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ABSTRACT

In 1985, the Chancellor of West Valley College met with California Attorney General John Van De Kamp to explore methods by which the community college district could respond to the growing problem of drug abuse. The first step was the establishment of a 15-hour, fee-supported class on drug and alcohol abuse education for adult offenders at the local county probation department. This was followed by the development of a drug diversion/education program for youths and their families. The goal of the youth program was to create a cost-effective intervention model appropriate for all socioeconomic levels of Santa Clara County, employing staff qualified to provide legal, drug-related, and psychosocial knowledge, and able to deal with the greater problem of family dysfunction. A survey of the most visible and respected county agencies serving youth involved in alcohol and drug abuse was conducted to determine necessary components of the program. The college ultimately implemented a 12-hour program focusing on drug pharmacology, group counseling, the criminal justice system, family communication, refusal skills, values clarification, and self-esteem. It also includes one unit of instruction for parents. Adolescents were directly referred from the Santa Clara County Probation Department, junior and senior high schools, churches, and police departments, and no adolescent could attend the program without at least one parent. Instruction emphasized class participation in an informal, non-threatening way to maximize involvement, and several films were used. Though no statistical data were available to indicate the success of the program, both parents and adolescents expressed gratitude and hope for the future after completing the program. Appendixes include a list of suggested steps for the development of similar programs and an administrative summary of the program. (JMC)

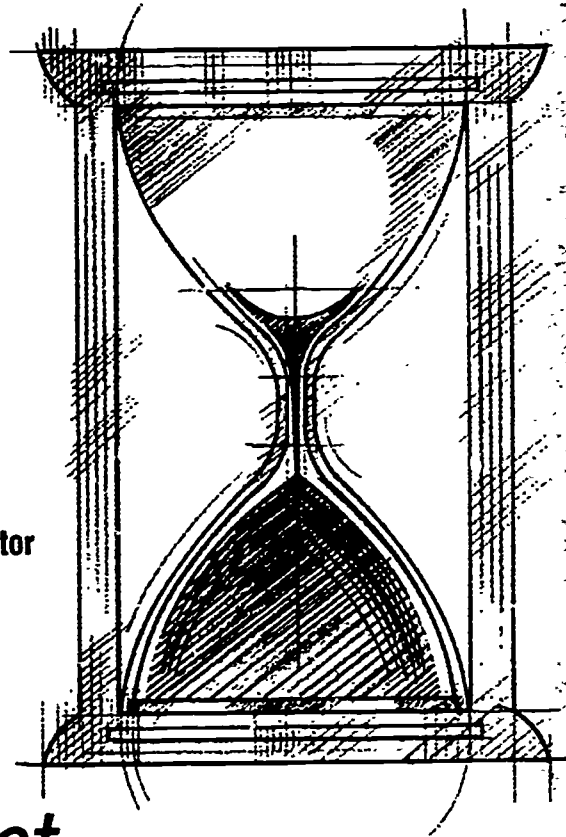
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# DRUG ABUSE:

## A COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESPONSE

**Gustavo A. Mellander, Chancellor**  
and  
**Gary Hubbard, Community Education Director**  
West Valley-Mission Community College District  
Saratoga, California



## A time to act

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## **DRUG ABUSE: A Community College Response**

America is losing the war against drugs. Growers, smugglers, money launderers, users, and pushers are outspending, outstaffing, and out-maneuvering the federal government on every front. It is becoming painfully evident that the actions being taken to combat the crisis are failing.

Throwing countless billions of dollars at law enforcement and interdiction programs has not worked and, by itself, will likely never succeed. It is imperative that new methods of intervention be found to confront the problem.

Taking action against drug abuse is an increasingly vital obligation for all of us. No longer can we hope that federal law enforcement agencies can stem the flow of drugs by themselves or provide effective disincentives for users and would-be users. Local educators must join with law enforcement, health, and social service entities to combat what the White House Conference for a Drug Free America calls a "war."

"Drugs threaten to destroy the United States as we know it. From both within and without, this country is being attacked as never before in its history," conference chair Lois Herrington warns in the June 1988 report. American infants are born addicted in many cases. Some 37 million Americans used illegal drugs in the past year, 23 million in the past month.

Herrington urges all appropriate local, state, and federal entities to join forces in reducing the estimated \$100 billion spent annually in costs related to illegal drugs. The 1,000 tons of marijuana, 70 tons of cocaine, and 1,400 pounds of heroin seized last year by federal enforcement agencies were not enough to stop the crimes, lost jobs, disease, and death that unconfiscated drugs are still causing.

In 1985 Chancellor Gustavo A. Mellander met with California Attorney General John Van de Kamp to explore methods by which a community college district could respond to this problem at the local level. It was decided to develop a pilot program at West Valley College. Overcrowded jails, increasing arrests for drug offenses, and the lack of well-administered drug abuse education programs set the stage to begin the college's involvement, first at the adult offender level and later for youths and their families.

### **"Drugs threaten to destroy the United States as we know it."**

A 15-hour, fee-supported class on drug and alcohol abuse education was developed for our local county probation department. The class was designed for selected clients as a condition of their probation diversion. Content focused on drugs, their health effects (including AIDS), and on community resources available for help. Approximately 140 adult clients now attend the college's classes each month.

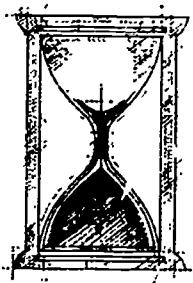
The program was designed in accordance with the recommendations developed by California Attorney General John Van de Kamp's Commission on the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

## Defining the Problem - California

It is common knowledge that drug and alcohol abuse is widespread among the state's youth. A state-wide survey by the Attorney General's Commission of students in grades 7, 9, and 11 (1985-86) showed a significant use, both in a six-month period and on a weekly basis, of beer, marijuana, and cocaine. The survey anonymously assessed 7,379 students by sex, grade level, and age, distributed ethnically to English-speaking respondents.

In the six-month period prior to the survey of 11th graders, 69% had drunk beer at least once, 42% had used marijuana, and 18% had used cocaine. Another 29% of the 11th graders reported also using either inhalants or psychedelics. On a weekly use basis, 20% of these 11th graders drank beer, 13% used marijuana, and 3% used cocaine. Perhaps most alarming is the finding that marijuana is used daily by 5.2% of the 9th graders and by 7.4% of the 11th graders in the survey.

Education, according to the Attorney General's Commission, has had some positive impact. Of the students who had taken classes in substance abuse prevention, 38% of the 9th and 46% of the 11th graders said they had gained knowledge about drugs and alcohol. From 29% to 41% at both grade levels had learned to avoid or reduce drug or alcohol use, to resist pressure to drink or use drugs, and to avoid driving under the influence. Statewide findings are mirrored, to some degree, locally.



## The Local Picture - Santa Clara County

West Valley College in Saratoga and its sister college, Mission College in Santa Clara, serve both urban and suburban students in Santa Clara County. A large portion of the district is located in the heart of Silicon Valley, one of the nation's leading high technology regions. With 15 cities, 37 school districts, 3 major universities, a large manufacturing, retail and agricultural base, and a 1.5 million population, the county is a mature metropolitan area. The cost of living is relatively high. The median price of a three-bedroom house in the county's largest city, San Jose, is routinely among the highest in the nation.

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**"The breakdown of the traditional family unit has paved the way for drugs and alcohol to find their way into your people's lives."**

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The population in the area is generally affluent and unemployment has been among the lowest in the country. There is, however, ongoing upheaval in the county's major manufacturing sector, electronics, with some firms consolidating and jobs being lost or drastically changed. Lower paying service jobs are replacing higher paying technical jobs in new employment. Families are working harder and faster to keep up. The resultant social and economic demands take their toll here as in other similar settings. The breakdown of the traditional family unit has paved the way for drugs and alcohol to find their way into young people's lives.

Findings prepared by the county's Bureau of Drug Abuse Services for the 1985 calendar year show that juvenile hall admissions related to drug abuse increased from 276 in 1983 to 603 in 1985. About 17% of the admissions were for narcotics, 30% for marijuana and

53% for "other dangerous drugs." PCP abusers account for 24% of all admissions to drug treatment programs as opposed to a 7% average for the rest of the counties in the state.

### **Education and Parental Involvement Needed**

Dr. Darrell Inaba, director of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury Clinic, stated in 1986 hearings on PCP that he had seen "...no more dangerous, insidious, and probably subtle drug abuse problem than the PCP problem..." often causing permanent mental and/or physical damage. Dr. Inaba urged education about the drug, its effects, and the causes for its use as the major part of the solution to PCP abuse.

A critical tangential issue to drug abuse is the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) by contaminated needles of intravenous drug abusers. Although less than 10% of the clients in the current West Valley College Drug Abuse Education Program have been identified as such, intravenous drug abusers are the major cause of AIDS transmission among heterosexuals, according to the county's Department of Health. The department urged education as the principal weapon against the spread of the disease. Obviously, education is especially relevant to drug abusers and potential drug abusers.

Characteristics of minors supervised by the juvenile division of the county's probation department were detailed in a report by the county's Bureau of Drug Abuse Services (Ritchey, 1986). They included intra-family turmoil, little communication with and sense of being isolated from parents, deterioration in scholastic performance, and two or more previous contacts with the police. The same report, focusing on prevention programs, found promise in teaching assertiveness, "refusal skills," and decision-making regarding values.

### **No Low-Cost Programs for Adolescents Available**

Current adolescent treatment programs are still full to capacity, and few educational alternatives are available to adolescents who are not part of the criminal justice system or covered by parents' insurance. Hospitals in contact with the Bureau of Drug Abuse Services expressed frustration at only being able to treat the medical problems when drug education and counseling for adolescents were needed to promote a truly long term response.

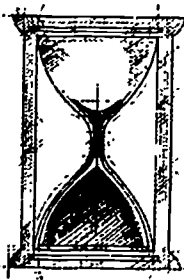
Clearly there is ample evidence of the need for a low-cost program of education for both youths and their parents.

Upon considering the request of the Santa Clara County Probation Department Juvenile Division to design an adolescent drug diversion program, the college wanted to create an effective intervention model; relate to all socio-economic levels of Santa Clara County; be cost-effective for the college; hire the best qualified staff in terms of legal, drug-related, and psychosocial knowledge; and deal with the greater problem of adolescent drug abuse, family dysfunction.

## Survey of Existing Approaches

A survey of the most visible and respected county agencies serving youth involved in alcohol and drug abuse was conducted. Others contacted included:

- **Comp-Care** – A nationwide private organization administering alcohol and drug intervention programs through large hospitals in major cities.
- **Kids Are Special** – A Saratoga-based non-profit organization dedicated to providing alcohol and drug services for schools, community organizations, and neighborhoods.
- **CHAC** – A Cupertino/Sunnyvale-based non-profit agency organized to provide alcohol and drug counseling services for youth.
- **Santa Clara County Health Department, Office of Drug Abuse Services.**
- **Eastfield Ming Quong Children's Center** – A non-profit, publicly funded 100-year old organization dedicated to providing 24-hour, live-in facilities for disturbed children.
- **Parent/Teacher and school-based organizations** through local high schools.
- **High school deans and counselors.**
- **University of Santa Clara and San Jose State University** – Family and child counseling programs in the psychology departments.



## Essential Elements

After approximately eight weeks of surveying and assessing needs, the following components were determined to be essential in designing and administering an effective program. The components were envisioned by the professional staff of the juvenile probation department and were supported by local school officials:

- The program must be competitive in hours with other programs in the county. A maximum of 12-15 hours was chosen.
- The program must be available to parents for a fee not to exceed \$40.00.
- The program locations should be central to the valley and easily accessible by major highways/freeways.
- The program must be closely administered in liaison with the probation department.
- The program must use instructors familiar with the clientele, who hold community college credentials, and who have both curriculum expertise and rapport with youth.
- The curriculum must be designed to educate participants in alcohol and drug abuse education, the legal implications including the juvenile justice system, and teach refusal skills, communication skills, parent-child relationships, self-esteem concepts, and values clarification.
- The program must require the full participation of at least one parent with the adolescent child.
- The program must expand over time to reach adolescents through schools, church, and police department referrals before these youths become chronic users.

## The Current Program

Coordinator Robert Culp collected films and videotapes on drug and alcohol abuse and prepared a teacher's reference manual, curriculum, and student workbook. An experienced probation supervisor and a family counselor were selected to assist with parent-child communication activities. Parent-child communication exercises have been successful in breaking down many of the communication barriers that these families experience.

Instruction emphasizes class participation in an informal, non-threatening way to maximize involvement. Role-playing using both parents and adolescents has been used effectively to recognize how to combat peer pressure and to teach refusal skills.

Both parent and child write a one-page unsigned letter to each other to openly express fear, anger, forgiveness, confusion, resentment and love. These are read anonymously to the class during the following class session. Of course, both parent and child recognize much of the content which is shared and understood in an open, non-threatening way. The instructor effectively builds on this with a discussion on improving family communication and trust.

### **"Both parent and child write a one-page unsigned letter to each other..."**

Several films are used, including Epidemic! Kids, Drugs and Alcohol; Smokable Cocaine; Choices I (for adolescents); and Choices II (for parents) which are particularly suitable for both parent and child.

The Eastfield Ming Quong Children's Center was chosen as a centrally located site that could provide university counseling interns to assist the instructor in small group processes. Both Saturday morning and weeknight evenings were provided as options to clients.

The registration process begins with the probation department's distribution of registration forms to diversion clients and ends with the computer input of that client's data at the college. A computer record of attendance allowed the college to report progress or completion of classes to the probation department.

Since the college found that the 12-hour program was eligible for state support through apportionment, fees were limited to a \$6.00 materials fee. That amount is slated for increase to \$15.00 with the production of a more comprehensive student workbook.

High schools, police departments, and churches have been encouraged to refer youth. So far, referrals are modest but growing. In the local high schools, athletic league rules were changed to allow drug abusing athletes to attend the 12-hour program in lieu of expulsion from their sports teams. The class has served as a condition of suspension in some high schools.

One small community has made maximum use of this program through their police department. A special client referral form allows the Los Gatos Police Department to both refer clients directly to the program and request a progress report upon successful completion of the program. The class is one of the means to divert the adolescent from formal sentencing and return more responsibility for remediation to the family.

Although few referrals have been received directly from religious organizations, the program has requested endorsements from the Santa Clara County Council of Churches to encourage church referrals when appropriate. The Council's newsletter will be used to help churches become more familiar with the college's program.

Most activity is still generated by probation department referrals, who comprise a majority of the 40 families who attend classes each month through the college.

Appendices which follow this report include a list of steps we suggest be followed in setting up a program of this nature, an administrative summary of the current program, and a listing of student handbook topic areas which describes the curriculum. These items should prove useful to other schools and organizations that wish to replicate the project in their local areas.

### **"I firmly believe in this program..."**

There are no statistical data available yet to show that the program reduces recidivism or effects a "cure." However, the files are replete with both parent and adolescent expressions of gratitude and hope for the future. Parents and their children are forgiving each other, revealing both their fear about and their love for each other, and learning about their own respective self worth. They also appreciate the practical skills they learn in dealing with their peers.

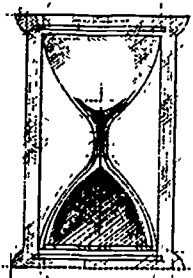
Program evaluation from parents and youths at the end of the last class session contains comments which are often repeated:

"I learned a lot – probably more than any participant;"

"I enjoyed the class. It really makes me stop and think about what I am doing to myself;"

"I firmly believe in this program – especially the idea of the parent also having to attend;"

"This course should be required in high schools."



### **Conclusions**

More resources will need to be devoted to assessing the program's efficacy in the future. For now, the effort has been focused on increasing depth of quality and breadth of impact. The community college offers a large enough entity to respond efficiently to a large number of probation clients, yet small enough to serve its constituent high schools and communities.

For the West Valley-Mission Community College District, "just saying no" to drugs has been more than a slogan during the past two years. The district has pooled its resources with local authorities to create a program which we hope will serve as a model for other communities across the nation.



## Appendix A

### Steps to Establish a Drug Abuse Education Program

Court-mandated programs for clients referred under Drug Diversion California State Penal Code Statutes 1000.1 and 1000.2 are authorized and monitored by local county adult probation departments.

Counties differ in their programs with some offering their own diversion program through their Health Department Bureaus or Drug Abuse Services. Others establish standards and criteria and entertain bids from the private sector. Programs vary in content, instructional hours, and individual and group counseling. Programs may run from 12 to 30 hours including required counseling sessions. Although each county has an established basic format including specific hour requirements they are often open to new proposals. Their programs are often approved and monitored by the probation department, health department, and/or the local municipal courts.

#### **"Programs may run from 12 to 30 hours including required counseling sessions."**

A prospective program provider should not assume that there is not a possibility for an additional or different program. There is always the opportunity for well-designed, professionally administered and reasonably low-cost programs to be considered by the ruling agency. A suggested format for a new provider desiring to enter the field might be:

- Obtain all relevant information including history of drug diversion programs in your county.
- Obtain data about diversion programs in neighboring counties including information about cost, program design and administration.

- Meet with the county, municipal, and presiding or administrative judge to determine what kind of program the court expects for diversion clients. Often the administrative judge appoints another municipal judge to assume responsibility for this.

- Set up a meeting with the health department or probation department to determine the procedures for referring clients, letting bids, etc. This is to determine if you should proceed with designing a program to submit for approval.

- Contract with an experienced drug abuse consultant to develop a proposal for submission to the supervising county agency. It is important to:

- Submit an outline for a program which has elements that will be different and unique to existing programs and fulfill needs not currently being met.

- Collect materials from up-to-date national, state, and local sources (public and private).

- Offer in your proposal an efficient, cost-effective method of reporting client progress, failure, etc. The provider "lives and dies" by a fast, accurate registration and reporting system. Proposing the use of registration and reporting by computer is very effective.

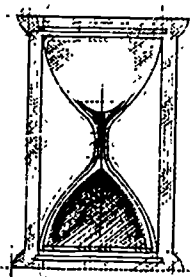
- Become aware of the local preferences and problems involved in each county bureaucracy. Contact members of the board of supervisors, head of the county health department, chief of the probation department, well-informed probation officer, or a municipal judge. Local politics often determine if additional providers will be allowed to receive clients from the probation department.

- If you receive a positive reception to submit a proposal, you are ready to hire a consultant to design your entire proposal including curriculum guide, client handbook, brochures, handouts, and films.

- Do not overlook classes for Spanish and other non-English speaking clients.

• Promote the value of a community college association. Probation departments and health departments may receive as many as ten to fifteen proposals a year for providing such services. Many will be too expensive or inadequate to meet the needs of the client or the expectations of the ruling agency. Very few agencies can compete with community colleges which offer:

- a) high public visibility and credibility of the general parties, as well as other public agencies
- b) a professional staff with state credentials and licensing
- c) a computerized system for registration and reporting with the possibility of direct link to the probation department
- d) a highly competitive price structure for clients
- e) an established reliability factor that is often lacking in profit-oriented, private entities
- f) established resources in facilities, equipment, counseling, curriculum design, subject matter materials, and supervision.



## Appendix B

### West Valley College Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Education Program Administrative Summary

#### Course Content

A 12-hour program consisting of drug pharmacology, group counseling, the criminal justice system, family communication, refusal skills, values clarification and self-esteem. The program also includes one unit of instruction for parents.

#### Teaching Centers

Two centers geographically located on the west and east side of the valley in central Santa Clara County.

#### Instructor Qualification

- Minimum of six years as a juvenile probation officer with extensive education and training in drug abuse or the equivalent.
- Minimum B.A. degree, three years' experience as an alcohol/drug counselor or the equivalent.
- California Community College Instructor Credential.

#### Program Fee

Program is state-funded with ADA claimed for both parent and adolescent. A \$15.00 materials fee is charged participants to cover expenses of the expanded handbook.

#### Referral Process

Adolescents are directly referred from the Santa Clara County Probation Department, Juvenile Division; junior and senior high schools; churches; and police departments. Some registrations result from general publicity.

#### Registration

Clients may choose to attend one of two centers with classes offered on Tuesday evenings, 7 to 10 p.m.

for four sessions or Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for three sessions. The probation department, schools, and police department give parents the mail-in registration form.

#### Program Requirements

Adolescents may attend the program only if at least one parent attends. On occasion, both parents elect to attend.

Clients must be on time, attend the full session, be appropriately dressed and participate fully in all class activities. If a client misses a class session, he/she is required to make up the class.

#### Reports to Agency

Client progress and successful completion are reported to the assigning agency by the community college registration office.

#### Clerical Assistance

We employ a full-time clerk with primary responsibilities related to the work required by the adolescent and adult drug abuse programs.

#### Supervision

We employ a drug abuse education consultant who has responsibility for total management of the program. This consists of:

- interviewing, hiring, and training teachers
- assigning all classes
- supervising instructional personnel
- serving as liaison with the probation department and schools
- making final decisions about client attendance, eligibility, client behavior problems, etc.
- responsibility for curriculum update, film selection, client handbook
- serving as consultant to Director of Community Education
- serving as editor of Drug Abuse Education Newsletter.

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