



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Know the Truth Updates Curriculum for Distance Learning *71 percent of youth believe substance use has increased due to COVID-19*

MINNEAPOLIS — Know the Truth™ (KTT), the substance use prevention program of Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, is adapting its curriculum for the 2020 – 2021 academic year. In addition to incorporating information on the latest youth substance use trends such as vaping, the program is also addressing the specific needs of Gen Z and adding virtual capabilities. Schools now have the option to host in-person presentations, live virtual presentations, or virtual presentations that students can log on to at any time.



“Every year our presenters speak at more than 160 high schools and middle schools throughout the state, reaching an estimated 60,000 students,” says Mika Nervick, the prevention program coordinator for Know the Truth. “While we will no longer be in person at every school, our virtual capabilities are allowing us to reach even more students across the state, including in outstate Minnesota where we have not been able to hold presentations previously.”

Prevention education is proving to be more important than ever during the twin crises of COVID-19 and social unrest. In a survey of youth conducted over the summer, Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge found that 71 percent believe that youth substance use has increased during COVID-19. Additionally, over half of youth reported using or considering using substances to cope with mental health struggles and 47 percent have used or thought about using a new substance since the start of the pandemic.

Since the Know the Truth program began more than a decade ago, it has seen significant success in helping prevent substance use among Minnesota’s young people. The program utilizes a peer-to-peer format, where Know the Truth presenters – often just a few years older than the students – share their personal struggles with substance use. This format allows students to open up and helps Know the Truth bridge the gap between the students and the parents, care givers, teachers and community leaders who support them. In most cases, the Know the Truth presentations are included in the standard health curriculum, embedded into the drug and alcohol unit.

Tracee Anderson, director of prevention and community engagement at Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge says, “The Know the Truth™ program works and helps save lives, especially since the vast majority of Americans who struggle with addiction started smoking, drinking, or using drugs before age 18.”

During the 2019 – 2020 school year, Know the Truth conducted surveys following presentations. After hearing the presentation, 87 percent of students said they would not use tobacco or nicotine until the legal age of use, and 71 percent would not use alcohol before age 21.

In addition to classroom presentations, students are encouraged to seek continued dialogue with the presenters through social media, reaching out to @knowthetruthmn on Twitter, and through the text hotline at 612-440-3967.

About Know the Truth

Know the Truth (KTT) is the substance-use prevention program of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge. KTT works within communities to help prevent teenage substance use by sharing personal stories about the struggles with addiction and by presenting students with information about the dangers of alcohol and drug use. Each year, KTT speaks in more than 160 high schools and middle schools and reaches more than 60,000 students.