

RAISING A TEEN IN ACCRA

A presentation created by Lincoln
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November 7, 2013
Lincoln Community School

Agenda



1. Parent Thoughts
2. Clarification of Terms--- Risky Behaviors
3. Anonymous Feedback from LCS Teens (FCD Survey Data, 2010/2012)
4. Social Norms
5. Teenage Brain
6. Parent to Parent- Group Discussion
7. Parent Rights
8. Suggestions – Parent Tips



What are your thoughts about your
teen & risky behaviors?

Teens & Risky Behaviors

- Alcohol Usage
- Breaking Curfew
- Inappropriate Peer Connections
- Other Illegal Substance Use
- Clubbing

Brief Overview from FCD Survey

- Conducted by Freedom from Chemical Dependence (FCD)
- 6-12 grades
- 300 surveys
- Administered online & anonymously May 2012
- Tim Ryan, with FCD, presented

Key Findings

□ HEALTHY STUDENTS

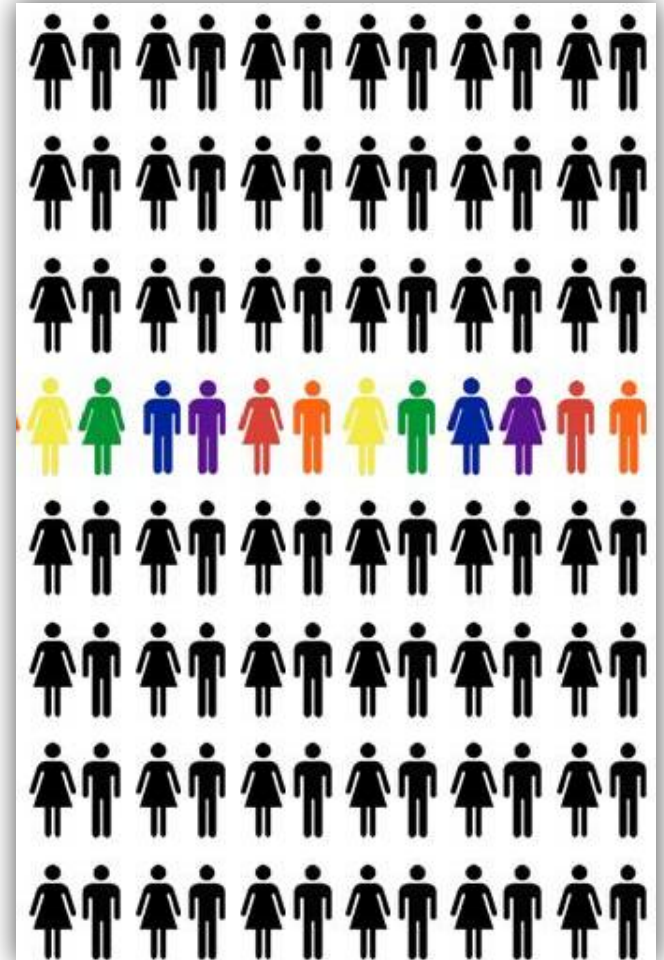
The majority of students hold positive beliefs, engage in responsible decision making, and exhibit healthy behaviors

- **57%** of students have **never** had a whole drink.
- **74%** of students do not drink at all, or typically drink 1-2 times per year.
- **Fewer** students in 2012 as compared to 2010, perceive the social atmosphere at LCS as encouraging alcohol use.
- The number of students classified as “non-drinkers” **increased** from 45 in 2010 to 65 in 2012.



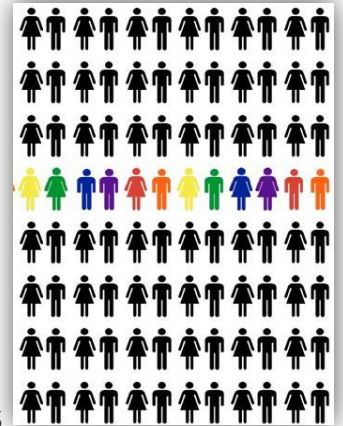
Social Norms

- Gross exaggerations
- False perceptions
- Perception influences reality
- Affects younger children
- Research-based prevention strategy



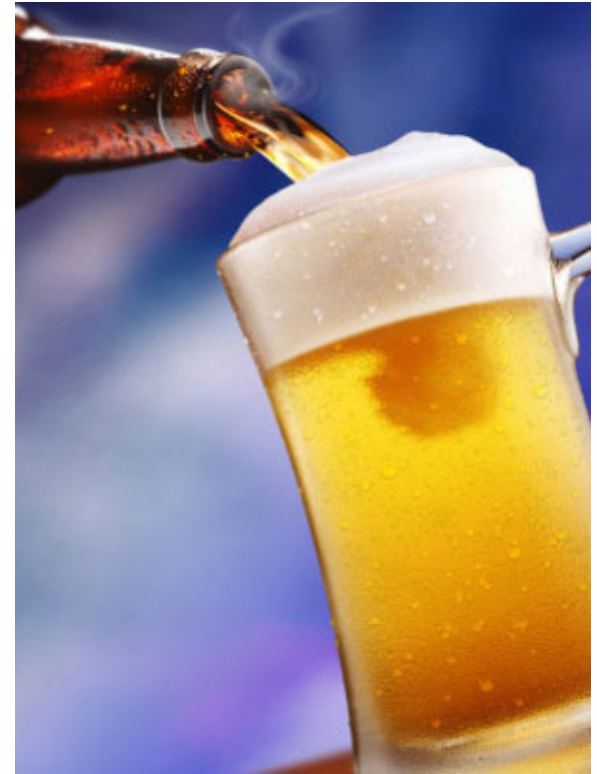
False Perceptions

- **7%** of all students think “it is cool to get drunk.”
- Yet, **42%** of all students assume schoolmates think “it is cool to get drunk.”
- **24%** of 11th graders say they typically drink once a week or more
- Yet, **65%** of 11th graders believe their classmates typically drink at this rate
- **20%** of 10th graders say they typically use marijuana 1-2 times a year or more.
- Yet, **88%** of 10th graders believe their classmates typically use marijuana at this rate.
- **29%** of 9th grade students drink once a month or more.
- Yet, **79%** of 9th grade students estimated that 9th graders drink at this rate.



Alcohol

- **65** students drank within the past 30 days.
- **64** 9th-12th grade students drank within the past 30 days.
- The majority of drinking happens at clubs or bars.
- **3%** of 7th graders drank in the past 30 days, versus **57%** of 12th graders.
- All measures of use by 12th grade students has **decreased** from 2010 to 2012.



Tobacco

- **3%** of 8th grade students report having smoked a cigarette during the past 12 months.
- **24%** of 10th graders report having smoked a cigarette during the past 12 months.
- **16%** of 12th graders report having smoked a cigarette during the past 30 days.
- The vast **majority** of LCS students choose not to smoke cigarettes.



Marijuana

- **86%** of LCS students report they “have never used marijuana at all.”
- The number of students reporting that they typically never use marijuana decreases with age - from **100%** of 6th graders to **76%** of 11th graders.



Other Drug Use

The vast majority of students do **not** use other drugs.

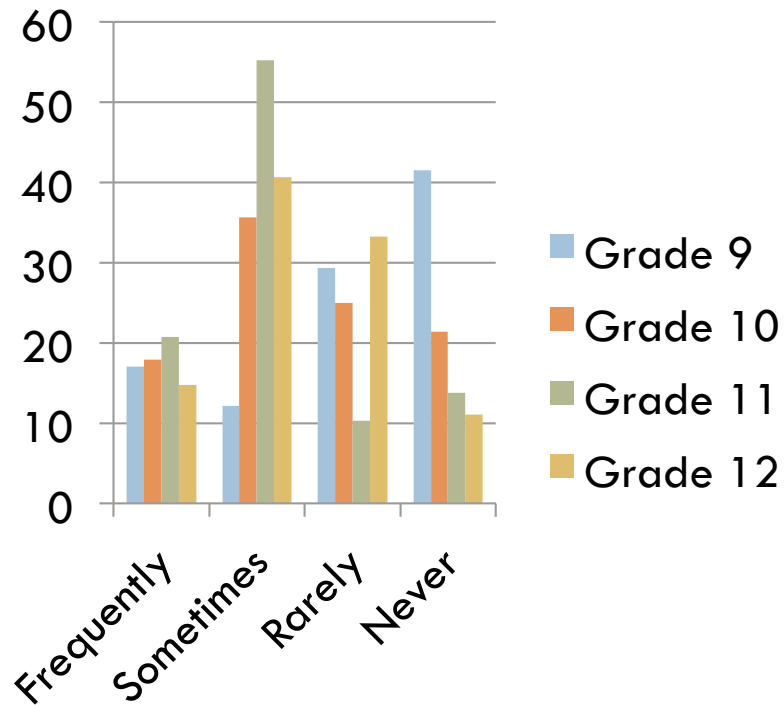
In the past 12 months:

- On par or lower than US norms
- 0% use of heroin, amphetamine, methamphetamine, LSD
- *Less than 4% of students abused :*
 - Over-the-counter drugs
 - Inhalants
 - Cocaine
 - Other hallucinogens
 - Steroids
 - Etc.

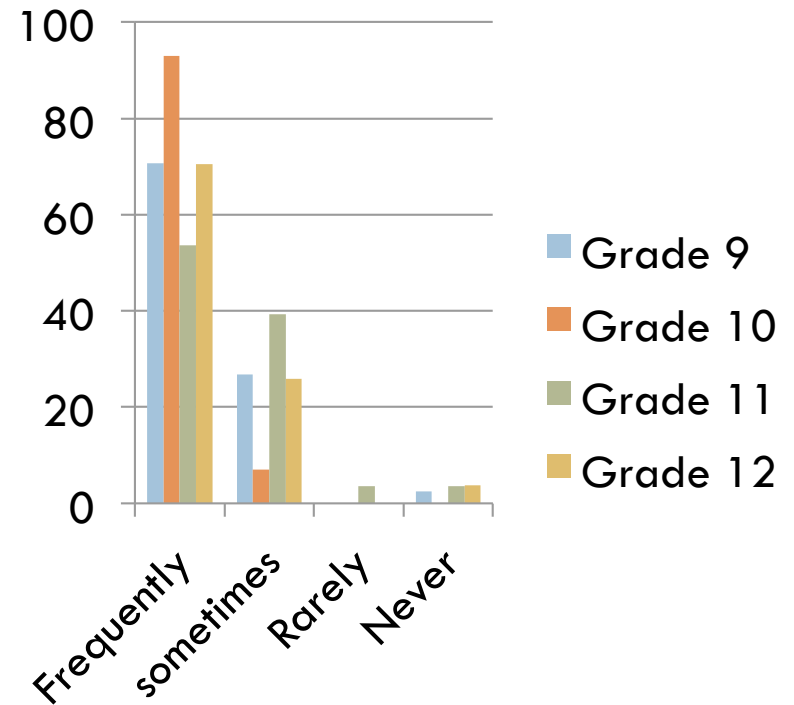


Clubbing

I go out clubbing



My peers go out clubbing



Family



29% of students do not have a curfew

60% say they are truthful about where they are what they do when they go out on the weekends

23% say their parents *sometimes* know their whereabouts on weekends.

Weekend Curfews

My weekend curfew is
between 12am- 2am.

Grade 9 35%

Grade 10 35%

Grade 11 41%

Grade 12 26%

I do not have a weekend
curfew.

Grade 9 10.3%

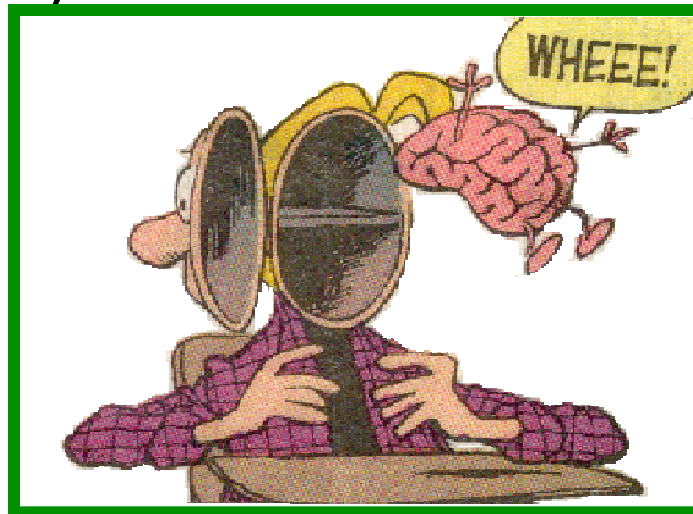
Grade 10 31%

Grade 11 24.1%

Grade 12 55.6%

What's going on inside their heads?

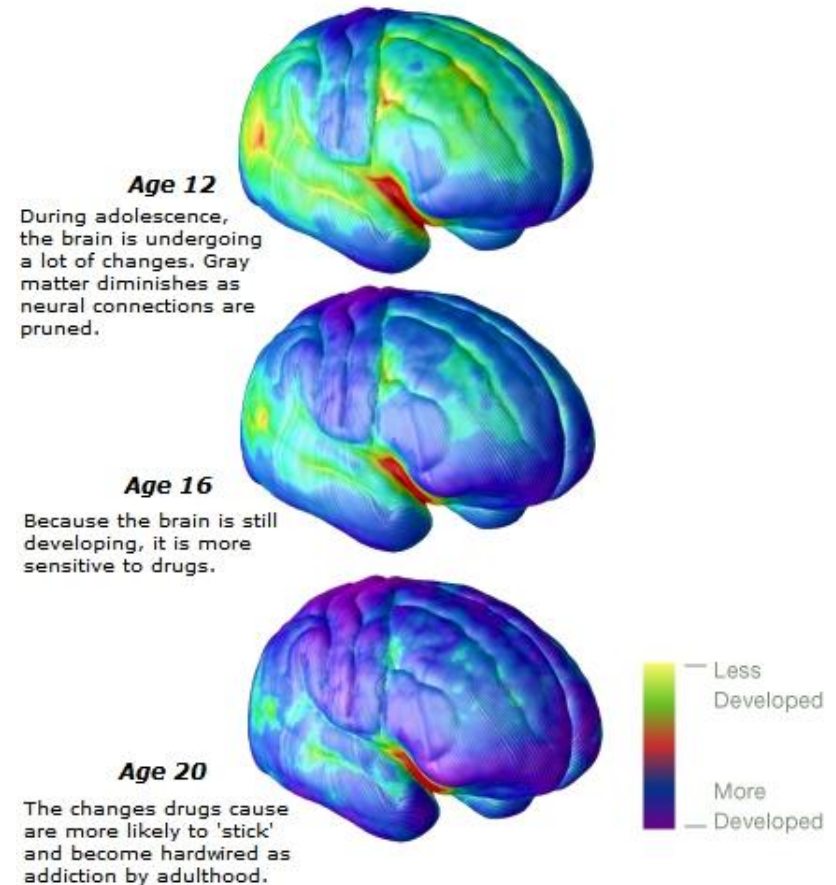
- By adolescence, the brain has reached its adult size so the conventional wisdom was that the brain was fully developed and functioning in a manner similar to that of an adult.
-the brain is still developing during the teen years.
- The brain is not fully “installed” until the early 20s.



Teenage Brain

Front brain functions that develop during adolescence:

- ▶ Abstract thinking
- ▶ Higher-order logic and reasoning (moral dilemmas)
- ▶ Self Control (emotions, impulses)
- ▶ Future-oriented thinking
- ▶ Organization



Can drug and alcohol abuse alter normal development of the teen brain?

YES....

Drinking is more dangerous for adolescents than for adults because the brain is still developing and alcohol may interrupt or disturb the process.

But remember.....

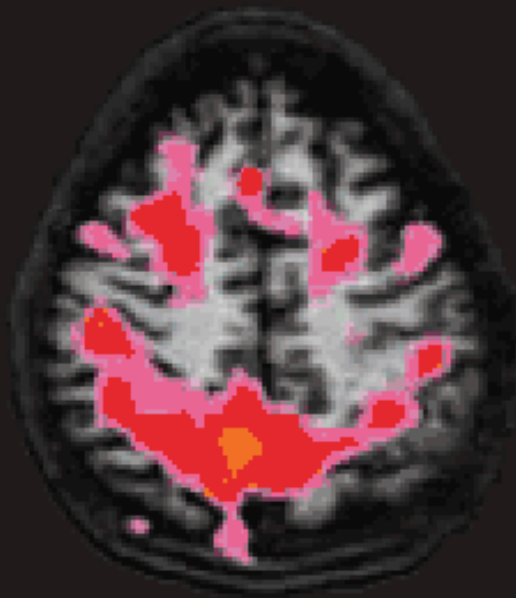
Non-use

Experimental use

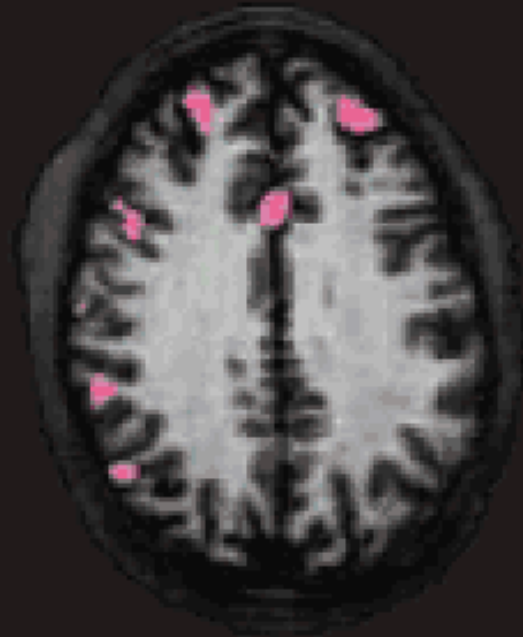
Mis- use

Abuse

**15-year-old male
non-drinker**



**15-year-old male
heavy drinker**



From: Pat Wolfe, Ed. D

DISCUSSION-

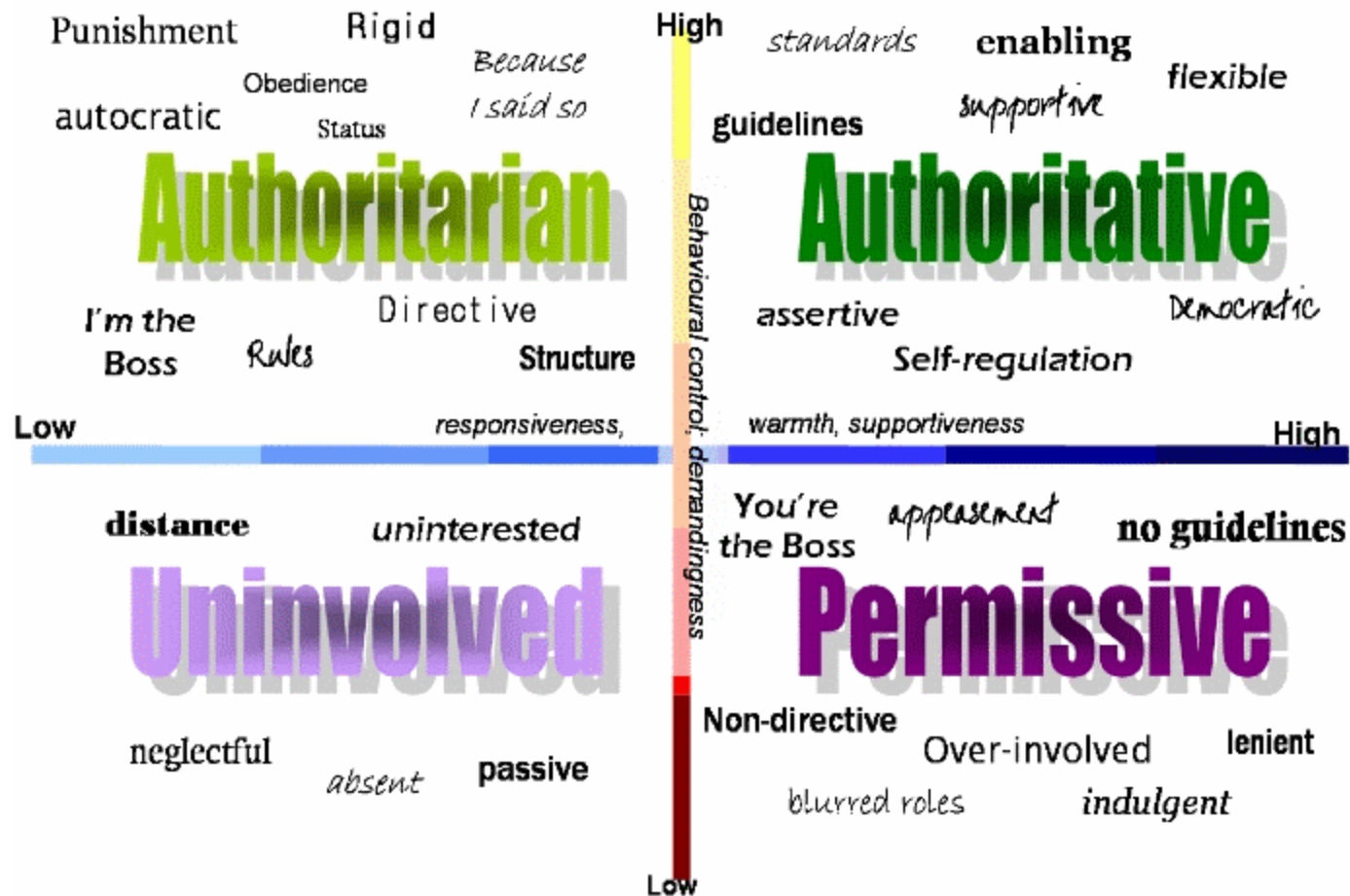
Take the next 20 minutes with the following questions. You can jot down responses to share with the group.

- What were your teenage experiences around alcohol and other drugs?
 - ▣ How does that affect your parenting now?

- What do you do well as a parent of a teen?
 - ▣ What parenting tip would you pass on?

- What do you find to be the biggest challenge or concern with parenting a preteen/teen in Accra?

Parenting Styles



The Rights of the Parent in Accra

As a parent of a teenager, or pre-teen, you have:

THE RIGHT

- not to feel guilty about bringing your child to Ghana, or transferring them to LCS from a local school, or moving to another country.
- to know who your child's friends are and to meet them.
- to know where your child is going when they go out and with whom.
- to contact and get to know the parents of your child's friends.
- to set a curfew time for coming home that YOU are comfortable with.
- to know what transportation is appropriate for your child.
- to say NO when necessary, even though “everyone else's parents lets them do it”.

These “Rights” are intended as guidelines and are meant to become the basis for discussions with your child about yours and their comfort levels in setting family rules and expectations.

Suggestions

- Continue to get to know families of friends
- Clarify cell phone rules
- Rationale behind your rules and involve your teen in rule making decisions.
- Clarity with drivers/nannies about expectations
- Get involved with the school
- Acknowledge your child for making healthy decisions!
- Parent to Parent Tips

THANK YOU!

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