Drugs and the School Aged Child

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Objectives

- List signs of drug use in children
- State appropriate interventions when drug use is suspected

Substance Abuse

- Understanding and teaching facts
- Identifying
- Preventing
- Intervention

Substance Abuse

- Prevalent among teenagers
- Many more elementary kids involved
- Temporary or permanent changes in brain cells
- Associated health problems
- Loss of productivity
- Suicide

Substance Abuse Programs

- Health education
- Safe and Drug Free Schools
- Here's Looking at You 2000

Reinforcement and Drug Addiction

- Reinforcement
- Release of dopamine
- Behaviors
- Behaviors continue because reinforced

Substance Abuse

- Definition - the self-administered misuse of a chemical or toxic material to the extent that the individual's health or ability to function responsible is adversely affected and compromised
- May be referred to as substance abuse disorder

Effects SA

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Emotions

Substance Abuse

- Individual
- Environment
- Substance

Common Risk Indicators

- Genetic predisposition
- SA in family of origin
- Affective and mood disorders
- Antisocial youth subculture affiliation
- Inadequate coping with traumatic life experiences

Symptoms

- Change in friends
- Change in dress, appearance and hygiene
- Change in eating or sleeping habits
- Frequent unexplained arguments or violent actions
- Skipping school and absenteeism
- Failing classes

Symptoms (cont.)

- Delinquency, running away
- Deteriorating relationship with family
- Severe mood swings, apathy
- Affective disorders, depression
- Suicide attempts
- Legal problems

Stimulants

- Commonly used stimulants
  - Amphetamines
  - Nicotine
  - Cocaine
  - Caffeine
- Symptoms of stimulant use
  - Reduced appetite, talkativeness, restlessness, dilated pupils, increased perspiration, irritability

Stimulants Toxic Effects

- Tremors
- Cardiac abnormalities – some fatal
- Seizures – some fatal
- Deficient immune system
- Depression, aggressive behaviors
- Learning deficits

Amphetamines

- Methamphetamine, dextroamphetamine
- Smoked, snorted, oral or injected
- Similar drugs tx ADHD, narcolepsy, OTC decongestants
- More powerful effect than cocaine on noradrenaline and dopamine
- Continuous body movements and distractibility

Cocaine

- Used medically as local anesthetic and appetite suppressant
- Inhaled, smoked, injected and absorbed intraanally and intravaginally
- Crack potent form when smoked – rapid high with intense addicted qualities
- Prenatal exposure

Hallucinogens

- Act primarily on the nervous system and alter sensory perception
- Psychological dependence
- Can last for 12 hours
- LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, cannabis, MDMA, Ecstasy and MDA

Hallucinogen Symptoms

- Symptoms of hallucinogen use
  - Increased pulse rate, body temperature, and blood pressure
  - Distorted auditory and visual perception
  - Sense of timelessness
  - Hallucinations
  - Violent behavior

Phencyclidine (PCP)

- Potent analgesic and anesthetic
- Increases respiration, heart rate, and blood pressure
- Symptoms
  - Agitation and extreme excitement
  - Impaired judgment, emotional lability
  - Ataxia, flushing, feelings of numbness, coma, death

Ketamine

- Liquid applied to marijuana or tobacco
- Symptoms
  - Delirium
  - Amnesia
  - Impaired motor function
  - Respiratory arrest
- Date rape drug

Marijuana

- Product of hemp plant
- Primary mind-altering chemical THC
- Hashish
- Psychological dependence
- Effects
- Passed to baby in breast milk

Marijuana Symptoms

- Symptoms
  - Impaired coordination
  - Reddened eyes, increased heart rate, dry mouth
  - Talkativeness, gaiety, increased activity
  - Relaxation, drowsiness, mental sluggishness

LSD

- Called acid and sugar
- Powerful, synthetic, cheap hallucinogen
- Last 8-12 hours
- Oral – squares blotter paper, sugar cubes, or pills that absorbed liquid
- Mental sx – perceptual distortion and visual hallucinations

MDMA, Ecstasy, and MDA

- Hallucinogen in high dosages
- Low doses like amphetamines
- Side effects
  - Jitteriness
  - Jaw clenching
  - Anxiety

GHB

- Liquid ecstasy
- CNS depressant
- Diminish inhibitions
- Enhance sexual experiences
- Date rape drug

Opiates

- Derived from opium poppy - codeine, morphine, heroin
- Synthetic – Demerol, oxycodone with aspirin (Percodan)
- Pain relievers, diarrhea, cough and agitation
- Physical and psychological dependence

Opiate Effects

- Constricted pupils, watery eyes, itching
- Drowsiness
- Slows bowel function
- Euphoria
- Suppression of pain
- Heroin – infectious diseases

Heroin

- White powder derived from morphine
- Highly addictive
- Injected Intravenously, smoked, oral
- Mimic natural endorphins and pain-killing hormones
- Prenatal heroin exposure

Inhalants

- Produce an alcohol-like intoxication
- Sniffed or huffing
- Used by children 7-17 years
- Long-term use
- Psychological dependence and tolerance
- Street names

Inhalants

- Organic solvents
- Abusable gases

Inhalant Symptoms

- Symptoms
  - Dizziness
  - Feeling of well-being, poor judgment
  - Floating sensation, hallucinations
  - Unconsciousness, coma, death (arrhythmia)

Narcotics

- Act on parasympathetic system
- Opium derivatives and synthetic
- Symptoms
  - Drowsiness and lethargy
  - Pupillary constriction
  - Euphoria
  - Coma, respiratory failure, death

Depressants

- Three main categories
  - Barbiturates
  - Nonbarbiturates
  - Tranquilizers

Symptoms of Depressant Use

- Slurred speech, unsteadiness, decreased respirations, drop in blood pressure, unconsciousness, coma

Rohypnol

- Implicated in sexual assaults
- Dissolves quickly in carbonated beverages
  - Tasteless, odorless
- Sedative and toxic effects enhanced by alcohol
- Profound amnesia after use

Club Drugs

- Bars, clubs or all-night dance parties
  - Raves
- Mood enhancers, increase energy
- Not perceived as risky
- Cause toxic and chronic effects
- Ecstasy, GHB, ketamine, Rohypnol, methamphetamine, and LSD

Alcohol Abuse and Dependency

- Definition
  - Alcohol abuse refers to the degree of drinking that interferes with an individual's normal functioning.
  - Alcohol dependence (alcoholism) - loss of control of drinking and dependency on alcohol that interferes with interpersonal relationships, economic functioning, and health

Causative Factors

- Environmental influences
- Lifestyle choices
- Genetic

Health Concerns/Emergencies

- Lower resistance infection
- Combined with other substances extremely dangerous
- Impairment changes vision, hearing, muscle control, judgment – accident
- Greater risk suicide and death
- Alcohol use during pregnancy

Effects on Individual

- 10% difference brain power
- Academic failure, career goals limited
- Prevent adolescent emotional growth
- Lack judgment – unsafe sex, unwanted pregnancy, and early marriage
- Arrests, loss driver's license

Management/Treatment

- Depression, lack self-esteem
- Frequent health room visits
- Special ed. students more at risk
- Long-term dependency involves medical intervention
  - Nutritional deficiencies
  - Medications
  - Psychotherapy

Symptoms Alcohol Withdrawal

- Tremors
- Fever
- Perspiration
- Nausea, vomiting
- Anorexia
- Restlessness
- Hallucinations
- Delirium tremens

School Nursing Role

Health Concerns/Emergencies

- Assessment skills
- Assessment of emergency
  - Substance use
  - Call 911
  - Eliminate other medical conditions
  - Identify substance
  - Follow up with other school staff
  - Documentation

School Nurse Interventions

- Provide information staff and parents
- Counseling at-risk or abusing student
- Referral to drug counselor
- Support student
- Positive role model

Long-term Treatment

- Explore personal biases, values
- Most adolescents deny drug use
- Continuum of services
- 12-step treatment program
- Family therapy

Legal Requirements

- No mandatory reporting
- Federal and state law usually interpreted by count or Office of Education
- Local law enforcement and schools may have memorandums of understanding
- Best practices