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Family Life in the Network Culture
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Cyber disconnects, drugs & your child

By Joanna Jullien

Most people appreciate how Internet technology and mobile phones have stimulated profound transformation in our political and economic systems.

What is not so obvious is the impact on the parent-child relationship of the home front.

Ironically, this technology that is designed to “connect” people can result in very disconnected families over time and leave our children vulnerable to leading clandestine lives with their friends and other adults where secrets are kept from parents. And where there are adolescent secrets, there is usually risky conduct involved.

“What many parents do not realize is the intensity of the exposure to the drug and alcohol culture compared to when we were kids,” said James Tillman, counselor at Full Circle Treatment Center on Sunrise Avenue in Roseville, CA. “The message kids are getting is that drugs and alcohol use are the norm,” said Tillman. Essentially, in a world where children are only cyber-connecting with friends and non-familial relations, children come to think of their parents as out of the picture, “not plugged in” and more importantly - not relevant.

The counselors at Full Circle Treatment Center encourage parents to participate with their child’s choice of Internet-powered technology (social sites including XBOX, texting, MySpace, Facebook, etc.) and communicate using the tech-

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Experts at Full Circle Treatment Center advise parents to embrace their teens preferred mode of communication—texting.



nology they use. “Communication with parents is the biggest issue we have to address with adolescents recovering from drug and alcohol addiction,” said Jordan Reiser, head of the counseling services at Full Circle Treatment Center. Sometimes this may mean texting, or setting up a Facebook account. The main objective is that the kids do not feel like they can live in a cyber-world completely isolated from Mom and Dad.

“Keep it in the open,” said Tillman.

The best way to have an appropriate presence in your child’s cyber world is to embrace the technology with your child and provide off-line wisdom and guidance as she earns more freedoms and autonomy of use. For more information about how to deal with “tech savvy” kids and get “plugged in” go to Pluggedinparent.com.

For more information about Full Circle Treatment, contact Founder and Administrative Director, Christy Crandell at 916-787-4357

Visit: Coalition for Placer Youth at www.coalitionforplaceryouth.com

For more information Google: *Sacramento Cyber Safety Examiner*



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