

# SPEED TRAP: FIGHTING A DEADLY DRUG

## *Getting Help and Staying Clean*

### **Further Research**

To learn more about the work and programs of the Canadian Assembly of Narcotics Anonymous, consider visiting [www.cana-acna.org/new/main.html](http://www.cana-acna.org/new/main.html).

There is no single way to treat a drug problem. How the problem is treated depends on the individual. What program is recommended for substance abusers depends on their age, the drugs they use, how much they use, whether they have a stable home environment, whether they are employed, and how their substance abuse is affecting their lives. Assessment and referral are usually the first steps for someone with a substance abuse problem. Substance abusers are interviewed about their problem, and then a recommendation is made for a treatment program best suited to their needs.

### **Detoxification**

Addicts' bodies adapt to a drug-free state while they stay at a detox centre and refrain from any drugs for several days. Detoxification sometimes requires medical supervision, but most centres follow a non-medical model. Once the addicts are drug-free, they are encouraged by detox staff to seek further help such as a treatment program or a self-help group.

### **Self-Help Groups**

The self-help group Narcotics Anonymous is based on what's called a 12-step program. The steps include admitting you're addicted, and putting yourself in the hands of a higher power to help you abstain from using drugs. The goal in self-help groups is abstinence, never to use drugs again. There are also self-help or mutual support groups for family members and friends who are having problems because of someone else's drug use. Self-help groups are often run by volunteers and recovered substance abusers.

### **Professional Help**

In concert with traditional treatment, a growing number of substance abuse programs also screen for and provide services for mental health and gambling problems. Outpatient care is one option available for receiving professional help. Outpatient programs can range from having the substance abuser attend a treatment centre for eight hours a day for five days a week, to one or two hours of counselling each week. Such programs are a good choice if the problems aren't severe, if the person needs support in quitting the addiction, and if the person can schedule other commitments around the program.

Inpatient care is another option available for receiving professional help. This involves having a substance abuser living at a treatment centre for several weeks or several months. Inpatient care is often recommended if outpatient treatment has not helped, or if the substance abuser needs to be away from family or workplace in order to focus on treatment.

Treatment techniques include drug education, individual problem-solving counselling, group therapy, or training (for example, stress management, assertiveness, and behavioural self-control therapy) to teach a substance abuser how to lead a healthier, more balanced life. Inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities offer follow-up services to help maintain changes and support a healthy lifestyle. This follow-up treatment ranges from regular meetings with a professional to weekly sessions with a support group. The length of the follow-up treatment depends on the substance abuser being treated.

Not everyone in treatment succeeds fully, but approximately one-half to two-thirds of the people who enter a treatment program show some improvement at its conclusion. This improvement can range from reducing drug use to quitting altogether.

### **Possible Signs of Substance Abuse**

- an unexplained lack of interest and attention in work
- frequent memory lapses or lack of concentration
- a loss of interest in hobbies and other regular activities
- money missing frequently from purses, other household areas, or bank accounts
- withdrawal from family life
- rapid changes in emotions, or emotions that seem too intense, uncontrolled or unrelated to the moment
- being defensive or deceptive when explaining unusual behavior
- being evasive about friends, about who they are, and what they do

### **Contact**

Drug treatment in Canada is generally the responsibility of the provinces and

territories. The federal government provides treatment for populations under federal jurisdiction (i.e., Aboriginal populations, federal offenders, and military personnel). Each province and territory has its own directory of local treatment centres. Links to this information can be found on provincial and municipal government Web sites. Addictions Organizations in Canada ([www.ccsa.ca/index.asp?ID=84](http://www.ccsa.ca/index.asp?ID=84)) is a database that lists federal, provincial, and territorial government departments or agencies involved with addiction issues and treatment providers. The Internet is a good source for information on treatment and support centres. Phone numbers and addresses can be found in local public phone books. Identifying and treating a problem as early as possible, and matching the person to the right program, vastly improves the odds for effective treatment.

Adapted from Centre for Addiction and Mental Health <http://sano.camh.net/infoline/tp72.htm> and Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse [www.ccsa.ca/index.asp?ID=22&menu=&page=87&full=yes](http://www.ccsa.ca/index.asp?ID=22&menu=&page=87&full=yes)

### **Analysis**

1. What is usually the first step in treatment for a substance abuser?

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2. What is detoxification?

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3. What is Narcotics Anonymous?

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4. What is the goal of Narcotics Anonymous?

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5. For what do substance abuse programs screen their patients?

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6. Why would they do this?

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7. Briefly describe the difference between inpatient and outpatient care.

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8. List the treatment techniques available for substance abusers.

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9. Does everyone in treatment succeed? Explain your answer.

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10. How do substance abusers or people concerned about a substance abuser find help for the abusers and/or themselves?

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11. Assess the value or importance of treatment centres. Do you think the three levels of government should continue to increase the amount of money used to offer treatment to substance abusers and/or their families? Explain your answer.

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### Further Research

1. a) Locate the treatment centre for substance abusers closest to where you live by using a local government Web site, the Canada-wide Addictions Organizations Database, or your local phone book.
  - b) What is its name?
  - c) What is the address?
  - d) What is the phone number?
2. Methadone substitution is also becoming increasingly available to people who are addicted to narcotics. What is methadone? How does it work?
3. Describe the process of detoxification. Include the physical and emotional effects of this on a substance abuser as well as the detoxification procedure from a treatment worker's point of view.

### Extension

Consider visiting a local treatment centre or inviting a worker from a treatment centre to visit your class to share information and answer questions.

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## Interview

**Date of interview:** April 28, 2004

**Name of Interviewee:** Rachel Lazarus

**Occupation:** Police Officer, Peel Region, Ontario

**Profile:** “I have been a member of a large police services in Ontario for the past four years. I worked as a front-line officer for three years and have spent the majority of time over the past year as a Community Officer, where one of my functions includes giving presentations to the public on safety and security issues.”

### **Why do you think teens use drugs?**

“I think that teens often start using drugs primarily for acceptance by their peer groups. Different groups will legitimize the level of drug use or non-use in different ways.”

### **In what context do they use drugs, (at school, at parties, to study)?**

“I think that the level of the youth’s submersion in the drug culture, and/or the types of drugs that they are comfortable using, will largely determine whether they choose to use drugs in their everyday lives, and/or strictly at social gatherings.”

### **How easy is it for teens to purchase drugs?**

“I believe that it is very easy for teens to purchase drugs. I am quite certain that the vast majority of teenagers know who is involved with drugs within their school.”

### **What is the going price for drugs?**

“A few of the street names for methamphetamine include speed, ice, chalk,

crank and crystal meth. The going price for this drug ranges from \$5 - \$7 per hit to about \$100-\$150 per gram, depending on what it is made with. A widely used drug among teens is Ecstasy, which is also known as the ‘club drug.’ Ecstasy sells for about \$20-\$40.00 a pill.”

### **How can you tell if a teen is using drugs? What are the signs?**

“Different drugs have different effects on users. For example, the effects of Ecstasy, to name a few, are appetite loss, jaw clenching, fatigue, restlessness, nausea, nervousness, shivering or tremors, tooth grinding, dry mouth, and headaches. The effects of methamphetamine are increased energy, decreased appetite, rapid breathing, sweating, dilated pupils, and dry mouth. The user may become more talkative, restless, excited, feel powerful, superior and aggressive, or behave in a bizarre, repetitive fashion.”

### **What can you do to help prevent teens from starting to use drugs?**

“I think that in order to prevent teens from starting to use drugs, they have to be educated at an appropriate age about the perils of short- and long-term drug use. In addition, different supports have to be available for the teen so that their recreational time is occupied by participation in activities that contribute to their self-fulfilment, whether they be sports teams, artistic groups, hobbies, etc. Teens also need ongoing encouragement and reinforcement of their participation in these types of activities.”

**What can you do to help teens already using drugs?**

“Ideally, once the teen using drugs is identified, they should be encouraged to enter the appropriate programs designed to treat the problem.”

**How aware are the parents about their sons and daughters using drugs?**

“I think that parents’ awareness regarding the drug use of their teen is dependent on the atmosphere at home. Some parents recognize the symptoms of drug use very quickly, while others do not.”

**Is there a relationship between teens using drugs and engaging in illegal activities?**

“I would say that a relationship could be drawn between teens using drugs and engaging in illegal activity. For one thing, possession of illicit drugs is an offence itself under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The drug use would indicate that the teen has raised the bar with respect to what he or she is willing to risk.”

**Is there a relationship between teens using drugs and running away from home?**

“Often teens who use illicit drugs will withdraw from their families. If the teen sees their family members as obstacles in their ability to access the drugs it could follow that they would run away to connect with the people in their lives who accept and legitimize the drug use.”

**Is there a relationship between teens using drugs and skipping or doing poorly at school?**

“I think that skipping and doing poorly in school can be symptomatic of drug use.

Instilling good values in children, and nurturing their confidence are both important, ongoing tasks that parents should take seriously from an early age. Also, parents should not become intimidated by their teens and should continue to take an active role in their sons’/daughters’ lives, asking lots of questions about the teens’ peers, whereabouts, work in school, etc. Teens need structure in their lives, and to believe that their parents care about what they are doing.”

**Questions**

- 1. What additional questions would you have liked to ask Officer Lazarus?

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- 2. How well does Officer Lazarus understand the world of teen drug abuse? Explain.

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3. What two questions would you ask a person addicted to drugs?

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4. a) What new information did you learn from reading this interview?

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b) What information did you already know?

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c) What answer surprised you the most? Why?

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5. If you were a parent what would you say to your children about using drugs?

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6. Summarize the possible effects of drug use on a teen's life.

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7. How might a person's life be changed by using drugs in the teenage years?

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8. Do you know people suffering the effects of drug abuse? Have you tried to help them? Explain.

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## *Final Activity: Learning Through Role-play*

### Instructions

Students are divided into groups of three to five. Each group creates a brief role-play that demonstrates one of the following scenarios:

#### Helping those on drugs

A friend of yours is using speed and you notice drastic changes in his or her behaviour. This scenario has a positive ending. Demonstrate how you can help a friend stop using drugs.

OR

A friend of yours is using speed and you notice drastic changes in his or her behaviour. This scenario has a negative ending. Demonstrate how in some cases it is difficult or impossible to stop a friend from using drugs.

#### Why people use drugs

Speed is becoming a popular drug of choice at your high school. Your friend becomes a speed user. Demonstrate some of the reasons why teens are not able to resist the temptation of using drugs.

OR

Speed is becoming a popular drug of choice at your high school. Your friend is tempted, but ultimately resists becoming a speed user. Demonstrate some of the reasons why teens are able to resist the temptation of using drugs.

#### Impact of using drugs

Someone in your family is a speed user. Demonstrate the effects of this on your family.

OR

Someone in your group of friends is a speed user. Demonstrate the effects of this on your group of friends.

OR

Someone you work with is a speed user. Demonstrate the effects of this on co-workers and the employer-employee relationship.

### Instructions for the Presenters

- Each group's role-play must include a setting (e.g., the workplace, home, school, friend's house, or the mall) and a specific situation as indicated by the scenario assigned to the group.
- Each group will have the freedom to develop the scenario assigned to it, but the scenario must include factual information and knowledge gained on the use of speed to make the role-play as realistic as possible.
- Your role-play must be at least two minutes in length.
- Each group member must have a speaking role.

### Instructions for the Audience

- In three to five sentences identify the scenario being presented.
- Rate the role-play on a scale of one to five for its realistic qualities (one being not realistic and five being very realistic). Explain your rating.