

Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder

Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder or SCD is a disorder in which a person has difficulty with social interaction and pragmatics. Children with SCD are able to understand word structure and grammar, but struggle to communicate appropriately in social situations. They often have difficulty altering speech based on social contexts and understanding implied information that is not specifically stated. Children with SCD also experience difficulty understanding the give and take of communication.

Children may begin to show signs of SCD at an early age, but are often not diagnosed until they begin school.

Symptoms of SCD include the following:

- Lack understanding of how to greet people
- Dominate conversations
- Does not adapt speech to accommodate changes in environment (i.e., speaking to adults and peers the same way or speaking the same way in the classroom as they do at recess)
- Trouble understanding nonverbal communication or sarcasm
- Begin a conversation without providing background information



Children with SCD can have problems making friends and interacting with their peers. Their behaviors (i.e. interrupting or dominating conversations) can come across as rude or as if they lack manners, which can make it difficult to make and keep friends. They are also more likely to act out or become withdrawn. SCD can also affect academic development. Children with SCD often struggle with reading comprehension and may experience difficulty developing writing skills.

SCD overlaps with signs of autism spectrum disorder. It is important to have the child properly diagnosed to rule out autism spectrum disorder. Once a diagnosis has been made, a speech pathologist can help determine a treatment plan.

There are cultural considerations for diagnosis and treatment of SCD. Social norms play a significant role in the way we communicate with others. It is important to have an understanding of the student's culture when working with the student on communication skills. A speech pathologist can help determine the difference between cultural differences or a disorder.

Strategies for parents:

- Read stories with your child and have discussions to help them with reading comprehension
- Schedule structured play dates with one friend at a time limited to 90 minutes
- Model and practice appropriate communication; make eye contact and discuss appropriate ways to ask questions

- Talk to your child's school about developing a 504 plan or an individualized education program (IEP)
- Learn about the resources available in your community (i.e., therapist or support group)

Sources:

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/communication-disorders/understanding-social-communication-disorder>

<https://childmind.org/guide/social-communication-disorder/what-is-it/>

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/04/03/what-social-communication-disorder-how-it-treated>

The Drug Culture: The Role of Awareness in Prevention and Intervention of Youth Substance Use

The culture of youth is ever evolving with each new decade. Understanding the world of our youth is very much a cat and mouse game. Just when we think we have it figured out, a new trend arises. Staying engaged in the lives of our youth, asking questions, listening, having conversations and paying attention to behaviors can help us in our endeavors to stay ahead. When it comes to drug references, it may be hard for the average parent or educator to detect. Popular music, clothing and language is often filled with hidden meanings that without education, adults may be blind to otherwise. Drug culture can also be seen in the online world. The accessibility of drug paraphernalia, information and connections to others who may be engaging in at-risk behaviors can easily be found via the internet.

One of our greatest roles in SCIP is to increase awareness and education of parents and school professionals surrounding youth substance use. SCIP had the pleasure of attending the Northeast Nebraska Drug Symposium in December. Jermaine Galloway is an international instructor on trends in drug/alcohol culture and enforcement methods. After spending nearly 20 years in law enforcement working to reduce underage drinking and drug use, Galloway now devotes his career to educating professionals, parents and communities in the hope of better equipping communities in their youth substance use prevention efforts. Teaching by the motto, “You can’t stop what you don’t know”, Galloway provided us with valuable information that can assist us in recognizing drug references within current youth culture.

The Internet and Drug Use

YouTube

- How to Make Pot Brownies
- Cannabis 101
- Hash School: Make Your Own Dabs
- How to Make High Grade Extracts

Online Stores

- Only requirement is you must click a box that says you are 18
- Can purchase an assortment of drug paraphernalia, including clothing used to hide drugs.
 - www.everyonedoesit.com
 - www.rollingpaperwarehouse.com
 - www.paraphernailaboutique.com
 - www.grasscity.com
- Be aware that there are online sales for synthetic drugs that are often advertised as Research Chemicals (RC). Sometimes called designer drugs, synthetics are highly dangerous, come out of a lab and are often stronger than the drug it was meant to mimic. Manufacturers of “Research Chemicals” are constantly changing formulas to avoid laws.
 - <https://www.smokeyschemsite.com>

Clothing

- Green Arbor Clothing is known to make clothing that references the drug culture.
 - <http://greenarborclothing.com/history/>
 - Produces t-shirts highlighting different marijuana strains.
 - Sour Diesel, Girl Scout Cookies, Pineapple Express (all different marijuana strains.)
- Be aware of certain clothing lines that provide “stash” compartments and hidden pockets inside garments to hide drugs.
- Supra, No Bad Ideas and Grassroots are examples.



Language/Symbols

- *Molly*- A reference to Ecstasy
- *420*- A term in marijuana culture for the international pot smoking time and day (4:20 or 4/20).
- *710*- The word oil upside down in reference to marijuana concentrates.
- *Image of double Styrofoam cups*- a reference to a mixture of cough syrup (active ingredient DXM) and soda. Also referred to as Lean, Dirty Sprite, Purple Drank and Sizzurp. When mixed in high quantities has the effect of drunkenness to hallucinations.



References: www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov (DEA Resource); Jermain Galloway (2017)

School Community Intervention and Prevention

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Kratom Kraze: The Next Drug Trend

You may have seen advertisements or heard radio commercials about Kratom being sold at your local tobacco or head-shop. You may ask yourself, “What exactly is Kratom?”

Kratom is a mind-altering drug that is produced from a tropical tree (*Mitragyna Speciosa*) native to Southeast Asia, with leaves that contain psychoactive opioid compounds. The tree’s bitter leaves are consumed for stimulant/ mood-uplifting effects and pain relief. The leaves and stems are dried and either chewed, brewed or smoked. Low doses have a stimulant effect in the same manner as caffeine while higher doses have opioid-like effects and have been known to cause hallucinations.

Kratom currently is not an illegal substance in the United States, though it has been banned in other countries and/or is listed as a controlled substance that requires a prescription for its use.

In recent years, some people have used Kratom as an herbal alternative to medical treatment in attempts to control withdrawal symptoms and cravings caused by addiction to other opioids or to other addictive substances such as alcohol. However, there is no scientific evidence that Kratom is effective or safe for this purpose.

Individuals are using Kratom to help reduce pain, anxiety and depression, as well as treat symptoms of opioid withdrawal. However, according to the FDA Commissioner, there is no “reliable evidence” to support the use of Kratom as a treatment for opioid-use disorder, and that there are no other FDA-approved uses for Kratom. Rather, he said, the evidence shows that Kratom has similar effects to narcotics like opioids, “and carries similar risks of abuse, addiction and, in some cases, death.” He said that calls to U.S. poison control centers involving Kratom increased tenfold between 2010 and 2015, and that Kratom is associated with side effects including seizures, liver damage and withdrawal symptoms.

While Kratom by itself is not associated with fatal overdose, commercial forms of the drug that are sold in the tobacco/headshops and over the internet are sometimes laced with other compounds that have caused deaths. The FDA has issued a strong warning to consumers to stay away from the herbal supplement Kratom, saying officials are aware of at least 36 deaths linked to products containing the substance. Likewise, there are other reported side effects when using Kratom. Reported health effects of Kratom use include:

- sensitivity to sunburn
- nausea
- itching
- sweating
- dry mouth
- constipation
- increased urination
- loss of appetite
- psychotic symptoms



In addition to the side effects, like other opioid drugs, Kratom may cause dependence (feeling physical withdrawal symptoms when not taking the drug). Some users have reported becoming addicted to Kratom. Some of the reported withdrawal symptoms include:

- muscle aches
- insomnia
- irritability
- hostility
- aggression
- emotional changes
- runny nose
- jerky movements



It should be noted, the FDA said it is working to prevent Kratom from entering the US. But the drug is currently legal in 43 states (Nebraska included) as it awaits a final decision from the FDA on how to classify the drug.

For more information about Kratom please visit the websites below.

<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/Kratom>

<https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm584952.htm>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/Kratom>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../fda-warns-of-deadly-risks-of-herb-Kratom-citing-36>

<https://nypost.com/2017/11/18/fda-finally-rules-on-kratom-its-a-potential-killer>

www.scipnebraska.com