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Just Say Know! Evaluation of a Novel Drug Education Program

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Just Say Know!

Evaluation of a Novel Drug Education Program



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What is Just Say Know?

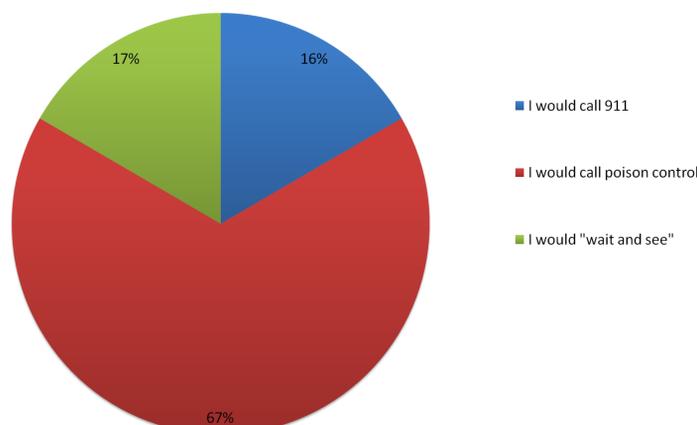
Just Say Know (JSK) is a revolutionary drug education program that is:

- Student-led, staff-facilitated
- Honest and unbiased
- Evidence-based
- Based on facts, not fear tactics
- Drug-specific
- Monthly
- Voluntary
- Harm reduction oriented

Rationale

There is no other drug education program for college students that fulfills all the above criteria. Peer-based education operates on the peer influence theory of adolescent and emerging adult behavior, while staff from the Wellness Center and other professionals lend the information credence. Providing VCU students with the truth about drugs – both positive and negative – and with strategies to reduce drug-related harms (such as overdose and death) will make the community safer. Focusing on one drug per session and making the seminars voluntary ensures that those who attend have a vested curiosity in the information, which is likely to improve retention. The most significant difference between our program and other drug education programs for college students is that JSK is not the result of drug-related university sanctions.

In a potential medical emergency associated with a drug that was not legal to use:

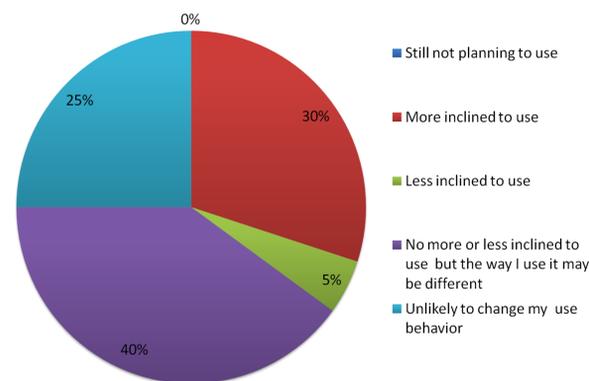


Source: Clicker Data for Just Say Know: MDMA

Methods

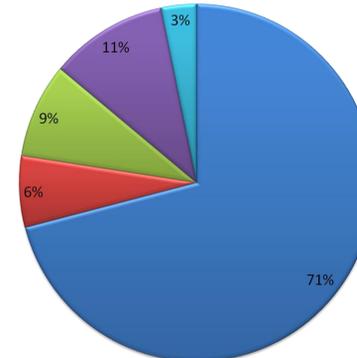
To promote honesty in responses, answers to various questions were collected anonymously via classroom clickers provided by the Wellness Center. Questions concerned topics such as social norms of drug use, drug intentionality, and drug knowledge.

Psilocybin: As a result of this presentation, I am...



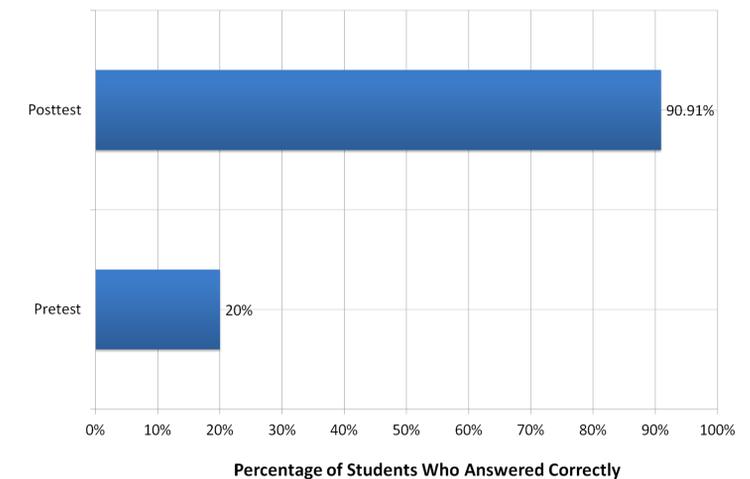
Source: Clicker Data from JSK: Psilocybin Mushrooms

Nicotine: As a result of this presentation, I am...



Source: Clicker Data from JSK: Nicotine

What percentage of VCU students report *never* using cocaine?
Answer: 93%



Source: Clicker Data from JSK: Cocaine

Conclusions

The clicker data illustrates that JSK both improved students' factual understanding of drugs, including alcohol, and influenced their use intentionality. As a result of the program, some students did report higher inclination to use the drug in question, an inevitable effect of fact-based drug education. This outcome varied significantly between substances, likely implying a relation to the inherent appeals of specific drugs, such as the seductive safety profiles of substances like psilocybin. In part, this consequence explains the rarity of JSK-like programs and the widespread ambivalence or aversion to implementing similar models. However, owing to JSK's voluntary nature, its audiences may not accurately represent the average population; a pre-established interest in drugs could imply a general predisposition toward drug consumption. Additionally, many students actually reported either disinclination to use or expected modification of usage behaviors, and clicker pre- and post-tests illustrate a significant improvement in knowledge of drug facts and harm reduction practices, signifying JSK's value as an educational framework.

Selected References

Drug Question Mark. Image from istockphoto.com via <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2011/06/07/128238932/drug-ads>. Accessed 2 Apr. 13.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kristen Kidd Donovan and the VCU Wellness Center for allowing Just Say Know to flourish, Mr. Herb Hill and VCU UROP for funding this poster and Students for Sensible Drug Policy at VCU and Mr. Devon Tackels for his work in founding Just Say Know.