

# Youth Speak about Drugs

The following is a poem that is in the "Drug Speak" book. This is a book that contains stories, poems, and art for youth about how drugs had an impact on their life or the life of someone they know. It also refers to mental health issues and drug use as well as some facts and information about harm reduction and drug use. The stories were collected by a group of youth called Youth Overcoming Pressure and has been over three years in the making. It will be printed before Christmas of this year and ready for distribution around the New Year. In addition, after the poem, there is a commentary from one of the youth who is part of the Youth Overcoming Pressure group talking about her experience.

## Today's youth

What's the point of pushing through?  
We take drugs to cure sadness  
Our friends are addicts  
No one can visualize the pain of this madness.

This could be such a horrible demise,  
we're all hiding the truth.  
Covering it with lies,  
'Cause no one really cares.

No one can feel the pain we feel,  
'Cause no one suffers like we do.  
We have this past and present of sorrow  
everyone's telling us we have a bright future  
Why can't we see it, or believe them?  
we only see in our head,  
Wishing there was no tomorrow.

They're always telling us,  
"tomorrow another day."  
None of us really believe that;  
At the end of the day,  
we still think we're fat,  
unattractive, unloved.  
No one can change how we feel;  
or how we think.

Most of us give up hope.  
everything is crushing our soul.  
Some say we have heart;  
others say it's just a black hole.  
We keep the ones we love at heart;  
No other deserves a sacred part.  
Who knows, they could rip it right out;  
and tear it apart.

Poem: Anonymous

## Youth commentary

This poem is related to harm reduction because this youth gives insight into the mind, body and souls of today's youth and what they may be thinking, feeling and experiencing when drawn to using.

Here is my experience as another example. When I went to Youth Overcoming Pressure for the first time, I was very reluctant to attend the meeting. But after I was there I loved it. I loved being a part of something bigger in my community. I love being a part of Y.O.P. and teaching other youth about mental health and teaching them there is more to life than drugs and death because I've been down that path and it can be a dangerous path for any youth to go down. I love learning about drugs and what they do to the human body so I can tell my friends or just a random stranger on the street what they are doing to their body may be damaging them or even certain things that are potentially killing them. Or just safety tips in general.

Yes I know from personal experience that there are a lot of pressures put on teens so they turn to drugs to get rid of the stress. For example, with me it started with getting into an abusive relationship then I started taking seizures. So I abused drugs as an escape from the real world. The drugs made me forget temporarily. I let myself fall to a dark place and I let the drugs bring me to a darker place.

But what really helped me eventually deal with the abuse and reactions to the stress of having seizures was when I stood up for myself and got myself out of that abusive situation and learned ways to cope with my emotions from having seizures. But it was not so easy and simple. I did not think I needed help or was doing anything that was wrong or dangerous. I thought it was fun. I did not think my using was causing me danger or that I was dependant on using. It took a friend catching me and deciding to tell the principal of our school because that friend was very worried about my safety. I was really mad at this person at the time. However, this led to me getting help - such as counselling and learning other ways to cope and joining the Y.O.P. group. I learned about seizures and started to do public speaking around this as well as public speaking on mental health issues and going to schools and telling my story.

If you have any inquiries about the book Drug Speak please feel free to email [aculham@opendoors.on.ca](mailto:aculham@opendoors.on.ca), or you can call Angela Culham (613) 880-3489.

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