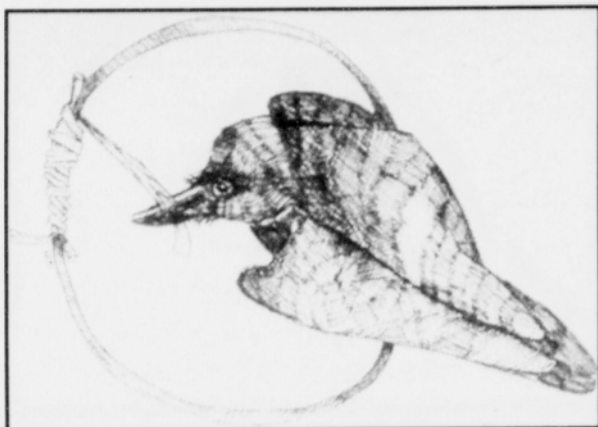


## Ask Raven

Raven will answer your questions about problems associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Look for boxes in tribal offices with Raven's picture. You can leave your questions for Raven in these boxes. Those questions suitable for the newsletter will be answered here. If you want a confidential answer to a question, please leave an address and Raven will contact you.



**Dear Raven: I have one question. Why do people do drugs and drink alcohol? From Courtney Lorraine Parsons**

Dear Courtney: Thank you for writing to me. People ask this question a lot, especially young people like you. I usually talk about everyone, but today I will tell you about me and why I drank alcohol and used drugs.

When I was a younger bird, I never really felt like I belonged. One time I was with some other young ravens and they had alcohol. I decided to drink with them to belong to their group. It made me feel different and I liked that, so I drank alcohol whenever I had a chance.

When I drank, I did not feel sad. After awhile, it seemed like drinking was the only way I could live. I got addicted to it in my body, my mind, and my spirit.

I started using drugs too and for awhile I liked them, but pretty soon my life was a mess and I was a very sick raven.

Now I am in recovery and I can feel my feelings and have good friends like you. Please stay strong and stay away from alcohol and drugs, even if your friends are using them. I hope you will write to me again, Courtney. Signed, Raven

**Dear Raven: I smoke, but I can't stop. Unsigned**

Dear Unsigned: My friend Woodpecker is an expert on smoking, so I shared your questions with her. Here is what she said:

"You are not alone. I have talked to many smokers who say the same thing. But you know what? A lot of those same people have quit. Most quit because they understand what is happening to them and what they can do about it.

"Cigarettes and other commercially processed tobacco have a powerful drug called **nicotine**. It gets in our bod-

ies by riding the tar that the smoker inhales when smoking.

"This tar, along with 5,000 other chemicals, gets breathed in and sticks to your lungs. The lungs then absorb it into the blood vessels and send the dose of nicotine to the brain. The brain begins to substitute nicotine for the natural chemicals our body already produces.

"Unfortunately, your brain tells your body that it doesn't care where you get it. It says to you, 'Just get it!' That is what we call craving.

"If we stop smoking or chewing, we can reverse this cycle of nicotine addiction.

"Good news! Lots of people have quit smoking for good. It's not easy, but it can be done. It takes a plan, patience, and practice.

"Where to begin? Talk to your doctor about ways to quit or get more information and a quit kit. You can get this information and support for quitting from DeAnna Pearl, Tobacco Prevention coordinator, at 1-800-648-0449,

## Siletz Tribal Alcohol & Drug Programs Prevention, Outpatient Treatment, and Women's Transitional

Siletz: 1-800-600-5599 or  
541-444-8286  
Eugene: 541-484-4234

Salem: 503-390-9494  
Portland: 503-238-1512

ext. 1659, or 541-444-9659; or call the Oregon Quit Line at 1-877-270-7867."

That was a lot of good information from Woodpecker! I hope you call those numbers and get some help with quitting. Please write again if you need more help or support. Signed, Raven

**Dear Raven: Why are people smoking? Signed, Britany Robertson**

Dear Britany: Here is more information for you from Woodpecker!

"People smoke for lots of reasons. Some people say cigarettes helped them reduce their stress. Some say they smoke because their parents smoked

"Most people say they started when they were kids just to show off and they became addicted to the nicotine, which is a powerful drug. The tobacco companies have made this drug so powerful that usually the smoker becomes addicted faster and stronger.

Most smokers do want to quit but they keep smoking because they are afraid of withdrawal. Funny thing is, when a person quits smoking, his/her body be-

gins to heal fast. Heart rates go back to normal. Lungs begin to heal immediately.

"Just remember, when you talk to somebody who smokes, he or she may just be scared of quitting. You can help them by being kind and respectful, and thanking them for smoking outside."

Thanks, Woodpecker! And thanks to you, Britany, for writing. Signed, Raven

## ATOD and Youth Delinquency Prevention

Parents, if you think your child may be at risk for alcohol, tobacco, or other drug problems and/or juvenile delinquency behaviors, please call Delina John or Jenifer Metcalf at 1-800-600-5599 or 541-444-8286.

One of them will talk with you about risk factors and those things that help protect your child from developing those problems. They will help you make a prevention plan that will support you as a parent and provide your child with support for making good choices.

## Underage Drinking Awareness and Prevention

by Delina John, Prevention Coordinator

I have chosen in this month's article to focus on the "Start Talking Before They Start Drinking" campaign. It urges parents to speak with their children about underage drinking in order to delay the onset of and ultimately reduce underage drinking.

### Campaign Background

Research shows that parents of teens generally underestimate the extent of alcohol used by youth and its negative consequences, with the vast majority viewing underage drinking as "inevitable." Many parents also find it difficult to know how or when to start a conversation with their children about underage drinking.

The campaign seeks to overcome parents' misperceptions about underage drinking by creating a greater urgency around the issue and encouraging them to communicate with their children about alcohol at an early age.

### Campaign Description

The public service announcement in this campaign features children predicting the future consequences of their own underage drinking and reminds parents that children who begin drinking at an early age are more likely to develop alcohol problems.

The message communicated is that parents need to talk to their children early

and often about alcohol and especially before they've started drinking.

Parents are encouraged to visit [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov) or call the toll-free number 1-800-729-6686 to get information about teens and alcohol, as well as tips on how to initiate conversations with their children about underage drinking.

**Campaign target audience:** Parents of children age 11-15.

### Did You Know?

- 11.1 percent of 12-year-olds report using alcohol at least once in their lifetime. That percentage doubles by age 13 and by age 15 is more than 50 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Children who begin drinking alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol problems than those who start after age 21.<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol kills more young people than all other illegal drugs combined.<sup>3</sup>
- More than one-quarter – 1.8 million – of alcohol-dependent adults age 21 or older in 2003 first used alcohol before age 14. More than 80 percent – 5.1 million – of alcohol-dependent adults first used alcohol before they were age 18. Ninety-six percent – 6.0 million – of alcohol-dependent adults, first used before age 21.<sup>4</sup>

This campaign is a really strong message to parents. I encourage all parents who are having thoughts that their child/children could be experiencing underage drinking to check out the Web site listed above to get points on what you could do.

SAMSHA and the Ad Council put out great television, radio, and poster ads – please look for them. The message is very clear: **talk to your children.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 1-800-600-5599 or 541-444-8267.

- 1 The NSDUH Report, 2004
- 2 The NSDUH Report, 2004
- 3 EIC and NIAAA, Spotlight on Underage Drinking, No. 22, 2004
- 4 The NSDUH Report, 2004

## Meth Task Force Meeting

March 1 – 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Siletz Community Health Clinic  
Conference Room

We will show the DVD "G."  
It was produced and sponsored by the Tuba City Regional Health Care Cooperation on the Navajo Reservation.

This film won the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual American Indian Film Festival's Best Public Service Award.

Please join us!



Happy St. Patrick's Day!