

## Some Myths and Realities

**Myth:** *Rush-Henrietta isn't the city, and it isn't a rich suburb, therefore we don't have a drug problem here.*

**Reality:** Mayor Robert Duffy, when he was the Rochester Police Chief, stated in a September 10, 2004, *Democrat and Chronicle* article on drug dealing, "There are no less drugs being used in Greece or Pittsford or other communities (than in the city.) But what's different is the nature of the drug market. In the suburbs, it's off the radar screen. What people notice are six kids on a street corner."

**Myth:** *Kids will experiment, but my child is smart enough to know when to stop.*

**Reality:** How do you know? Why take a chance? Some teens don't become dependent or addicted, but other teens, after trying, DO become dependent for various reasons, and if no intervention takes place, there can be serious consequences. Although experimentation may occur, we should not accept it or expect it. Besides, it's illegal.

**Myth:** *My child participates in sports and school activities; I don't need to worry about drinking or drugs.*

**Reality:** Some kids who are involved in sports do drink alcohol and use drugs. Student surveys tell us no one is exempt. Further more athletes are trained to be confident risk takers, this skill when applied to experimenting with chemicals or drinking can be volatile. Athletes tend to be socially diverse. Many are among popular crowds and have more opportunities to socialize. If this socialization involves drinking or drugs, they are at higher risk for exposure and abuse.

**Myth:** *The only kids involved with drinking or drug abuse come from troubled environments.*

**Reality:** Substance abuse can happen in any family. Given the opportunity, some of our kids will make the choice to use alcohol or other drugs, no matter how they've been raised. There are many reasons for doing it: maybe they're curious, or their friends are doing it, or maybe they are trying to feel better.

**Myth:** *If I catch my kid using drugs or alcohol, we can deal with it within our family. We'll ground our child or figure out some other kind of punishment. We'll work through it. But we don't need professional help. The problem isn't that bad.*

**Reality:** If you discover your child is using alcohol or other drugs, consider getting help. The earlier you intervene with evaluation and counseling, the less likely your child will become dependent or addicted, or injure him or herself or others. This is not the time to punish, to deny or to ignore, or to diminish the seriousness of the problem. As a parent, you don't have to go it alone. Please refer to the Resources section of this guide for help.

**Myth:** *If I call my child's school for help, it will go on his or her record.*

**Reality:** Absolutely not. Calling school is a good step in getting help for your child. The information you share with your child's counselor or other professional will be kept strictly confidential and not recorded in his or her records.