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Know the Truth Updates Curriculum for 2019 – 2020 School Year

Program will incorporate generational insights and information on the dangers of vaping

MINNEAPOLIS — Know the Truth™ (KTT), the substance use prevention program of Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, is kicking off its program for the 2019 – 2020 academic year, with a few tweaks. The program has been updated to incorporate information on the dangers of vaping, more personal stories from presenters, and the latest in generational insights, ensuring that the program address Gen Z in the most effective way possible. Presenters will speak to more than 160 high schools and middle schools throughout the state during the school year, reaching an estimated 60,000 students.

“We’ve worked in the schools for more than a decade and heard about the trends in substance use first-hand,” says Tracee Anderson, director of prevention and community engagement with Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge. “Over the past several years, we’ve been tracking the increase in vaping and knew we needed to formally address the issue with students.”

More than 40 percent of high school students have reported that they’ve tried vaping before, a number that has been steadily increasing over the years. Marketers are also focusing on young people, selling flavors such as tutti frutti and cotton candy and posting ads on popular social media platforms like Snapchat. However, vaping has recently proven dangerous with reports of hospitalizations, lung damage, and nicotine poisoning in young people.

“Teens have been told that vaping is harmless since it’s just water vapor, but the evidence shows that’s clearly not the case,” says Anderson.

Since the Know the Truth program began more than a decade ago, it has seen significant success in helping prevent substance use among Minnesota’s young people. An independent study conducted by an outside research evaluator from the University of Minnesota corroborates the effectiveness of the KTT program. The study compared attitudes towards substance use among students who participated in the Know the Truth program with students who participated in only the standard health curriculum. Participation in either group had a generally positive impact on overall healthy attitudes toward substance use and the risks associated with it. However, nearly one in four students in the KTT group (23.7 percent) reported an overall increase in healthy attitudes, while only about one in 12 in the control group (8.1 percent) reported an increase. Regarding prescription pills including opioids, KTT had a larger net increase in the number of students who reported healthier attitudes toward prescription drugs after participation (54.3 percent) compared to the control group (17.6 percent).

“The Know the Truth™ program works and helps save lives, especially since the vast majority of Americans who struggle with addiction started smoking, drinking, or using drugs before age 18,” says Anderson.



The program utilizes a peer-to-peer format, where Know the Truth presenters – often just a few years older than the students – share their personal struggles with substance use. This format allows students to open up and helps Know the Truth bridge the gap between the students and the parents, care givers, teachers and community leaders who support them. In most cases, the Know the Truth presentations are included in standard health curriculum, embedded into the drug and alcohol unit.

In addition to classroom presentations, students are encouraged to seek continued dialogue with the presenters through social media, reaching out to @knowthetruthmn on Twitter, and through the text hotline at 612-440-3967.

“Know the Truth is built on evidence-based principles,” explains Anderson. “We believe if we can change students’ attitudes towards drugs and alcohol, we can change their behavior.”

About Know the Truth

Know the Truth (KTT) is the substance-use prevention program of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge. KTT works within communities to help prevent teenage substance use by sharing personal stories about the struggles with addiction and by presenting students with information about the dangers of alcohol and drug use. Each year, KTT speaks in more than 160 high schools and middle schools and reaches more than 60,000 students.