

National drug facts week 2011: Shatter the myths

Addiction is a disease of the _____? Marijuana was a contributing factor in what number of emergency room visits in 2009? What does detoxification mean?

You can test your knowledge on drugs and drug abuse by taking the National Drug IQ Challenge. It's not as easy as it seems. A certain prevention professional - who shall remain anonymous, but who often writes this column - got 70% correct. And, this same anonymous person got only 60% correct on the bonus point questions. Hmmmm. What's wrong with this picture?

Even when you think you know something, it's amazing how little you do know.

That's the message of National Drug Facts Week, which is celebrated this week through Sunday, Nov. 6. The week was launched by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) as an opportunity for teens to shatter the myths about drugs and drug abuse. The focus is to get constant noise and static - incorrect information and myths - that we get from the internet, TV, movies, music and even from friends. Instead, it's time to focus on the science of drug abuse and addiction and how they affect the brain, body and behavior.

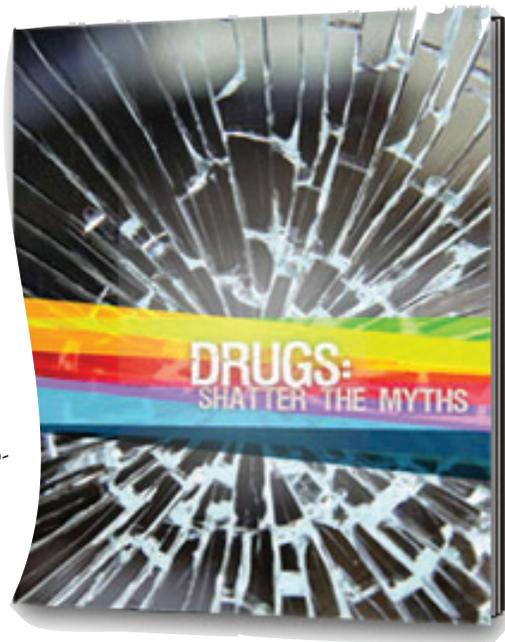
Why celebrate the week? More than a third of high school seniors nationwide report using an illicit drug sometime in the past year. Closer to home, more than 10% of Lorain County high school seniors reported non-medical use of a narcotic painkiller. Nearly 24% of Lorain County high school seniors surveyed said they had smoked marijuana in the last month. The 2009 Youth Survey was conducted by Communities That Care of Lorain County and surveyed more than 10,000 youth in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12.

Drugs can be deadly, but many teens aren't aware of the risk. Nearly 70% of all Lorain County youth surveyed in 2009 said they don't use drugs or alcohol; but they may have friends or family who do - knowing the facts and knowing where to get help can be a lifesaver.

And, clearly, even some adults - including yours truly - don't always have the facts about drugs and drug abuse's impact.

Take the quiz. Log onto: <http://drugfactsweek.drugabuse.gov/>.

You can also get a great booklet



called, "Drugs: Shatter the Myths". It's geared toward teens, but even some adults - yes, you know who - can benefit by reading the booklet. You can also download the booklet at the NIDA website link above.

If you'd like copies of the booklet, contact Communities That Care of Lorain County, a countywide coalition working to prevent underage substance abuse at 440-282-9920 or cgabe@lorainadas.org (yours truly).