



*"God's heart beating for the hurting world"*

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## **MARIJUANA EDUCATION & PREVENTION PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this proposal is to provide a brief overview of a marijuana education and prevention program the JBU CARE Clinic developed for the Court System and River Valley community. The course addresses the realities of the social, physiological, psychological, economic, and legal consequences of making the choice to continue using marijuana. The program also provides a much needed information and community resources for continued help.

### **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

1. Participants will gain an increased awareness on the detrimental effects of marijuana use.
2. Participants will recognize and acknowledge their own struggles with marijuana use and be able to identify personal strengths and/or natural resources to help them make needed lifestyle changes.
3. Participants will become aware of community resources to assist with follow-up care and relapse prevention if needed.
4. Decreased recidivism of offenders adjudicated through the Drug Court for marijuana related offenses.
5. Increased public awareness on the negative effects of marijuana use in our community.

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The program would initially be offered once a month on a predetermined Thursday from 6:00-9:30 pm depending on length of group discussions. Additional groups would be added each month if the need arises. Each group would consist of around 10 or more adults.

One of the foundational elements present in most substance abuse programs, including be the 12 Step Program, is to help participants recognize and acknowledge that they have a problem. Consistent with this goal, this program would minimally seek to help participants recognize and acknowledge that their use of marijuana has negatively affected their lives and that continued use would have detrimental effects.

Below is a brief description of the program content:

- Participants will be welcomed and given information about the content and structure of the course. Participants will be informed that this is an actual class and that there will be a short test at the end. They will be informed that if they listen and actively participate they will pass this course. If they choose not to listen and participate then their grade will reflect this lack of interest and like any other class, if they do not pass, they would have to retake the course. No one should do poorly on the test unless they want to do poorly. Hints will be given throughout the course as to what information they will need to know. The course is set up for success, not failure.
- The group will become acquainted with each other by everyone introducing themselves, telling a bit about themselves, and telling why they are here. The facilitator will attempt to gauge each participant's level of readiness for change and utilize group dynamics to promote individual growth throughout the program.
- Participants will then view a video which contains cutting edge information that is both educational and therapeutic. The video provides basic facts about marijuana use and how it can affect one physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially. The video will be stopped at various points to highlight important information and facilitate group discussion. Participants will also be given handouts containing facts about marijuana and its use to invite additional questions and comments.
- The facilitator will then provide information about the addictive cycle including how and why individuals become addicted, how to recognize addictive behaviors, and what they can do to break the addictive cycle. Additional topics that will be covered include: cross addiction (when one addiction is halted another addiction takes its place), physiological effects of addiction, and psychological effects of the addiction process.
- Participants will be given a list of local resources including counselors, therapists, substance abuse treatment programs, and 12 Step meetings. Participants will be encouraged to seek therapeutic treatment if needed. Participants will also be given several handouts with supportive information on marijuana use.
- After reviewing what they have learned through the program and what they have learned about themselves, participants will take a short exam. The exam will consist of 25 multiple choice and true/false questions from the information presented. Exams will be graded upon completion.
- Participants will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire that will ask for their feedback about the course. This will allow for ongoing analysis of the course, allowing for adjustments when merited.
- Participants will be given their certificates and congratulated on their successful completion of the program.
- The referring Court will be notified within 24 hours as to who participated and completed the course.

## Annual Report:

This course was developed and facilitated by Dr. Pat Nation, LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor, CSMS (Certified Sentence Mitigation Specialist), Forensic Counselor.

This program/course began September 2009 and continues to date. Based on the completion of this program, first time offenders have the opportunity to have their drug charges removed from court records after one year of non-reoffending. The first preliminary annual report on this program indicates a recitivism rate of 4%, with indicates that none of the offenders re-offending. This program may be helpful for other communities to consider in dealing with first time marijuana offenders.

The presentation of this program at the National Conference on Substance Abuse, Child Welfare and the Courts will go into details on the development and utilization of this program for other communities. It is the hope of the developer that other communities will benefit from the sharing of this program.