

DREAMS BURNED TO BITS

by:

Rosalie P. Tuazon

Teacher I, Mariveles National High School - Poblacion

Who would have thought that tiny bits of substance could spark the interest of vulnerable minds? The thrill and curiosity from its tiny flicker slowly becoming a wildfire in their life that may be difficult to extinguish. This fire subsequently setting ablaze their dreams- until ashes are all that is left.

The young people are the easiest to influence of the use and misuse of licit and illicit drugs. In the Philippines alone, almost half of reported cases of drug abuse start at the age of 15-19 years old, according to the Dangerous Drugs Board. The age group is just out of high school. Known factors of these occurrences are peer pressure, curiosity, and boredom, as well as a form of escapism and the instant gratification they perceive as they indulge in the substances.

Drug abuse affects lots of aspects of human life. Studies show that drug abusers have higher risk of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis. It affects their relationship with the people around them due to the intensity of the sensation after using drugs, assault may even occur towards oneself or other people. In young people, it could affect their growth, development, and their academic performance. The addiction to these substances has taken away their chances to live a better life.

Effective education plays a crucial role in shaping the young minds into critical thinking, informed decision-making, and promoting a culture of safety among teenagers. In the current curriculum, drug education is integrated to the health subject to provide sufficient information about the dangers of drugs as well as to promote healthier behavior for the students in the classroom setting.

Aside from this, programs like “Barkada Kontra Droga” by the Department of Education have been implemented to aid in the minimization of drug abuse among students by involving in advocating for drug prevention. As the young people are easily influenced by their peers, it is important to be in par with students who could serve as role models and conducting drug education whom they share the same age group.

It is important that educators dedicate necessary efforts and are provided with sufficient resources and training to enable them to have the ability to cultivate effective drug education and intervention to the youth. Not only does this help prevent drug abuse cases in young people, but it also cultivates healthy relationships within oneself and the local school community as they engage in these activities and programs.

Youth has a colorful path ahead of them. It is the age for them to dream and to explore what life has prepared. It is our duty to douse the fire attempting to scorch the bright future of the youth and guide them away from impending danger. With all cooperation in effective drug education, let us all not let drugs burn our young people’s dreams to ashes.

References:

Zelfox. 2017. “Why Majority of Drug Users in the Philippines Are Teenagers.” Medium. Medium. June 4, 2017. <https://medium.com/@zelfaest/why-majority-of-drug-users-in-philippines-is-youth-57f323707e2d>.

“The Role of Principals in Drug Education.” 2019. Vic.gov.au. Education and Training. 2019.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/ph/ysed/Pages/drugeducation2.aspx>.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2021. "Part 1: The Connection between Substance Use Disorders and Mental Illness | National Institute on Drug Abuse." National Institute on Drug Abuse. April 13, 2021. <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/common-comorbidities-substance-use-disorders/part-1-connection-between-substance-use-disorders-mental-illness>.