressure, obesity, traffic accidents, cancer, problems in pregnancy, family and marriage problems, and emotional turmoil.

So Why Do We Drink?

People drink for different reasons. Alcohol changes your mood and some people say it helps them to cope with stress. In the short term it makes you feel happy (although, in fact, alcohol is a depressant), and at the end of a long hot day, nothing hits the spot better than a cool beer or a glass of wine.

Drinking can be fun – alcohol is not called “the nation’s favorite drug” for nothing. Some people use a drink to become more sociable and confident, but too much can:

- Make you ill
- Give you a hangover
- Cost you a lot of money
- Cloud your judgment
- Encourage you to do things that are stupid or dangerous
- Act as a depressive
- Make you fat
- Lead to serious health problems and, in extreme cases, even death

How Does Alcohol Get You Drunk?

When you drink alcohol it quickly enters the bloodstream and spreads all through the body. It partially removes water from the parts of the brain that

deal with the way we think. It makes you relax and lose inhibitions – a few drinks can make it easy to meet and chat to people. And if you're out with friends you become chattier, more confident and convinced you are the funniest person on the planet.

Alcohol also affects the Central Nervous System, which controls many of your body's other functions - senses, speech and sense of pain. So the more you drink the more your speech will be slurred and the more your sight will go fuzzy.

At the same time, alcohol's diuretic effect draws water from all over the body, making you urinate more. When you drink alcohol, your body gets rid of more liquid than it takes in, so you end up dehydrated. This lack of water is what causes you to wake up with a throbbing headache.

So it's Not All Good News

Losing your inhibition, added to lack of coordination, can be a tricky combination. When you're really tanked up and think you're invincible, you're actually very vulnerable. It's easy to end up in situations where you could be in real danger – and not realize it.

And we're not just talking about falling into the road as you stagger home from the pub. On a typical Saturday night, you can be pretty sure that the emergency room at your local hospital will be full of people affected by alcohol in some way. Drink makes you feel more confident and up for trying anything while your friends egg you on – things you'd never do normally if you hadn't had a drink beforehand.

A recent survey of 1,000 women aged 16 to 34 found that half the respondents had got so drunk they do not know how they got home, and a third had ended up having unprotected sex, putting them at risk of HIV and other STD's.

And though you'd definitely never, ever drink and drive, are you absolutely sure that your friend, driving you home, shares your view? The more you've drunk, the less likely you'll be to check – or care.

Even if you do not decide to walk home on your own (which a lot of people do with a few pints inside them, convinced nothing will happen) and get a cab, how do you know you're getting into a safe car if you're too drunk to check?

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

- 341. Drinking 3-4 units a day for men and 2-3 units a day for women is the recommended intake for good health.
- 342. Alcohol changes your mood, and it is recommended to help cope with stress. In the short term it makes you feel happy, although, in fact, alcohol is a depressant. At the end of a long hot day, nothing hits the spot better than a cool beer or a glass of wine.
- 343. A few drinks, especially at a party, are recommended. This is particularly true if you are shy, because it makes it easier to meet and chat to others. It will even make others think you are very funny and witty.
- 344. Alcohol can cause real kidney damage because of its diuretic effect. It draws water from all over the body, causing dehydration. This is the main reason for the hangover the next morning. So when you drink alcohol, it's best to increase the amount of water intake.

Alcohol: How Much Is Too Much?

The recommended weekly alcohol limit is:

- **28 units for men** and
- **21 units for women.**

One unit of alcohol is roughly equivalent to half a pint of normal strength beer, or a small glass of wine, or one pub measure of spirits. Check the bottle or can to see how many units there are in it. All this should be spread out over the week, so do not kid yourself that sticking to the limit but drinking it all in one sitting is somehow being healthy!

Similarly, if you regularly go over this amount, then you should think about cutting down your alcohol intake. Apart from all the ways you can get into trouble when you're drunk, your body will suffer long term if you put too much alcohol in it. Your liver, stomach, throat, kidneys and heart can all suffer from long-term alcohol use (or abuse).

Binge drinking (downing twice the recommended daily intake in one session) is a growing problem, and according to a survey by Communities that Care, over a quarter of 15- and 16-year-olds (male and female) binge three or more times a month.

We know the health risks, but it still does not stop us. Why? The experts say there are two reasons:

- The British attitude toward booze is that, because it's a forbidden fruit when we're young, we associate it with being "grown up," cool or rebellious. We carry that belief with us even when we're legally old enough to drink.

- British pub opening hours give Brits a desperate need to cram in as much as they can before being turned out just after 11 p.m.

The government hopes it has the solution. In 2003, they're trying to push through new legislation that allows pubs, clubs and bars to open 24 hours a day. The longer licensing hours, they believe, should allow us to drink at a more leisurely pace and reduce binge drinking.

Regularly Overdoing It

Going over the recommended limit occasionally does not mean you are an alcoholic or that you have a drinking problem.

But if you find it hard or impossible to stick to the recommended level, if you're drinking too much too often, or if you regularly feel you really **need** a drink, that is when you should think about asking for help.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
- Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Answering "yes" to two or more of these questions means that you may have an alcohol-related problem and that you should cut down. Your drinking could start to control you rather than the other way around.

Drinking

Alcoholism is a destructive force. It can cause unpredictable and extreme behavior, even lying, mood swings and violence. If someone close to you is drinking to excess, here's how to get a handle on it.

- You are not to blame
- You can't control their drinking or cure them
- Only an alcoholic can beat his or her addiction
- When they're ready to quit, be ready to help

- Which statement is the most accurate?

345. A survey of over 1,000 women aged 18 to 34 found that over half of them got so drunk they did not know how they got home, and ended up having unprotected sex – putting them at risk for HIV and other STDs.

346. Your body will suffer long-term if you put too much alcohol in it. Your liver, stomach, throat, kidneys and heart can all suffer from going over the recommended limit, even occasionally, as it is dangerous and means you are an alcoholic or that you have a drinking problem.

347. If you regularly feel that you really **need** a drink, then that is when you should ask the following questions in order to see if you are an alcoholic. Answering “yes” to one or more of them means that you may have an alcohol-related problem and that you should cut down:

- Have you ever felt that you should cut down on your drinking?
- Are you annoyed when others criticize your drinking?
- Do you feel guilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

348. Alcoholism can destroy you. It can cause extreme behavior, lying, mood swings and violence towards the family.

The Full Measure

More than 2 million families are affected by someone with a drinking problem.

- Alcohol is a depressant drug. Drink when you're down and you'll only feel worse.
- Men who drink more than one-and-a-half to two pints of lager/beer or three glasses of wine a day could be heading for trouble with their health.
- Women shouldn't go beyond a pint or a couple of glasses of wine a day.

Alcohol: Addicted?

Addicted To Drinking

If someone's addicted to something it's not just a mental craving; they often have physical cravings for it and sometimes need a drug or drink just to feel normal. Addiction can take over a person's life and their illness can cause all kinds of problems for those who care about them.

Even if someone stops taking the drug they're addicted to they're not going to feel normal without it.

People who are scared of facing the problem could put off trying to quit, or deny the problem exists in the first place – to others as well as to themselves.

Sometimes they have to have had enough of the effects and the consequences of their addiction, to reach a personal “rock bottom,” before they’re ready to do something about it.

Alcohol Concern estimates that one in every 13 people is dependent on alcohol. Only you will know if you are – and only you can decide how to face up to it. But you do not have to do it alone.

I Want To Stop

One of the most important and difficult steps is admitting there is a problem. Heavy drinkers can go to extremes to hide their drinking. Hiding bottles where they’re not likely to be found, filling other “innocent” bottles with drink, lying to friends and family about the amount they drink – the lying and deception that can go with alcohol addiction is destructive to the drinker and those around them. And that is all on top of the physical and mental stress of having a permanent drunk at home. Add to that the cost financially, besides all the other costs.

Recovering alcoholics say that they approach each day without drinking, one day at a time. It can be really hard work sticking to the decision, which is why many of the self-help groups and support organizations have meetings in which their members meet and encourage each other to stick with it.

If you want to avoid drinking:

- You could change your route so you do not pass an off-license or pub if that is too tempting.
- Try avoiding places where alcohol will be offered to you.

- You could decide not to take money out with you so you can't buy alcohol.

If you're likely to slip, try telling your friends what you're doing – and why. It's easier to deal with a problem when it's shared, and if they're true mates they'll understand and want to help.

Heavy Drinking's Toll

A team of doctors in Denmark concluded that the excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages by men under the age of 35 causes more brain damage than damage to the liver. It was found that 60 percent of addictive drinkers between the ages of 21 and 35 showed signs of serious mental damage, compared to 20 percent who suffered liver damage. The tests showed that the brain-damaged alcoholics were forgetful, became mentally fatigued easily, had difficulty in concentrating and reasoning, and failed to learn as quickly as others.

Babies Pay Price

Eighteenth-century British doctors reported that alcoholism in mothers led to "weak, feeble and distempered children." Modern medicine confirms that alcoholic mothers are far more likely to have children with birth defects, including mental and physical retardation. One investigation revealed that of eight children with birth defects, all were born to alcoholic mothers. In another study, of nine babies born to mothers who were heavy drinkers, only one baby was normal.

Alcohol Epidemic among Youths

The number one drug problem among young people today appears to be alcoholism. In England, the *Daily Mirror* says: "Too much pocket money is turning Britain's teenagers into alcoholics." In the United States, a national survey found that 60 percent of 12th graders had been drunk one or more times in a year, 30 percent had been drunk four or more times, and 10 percent about once a week. Dr. William Rader of California stated:

"Alcoholism is a terminal disease. It affects every organ in the body... if a person continues to drink in excessive amounts, he will die." And he added: "A teenager can become an alcoholic in 10 months, while it might take 10 years for an adult."

□ Which statement is most accurate?

349. Alcoholism can cause unpredictable and extreme behavior. We must keep in mind that if a family member has a drinking problem, you are not to blame; but you certainly can control their drinking or even cure them.
350. Health wise, men and women who drink more than a half a pint to two pints of lager/beer or three glasses of wine a day are heading for trouble.
351. The only way to help an alcoholic is to let them have enough of the consequences of their addiction to reach a personal "rock bottom"; only then will they change.
352. Alcohol Concern estimates that one in 13 people 13 years and older is dependent on alcohol. Only you will know if you are among them and only you can decide how to face up to it; but you do not have to do it alone.

Guiding the Alcoholic to Help

Although no one can force an alcoholic to go for treatment, you can make him want help. Two approaches that have worked well are: (1) allow the person to experience the consequences of their drinking and (2) confront them directly with the facts about their drinking. Even at their worst, the alcoholic can accept some portion of reality *if it is presented to them in a receivable way!*

Now, what does it mean to let the alcoholic feel the consequences of their drinking? It does *not* mean punishing him, but it does call for being firm. Dr. Winnie Sprenkle, director of counseling at a successful alcoholism treatment center, made the following recommendations:

- *What could she do when her husband passed out on the floor?* “In general, It’s very important for the family not to mask over the problem so that the alcoholic does not know what’s gone on. So if he passes out on the floor and wakes up the next morning in his pajamas in bed, he will never know what happened.” Hence, depending on the circumstances, she could let him sleep it off right there. The next morning, as he wakes up on the floor, he would be presented with the reality of his situation.
- *When he can’t recall his behavior of the previous day, what could she do?* “Be honest with him, but not in an angry way. “Here’s what happened last night and here’s the effect it had on me.” Even though he may get angry, she is helping him to see that his behavior does not occur in healthy families.

- *What about isolating herself?* “I think the most important thing is for the family simply to go about their business of living in the healthiest way they can. The alcoholic gets confronted more and more with how big the contrast is between him and the rest of the family. Often that will result in his finally saying, “Hey, I’ve got a problem and I need to get some help!” Thus, if she socializes without him, she could kindly let him know that she wished he could join her, but that his drinking problem prevents it.

What about the second approach – confrontation? In *I’ll Quit Tomorrow*, Vernon E. Johnson recommends the following:

“Those confronting the alcoholic should be the most meaningful persons in his or her life. With the help of a qualified counselor, each one prepares a list describing in unsparing detail the alcoholic’s behavior. A date and time are set when the alcoholic is likely to be sober. Then, in a way that reflects their deep concern, each one reads aloud his list. Though the alcoholic may at first be defensive, firmly continue. The goal is to enable the alcoholic to accept enough reality to see the need to get help.”

Q&A: Alcohol

Here are some of the most common alcohol-related questions & answers.

How do I know if my drink has been spiked?

It’s very hard to tell if your drink has been spiked. The trick is to try and avoid it happening at all. Never leave your drink unattended, and do not accept drinks from anyone you’ve not met before and do not trust. Do not share or swap drinks and think carefully before agreeing to leave a pub or club with someone you’ve just met. Finally, if you start to feel woozy or really drunk

after just a couple of drinks, get help from a friend or someone from the bar's management. Get yourself to a place of safety as soon as you can.

What's the drink-and-drive limit?

It's very hard to give an exact guide for how much a person can drink before they go above the legal limit for driving. The legal limit in the United Kingdom is 80 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 milliliters of blood in the body – and it's this which is tested in a "breathalyzer" test, not how many pints of beer or glasses of wine you've had. The ratio of alcohol to blood varies a lot from person to person depending on your body size, your sex and the amount of food in your digestive system. The only safe way to ensure you're not over the drink-drive limit is not to drink any alcohol at all before you drive.

How long does it take for alcohol to clear from your system?

It depends on how much you've had to drink and how much alcohol was in the drinks you had. Your liver is the organ that breaks down the alcohol, and it normally deals with this at around the rate of one unit every hour.

Generally, one unit of alcohol can be found in half a pint of normal beer or a small glass of wine. So if you've had 3 pints of beer, it'll take your body 6 hours to metabolize it. If you've drunk a lot in one evening, remember that you can still be over the drink-drive limit the next morning.

Why do some drinks give you worse hangovers than others?

A hangover is caused by dehydration, low blood sugar and poisoning. The poisoning is caused by congeners (chemical compounds produced during fermentation and maturation that are in all alcoholic drinks). However, dark drinks such as red wine, whisky and brandy generally have more congeners.

□ Which statement is the most accurate?

353. A team of doctors in Denmark concluded that the excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages by women over the age of 35 causes more brain damage than damage to the liver. It was found that 60 percent of addictive drinkers between the ages of 21 and 35 showed signs of serious mental damage.
354. Eighteenth-century British doctors reported that alcoholism in mothers led to “weak, feeble and distempered children.” Modern medicine confirms that mothers with birth defects are far more likely to have children with alcoholic tendencies, including mental and physical retardation. Another investigation revealed that of eight children with birth defects, all were born to alcoholic mothers.
355. Two approaches that have worked well to help alcoholics seek help are: (1) punish the person by allowing the person to hit “rock bottom”; (2) confront them directly with the facts about their drinking. Even at their worst, the alcoholic can accept some portion of reality *if it is presented to them in a receivable way!*
356. The loving way to help an alcoholic is for the family and friends to mask over the problem so that the alcoholic does not know what is going on. For example, if they have passed out on the floor do not leave them there.
357. Your ultimate goal is to enable the alcoholic to accept enough reality to see the need to get help.

MODULE - 16

Cocaine – and other Dangerous Drugs

Plant name: Coca plant

Slang: Cocaine – coke, Charlie, snow, C.

Crack: rocks, wash, stones, base

Form: A white powder that can be snorted or injected. Crack is a form of cocaine that comes as crystals of various sizes from a couple of millimeters to a centimeter cubed that can be smoked.

Risks: In the long term, there is evidence that persistent cocaine use can affect your mental health – from mild depression to “cocaine psychosis,” with symptoms similar to schizophrenia. Cocaine can be addictive and withdrawal symptoms include severe anxiety, agitation and restlessness. Crack can be more addictive than cocaine, with more extreme effects and greater temptation to want more once the effects wear off. Snorting coke regularly can permanently damage the tissue inside your nose. Cocaine use can cause heart problems and chest pains. It is possible to die of a cocaine overdose, though most deaths are caused by heart failure, stroke or from a combination of effects including polydrug use.

- Excessive doses of cocaine can produce stupor and coma, even death from respiratory failure
- Excessive doses of cocaine can lead to extreme anxiety, paranoia and even hallucinations
- Drug use is thought to have risen by 30% in the last 5 years

Ecstasy

Chemical name: MDMA (though many tablets contain other ecstasy-type drugs like MDEA, MDA, MBDB)

Slang: E, XTC, disco biscuits, echoes, hug drug, burgers, pills – or named after logos which are pressed into the tablets, such as doves, Mitsubishis, Crowns or smiley faces.

Form: Ecstasy comes as tablets of different shapes, sizes and colors (but often white), which are swallowed.

Risks: Can leave users feeling tired and depressed for days after. There is a risk of overheating and dehydration if users dance energetically without taking breaks or drinking enough fluids (users should sip about a pint of non-alcoholic fluid such as fruit juice, sports drinks or water every hour). Use has been linked to liver and kidney problems. Some experts are concerned that use of ecstasy can lead to selective damage to nerve endings in the brain.

If you suffer from cystitis or thrush, it could be heightened by dehydration caused by using ecstasy. Ecstasy can be all sorts of substances and known by all sorts of names. Whatever it's called, the same applies: **you do not know what you're taking.**

Gases, Glues & Aerosols

Chemical name: Various solvents and volatile substances

Slang: Sniffers, doing gas, biffing

Form: Gas lighter refills, aerosols containing products such as hairspray, deodorants and air fresheners, tins or tubes of glue, some paints, thinners and correcting fluids

Risks: It's important to remember that this form of drug abuse can cause instant death due to heart failure or asphyxiation, while long-term effects include damage to the heart, brain, liver and kidneys.

GHB

Chemical name: Gammahydroxybutyrate

Slang: GHB, liquid ecstasy, liquid x, fantasy

Form: A colorless liquid sold in small bottles or capsules. The liquid is measured out in capsules and then swallowed.

Risks: Excessive hits could lead to sickness, stiff muscles, fits and even collapse. If incorrectly produced, can badly burn the mouth. It is very dangerous and can be fatal when mixed with other depressants such as alcohol or tranquillizers. The long-term effects are not yet fully known.

Heroin

Chemical name: Diamorphine

Slang: Smack, brown, horse, dragon, gear, junk, H, jack, scag

Form: A white or brown powder you can snort, smoke, swallow or inject

Effects: Heroin is a powerful painkiller, which depresses the nervous system and prevents the brain and body from feeling all sorts of pain.

Risks: Its highly addictive and long-term effects include a loss of sex drive, loss of energy and a lack of lust for life. Injection carries many life-threatening risks, including the risk of overdosing and transmission of HIV and other

infections. Addiction can lead to the person needing more and more to get high and to prevent them from feeling ill due to withdrawal symptoms similar to that of flu. Many who are addicted tend to lead chaotic lives that revolve around obtaining the drug and various ways of getting money to buy it. Methadone can often be prescribed by doctors to help users reduce the amount of heroin they are using. This, too, is an addictive drug and can also kill, even at moderate doses.

Which statement is most accurate?

358. Today there is more and more evidence that persistent cocaine use can affect your mental health – from depression to “cocaine psychosis,” with symptoms similar to schizophrenia. Cocaine is addictive and withdrawal symptoms include severe anxiety, agitation and restlessness. Crack is not as addictive as cocaine, but it has more extreme effects and carries a greater temptation to want more once the effects wear off.
359. The use of drugs has risen by some 30% in the last five years. Cocaine can lead to extreme anxiety, paranoia and even hallucinations.
360. Ecstasy leaves the users feeling tired and depressed for days after. There is a risk of overeating and dehydration if users dance energetically without taking breaks or drinking enough fluids (users should sip about a pint of beer or water every hour). Use has been linked to liver and kidney problems. Some experts are concerned that the use of ecstasy can lead to selective damage to nerve endings in the brain.
361. If someone is going to use drugs, Heroin is a safe choice because it is a powerful painkiller and therefore used in hospitals. It depresses the nervous system and prevents the brain and body from feeling all sorts of pain. Small doses give the user a sense of warmth and well-being. Larger doses can make them drowsy, content, feeling safe and relaxed.

Drugs

Addiction: facts

Different drugs work in different ways. You understand that the effects depend on the amount you're doing, where you are and how you're feeling. It still does not mean you're too smart to get hooked. Knowing the facts just means you're aware of the risks involved.

- Physically addictive drugs like tranquilizers, alcohol, sleeping pills and heroin work by changing the body's chemistry.
- As people get used to the drug, they need to take more to get the effect they want – increasing the overdose risk.
- Most people do not realize there is a problem until they're addicted.
- Psychological addiction is a risk with all drugs.
- If drugs appeal as a form of escapism, then dependency is a risk.
- Some people are more vulnerable to a mental addiction than others.
- You can become addicted to any drug that affects your mood (e.g., cannabis).

Addiction: Busted

Coming off physically addictive drugs or “withdrawing” can be very tough. It may even be life threatening in chronic addictions to alcohol or sleeping pills.

Depression is normal for those coming off any drug and can be intense with crack and cocaine.

- The body may react badly for a few days as the muscles and central nervous system get used to going without the drug.

- Symptoms include cramps, sickness, shivers, sweats, chills, headaches and goose bumps, which is why it's often called "cold turkey."
- Heroin suppresses the production of the body's natural painkillers, endorphins. "Cold turkey" is the vacuum before these endorphins resume production.

Fit for What?

Exercise boosts stress-relieving brain chemicals called endorphins. Some find the buzz hard to beat, but overtraining could do more harm than good.

Excess Effects:

- Muscular damage and heart problems
- A weakened immune system, exposing one to infection

Ideally, aim for 20-60 minutes of aerobic exercise at least three times a week.

If you feel the need to do more, check with an expert at your local sports centre or gym.

MODULE - 17

OTHER ADDICTIONS

Internet Junkies

Ten percent of us regularly use the Internet, but some of us find it hard to switch off.

Q: What's an online addict?

A: Someone driven to go online rather than to do anything else.

For many, logging on is a way of escaping real issues that might be hard to handle.

Q: Like my soaring phone bill?

A: Precisely

Q: So how do I kick the addiction?

A: Limit your online time. Sort out the problems the Internet helps you forget.

Do not cut off your friends. Enjoy time offline.

Game Heads

Do you:

- Get restless away from the console?
- Mostly play on your own?
- Go for personal bests?
- Drift into a screen trance?

Answered yes to two or more?

- Do not start up a new game – call up a friend.
- It may seem easier talking to your PC than to people, but interacting with the real world can be more rewarding.
- Which statement is the most accurate?

362. The body gets used to addictive drugs like tranquillizers, alcohol, sleeping pills and heroin; therefore, you need to take more to get the effect you want – increasing the overdose risk. Most people realize there is a problem before they're addicted.
363. Depression is normal when you're coming off any drug, and it can be intense with crack and cocaine. Other symptoms include cramps, sickness, shivers, sweats, chills, headaches and goose bumps, which is why it's often called "cold turkey." Your brain is reacting to the absence of the drug, plus missing its natural endorphins.
364. Traces of cannabis will usually stay in a person's system for about six or seven hours. However, if you use it a lot or have a lot in one session, it stays in the system even longer. The reason for this is because it lodges itself in the fat cells of the body, in the brain, the liver, and the kidneys.
365. Ecstasy can generally be detected, less than 1% after two hours.
366. For people who take more than one kind of drug, they should have someone they really trust right nearby – just in case it goes wrong (which it rarely does).

SOURCE OF MATERIAL UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onelife/health/drugs/cocaine.shtml>

Chapter 2: "Peer (Steer) Pressure" – By Leesa Byman

Introduction

As children grow and develop, involvement with their peers grows. They begin to question the guidance from their parents and find it comforting to discuss things with others their own age. Just mention the word peer pressure and many parents shudder, a response resulting from the knowledge of how detrimental it can be. However peer pressure can also be a positive influence. This essay will discuss both how peer pressure

negatively influences North American children in the learning environment and, as well, the positive effect it can have.

Negative Impact

Most parents want their children to get a university degree. And yet only about 1 in 4 children do. Parents want their children to behave in school and yet in a recent survey of 6500 kids, only 1 in 4 said they felt behaving well in school was important. Why the discrepancy? The answer is negative peer pressure.

A lot of research has been done to show that peer influence has a greater impact on adolescent behavior than any other factor. This is logical considering the amount of time teens spend with their friends – far more than with family members. Peer pressure plays an exceptional role in children's academic achievement. However, all too often this pressure is felt in a negative way in the child's life.

Peer pressure seems to affect children with low esteem to a greater degree than children with a healthy self-image. If a child has a strong desire to fit in and to be liked by everyone, he may go along with activities that go against what he knows and has been taught is right.

Peer pressure can lead to experimentation with drugs, performing poorly, skipping school or even criminal behavior.

Sadly, "some literature suggests that there is a cultural pattern within the African-American and Latino communities whereby students disparage academic achievement because it is perceived as 'selling out' or 'acting white.' This would suggest children in this culture are often ostracized for conforming to the educational system. It is felt that anyone trying to get good

grades, participate in other activities or even speak Standard English is betraying his cultural heritage. This issue is particularly troubling since it may well explain the differences in academic and career achievement between whites and minorities.”¹ In fact, among fourth-grade African-American students, 35.8% of them agreed with the statement: “My friends make fun of people who try to do well in school.” Of the eighth graders, 23.3% answered positively. Of the Hispanic children 28.8% of fourth graders and 29.4% of eighth graders answered yes.

By the time students reach their teens, their friends may actually define how they will perform in school. Studying isn’t “cool” to many students, neither is participation in sports. A recent Heritage Foundation study showed that negative peer pressure was associated with an 8.5 percent lower test score. Typically peer pressure motivates a student to stay in school because our culture disapproves of failure. But even if peers frown on failure, they do not encourage full effort and high achievement. “If asked whether they would prefer to be called smart or hard-working, students will choose smart almost every time. Why? Because they believe that hard-working students risk being considered either excessively ambitious or of limited ability – both of which they would find embarrassing.”² “Gifted students ‘dumb-down’ as they make the choice between being academic and just ‘fitting in.’”³

Positive Peer Pressure

“A healthy part of every child’s development is involvement with their peers. This is especially true during adolescence as teenagers develop a sense of independence from their parents.”⁴ Even though peer pressure often has negative connotations and effects, it also has the potential for being a

strong positive influence. Peers are crucial in helping adolescents make a successful transition from child to adult. “Peers can and do act as positive role models. Peers can and do demonstrate appropriate social behaviors. Peers often listen to, accept, and understand the frustrations, challenges, and concerns associated with being a teenager.”⁵ Even though the family circle usually satisfies the emotional needs of children, peers provide different and unique opportunities to meet these needs. They provide the teen with an opportunity to feel capable, to belong to a collective outside the family, to be respected and to have fun. “The peer group encourages autonomy, mutuality, and experimentation with self-guided roles. While many families assist teens to find out who they really are and to help teens feel proud and confident in their unique traits, backgrounds, and abilities, the peer group may often be more accepting of the feelings, thoughts, and actions associated with this search for self-identity.”⁶

Positive peer pressure can be experienced when children compliment each other, support each other in their endeavors, involve each other in activities, stick up for one another, and encourage participation in extra-curricular activities. Peers can teach the lessons of friendship better than parents can, since someone who selfishly always wants their own way will be left without any friends.

Another benefit of peer pressure is that it “helps a child to clarify his beliefs. Peers provide a backdrop for the values that a youngster learns at home. Even the most sheltered, well-brought up child must take his values out into the real world and test them with his friends. Do his buddies share the same beliefs about family, school and personal responsibility? Can he

maintain his beliefs without losing his friends? If not, why? It's this kind of questioning that will make the values learned at home real and enduring."⁷

The old saying "birds of a feather flock together" is often true with peer groups. Young people usually gravitate to others who have had a similar upbringing, who have similar beliefs or whose parents have similar expectations. Thus peer pressure exerts a positive influence as the group works together to stay within boundaries they all accept as reasonable. They thus look out for and protect one another.

Therefore, when an adolescent's social circle promotes success in school, peer pressure can be used in a positive way.

Positive peer influence has been harnessed in many schools in North America with the inception of "peer mediators." The concept is that other students are better equipped to know what causes students problems and how best to resolve them. "As mediators, the students' primary duties are to listen and ask questions that will help classmates resolve their own problems, not to intervene during fights. After a brawl or disagreement occurs, two mediators meet with the students involved in the conflict. They are allowed to mediate all conflicts except those dealing with substance abuse and sexual harassment."⁸ The program chooses teens that have gone through some tough times themselves. This adds validity to the other students. One teacher commented: "This age group is a lot more receptive to other kids than they are to us."⁹

Conclusion

Basically, the difference between negative and positive peer pressure is the outcome. Negative peer pressure is strong in school, making high achievement an unpopular thing for many teens. Conversely, children whose friends promote learning and success will certainly perform better. Peer pressure can then be seen as a positive influence in their life. Parents, then, need to work hard to “replace negative influence with this “steer pressure.”¹⁰

□ **Which statement is the most accurate?**

367. Basically, the difference between negative and positive peer pressure is the outcome. Positive peer pressure is strong in school, making high achievement an unpopular thing for many teens.
368. Most parents want their children to get a university degree, yet only about 1 in 4 children do. Parents want their children to behave in school and yet, in one recent survey of 6500 kids, only 1 in 4 said they felt behaving well in school was necessary – because of positive peer pressure.
369. Peer pressure seems to affect children with good self-esteem to a greater degree than children who are healthy. If a child has a strong desire to fit in and to be liked by everyone, he may go along with activities that go against what he knows and has been taught is right.
370. Young people usually gravitate toward others who have had a similar upbringing, who have similar beliefs or whose parents have similar expectations. Thus, peer pressure exerts a negative influence as the group tries to stay within boundaries they all accept as reasonable. They thus look out for and protect one another.
371. A positive peer pressure can be experienced when children encourage each other, involve each other in activities, stick up for one another, and encourage participation in extracurricular activities.

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