

that it gives strength to carry out heavy manual work. Some users believe that it improves performance during sexual intercourse. Both these beliefs are contrary to the chemistry of the substance.

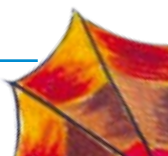
There are many such examples related to alcohol use too. Although it is a depressant of the nervous system, many consider that it improves the users' ability to have fun and be funny, bold or strong. Scientifically, alcohol, once taken, has to be absorbed in the intestine, and is metabolized in the liver before it is released in the systemic blood circulation, through which it can travel to the brain, and have an effect on its functions. This process usually takes around 30 to 45 minutes.

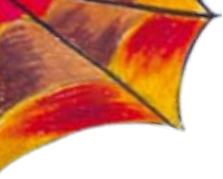
Generally, alcohol users know what they feel around an hour following alcohol use — headache, nausea, lack of coordination, etc. — which are the real chemical effects of this substance. On closer examination of alcohol-using behaviour, it becomes clear that most of the so-called “positive” effects of alcohol are felt when one joins an alcohol-using group, and begin even before actually consuming alcohol. Therefore, the positive effects which are felt are actually learned behaviour, and expectancy plays a major role (Fekjaer, 1993).

●● Who should be the target group?

As stated in the introduction, drug-use-prevention programmes can cover general audiences or specific audiences. Within the school setting too, the audience can be segmented. Although effective prevention messages and interventions should reach all students, those who are most likely to use these substances should be specifically targeted.

For drugs, the most-likely-to-use group, are the students who are more outgoing, ready to experiment and ready to follow new trends.





The most-likely-to-use group, are the students who are more outgoing, ready to experiment and ready to follow new trends. Such students can be easily identified by teachers at the classroom level. This group includes not only “problem” students who have repeated disciplinary problems and come from troubled social or economic backgrounds, but also many ordinary students.

●● How should interventions be delivered, and by whom?

Students should lead

Interventions are most effective when they become student-centred and students take the lead role in observing and working on the factors that promote drug and alcohol use. Such efforts should be made attractive and fun. This also ensures that it is appealing to the specific target group and will help to engage them.

Research shows that interventions are most effective when they are student-centred, with students taking the lead role in observing and working on the factors that promote drug and alcohol use. Interactive peer interventions are superior to non-interactive didactic, lecture programmes led by teachers/researchers.

Programmes should be interactive

Research shows that interactive peer interventions for middle school students, where they employ interactive techniques, such as peer