

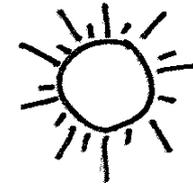
***Welcome to the  
Madison County  
Youth Forum***



***“Let Kids Be Kids”  
Strengthening Mental and  
Emotional Health***

Let Kids be Kids

Welcome to the 13th  
2009



Madison County  
Youth Forum



Illinois Drug  
Education Alliance





# Low Self-Esteem/ Low Confidence

Team 1

# *Low Self-Worth/ Low Confidence*

- **Problem Statement:**

The teenage years have become marked by pressure, demands, unrealistic expectations and other stressors that have had serious negative effects upon the self-esteem of adolescents. Parents, schools, peers, the media, and self-expectations all are taking a toll on making young people feel that they are not worthy. Instead of young people enjoying their youth, teens often find themselves feeling inadequate or lacking the confidence to address the demands they face.

# *Low Worth/ Low Confidence*

- *Solution 1: Online anonymous weight support group, facebook group*
- *Solution 2: After school programs, intramural sports without tryouts*
- *Solution 3: “Combating media with media” use of positive media in classroom*



# **Coping with Stress and Family Pressures During Difficult Economic Times**

Team 2

# ***Coping with Stress and Family Pressures during difficult economic times***

**While stress is always an issue for families and teens it becomes magnified during difficult economic times. Family members who lose jobs or who are experiencing financial crisis become more easily frustrated and angry and sometimes vent at children and other family members. Teens suddenly find there is less money going to them for clothes and other recreational needs. They may also experience more arguing in the home.**

# **Coping with stress and family pressures during difficult economic times.**

- **Solution 1: A counselor in schools to aid students in finding a job and helping them with the application process. For example, helping students prepare resumes, contacting employers for students, and helping students with interviewing skills.**
- **Solution 2: Holding monthly free/low cost events that focus on family bonding and stress free nights. For example, concerts, organized sports events, trivia nights, movie nights, and other fun group activities.**
- **Solution 3: Establish a program supported by fundraising within the school that anonymously provides students with academic materials and other basic needs.**



# Peer Pressures

Team 3

# *Peer Pressures*

- **During the teen years peers tend to have the greatest impact upon young people. They influence their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors in ways that often go beyond those of family, school and other civic organizations. Unfortunately the impact of this pressure usually is negative causing teens to feel low self-worth, engage in high risk behaviors, and also contributing to feelings of isolation and loneliness when not included in the activities of their peers.**

# *Peer Pressures*

- **Solution 1: Teens are appointed to an adult of their choosing (college student, counselor, teacher) to talk about pressures**
- **Solution 2: Expand Big Brother's and Sister's Program**
- **Solution 3: High schools require a peer pressure/stress course led by a professional**



# School Pressures

Team 4

# *School Pressures*

- **Today schools more than ever contribute excessive demands to the stress levels of teens. Convincing students that they have to be in numerous clubs, make 'A' grades or be the best athlete is quite common in today's schools environment. Add to this several hours of homework and it is easy to see why students feel so much stress and experience so much anxiety. There is very little research that shows over-involvement or being an 'A' student predicts a better future. In fact students that stay more balanced often go on to have greater success.**

# *School Pressures*

- **Solution 1: Have an assembly at school to educate students on proper use of popular networking websites to reduce gossip and cyber bullying.**
- **Solution 2: Supply students with more social events and groups/clubs to deter them from drugs and alcohol with stricter punishments for those caught using.**
- **Solution 3: Increase break times in schools for students to relax from daily stressors.**



# Lack of Organized/Fun Activities

Team 5

# *Lack of Organized/Fun Activities*

The most common time for teens to engage in high-risk behaviors is after school and on weekends when there is little adult supervision. Other than school sports and clubs there is often very little organized teen activities available in the community. As such teens feel bored and this not only contributes to stress but also increases the likelihood they may engage in risky behaviors. Very few communities make concentrated efforts to provide teens with free activities where they can have fun, socialize and stay away from making poor choices.

# *Lack of Organized/Fun Activities*

- **Solution 1: Provide more student events within the community rather than just in school. Also more parental assistance and other volunteers from the community would set a precedent that the standards we try to introduce should be carried away from the event back out into the community.**
- **Solution 2: Create a community in schools for the sole purpose to search for community sponsors to help fund inexpensive activities and in return receive advertising within the student body.**



# Depression/Suicide

Team 6

# *Depression/Suicide*

Depression and suicide are growing problems within the teen population. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the 10-24 year old age group. Additionally 15% of 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders reported thinking about suicide in the past 12 months according to the CDC, while 11% made a plan and 7% actually attempted suicide. Further over 10% of adolescents suffer from a mental condition that impairs their functioning. Depression and anxiety disorders are at the top of the list. Even more critical is the fact that most of these teens do not get treatment. Often these mental problems contribute to other risky behaviors like drug use, violence, or sexual behaviors. Schools do very little to help teens who suffer from these mental disorders.

# *Depression/Suicide*

- **Solution 1: Incorporating a texting service into the suicide hotline for those who are not willing to talk to an advisor directly.**
- **Solution 2: AskMadison.com. – a site used to anonymously report or discuss topics among students and their counselors.**
- **Solution 3: Create a peer support group for those who are or have been affected by depression and suicide.**



# Coping with Drugs

Team 7

# *Coping with Drugs*

**While curiosity, availability, and peer pressure often contribute to the initial use of drugs those whose lives are severely impacted usually have deeper mental health issues that contribute to the problem. Low self-esteem, feeling alienated, bored or lonely are prime factors that lay at the foundation of the problem. Schools and communities need to do much more help high-risk youth and others who try to escape pain by using from getting caught up with the use of alcohol and other drugs. Parents who model alcohol and drug use, police who don't enforce laws and communities that promote alcohol festival all shares the responsibility of the problems.**

# *Coping With Drugs*

- **Solution 1: Have “me time” and promote more time management for teens.**
- **Solution 2: Promote individuality. It is OK to be your own person and “out of the loop” with what everyone else does.**
- **Solution 3: Promote more community events/church events that keep kids healthy, always having something safe to do, and fun!**



# Coping With Sexual Behaviors

Team 8

# *Coping with Sexual Behaviors*

We live in a society that openly promotes sex as an answer to everything. It's used to sell products, it's a part of most movies and television shows, and most often it is rarely portrayed as part of a long term relationship. Young people eager to find love often think that being sexually active is a way to bring love into their lives. Unfortunately, it is more likely to bring pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections than true love. Sexual behaviors are occurring at earlier ages and despite this schools continue to not provide students with comprehensive sexuality education despite the fact that research shows most parents and teens want it.

# Coping With Sexual Behaviors

- **Solution 1:**  
**Pre-Campaign:**  
Survey Parents about the sexual health education they would like to be covered.  
Survey students about what risky behaviors they are participating in.
  - Hand out during registration.
- **Campaign:**
  - Promote positive statistics and available resources from community/schools
  - Updated resources for teaching materials
  - Speakers to share true life experiences “Show what it’s really like”
  - Against “fake” media messages- so students don’t think they are really
  - School announcements
- **Solution 2:**  
**School Health Counselors Involvement will increase student comfort to help them share sexual issues:**
  - Meet and greet at registration
  - Be more involved at school functions/make appearances
  - Utilize peer leadership programs as a way to communicate with students
  - On School website have a counselor page
    - Ask questions anonymously
    - Sexual health resources available
    - Utilize peer leadership

***Welcome to the  
Madison County  
Youth Forum***



***Open Discussion***

# Thank you for attending this year's Madison County Youth Forum

