

## **ADOLESCENTS, YOUNG PEOPLE & DRUG ABUSE**

The transition from adolescence to young adulthood is a crucial period in which experimentation with illicit drugs in many cases begins.

Drugs may have strong appeal to young people who are beginning their struggle for independence as they search for identity. Because of their innate curiosity and thirst for new experiences, peer pressures, their resistance to authority, sometimes low self-esteem and problems in establishing positive interpersonal relationships, young people are particularly susceptible to the allure of drugs.

However, youth around the world do not all have the same reasons for abusing drugs.

### **SOME REASONS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE USE DRUGS:**

- Street children, working children, sexually exploited children may use drugs to cope with problems of unemployment, neglect, violence and sexual abuse. In such cases, drugs are used for functional reasons – to keep awake for work, to get to sleep, to reduce hunger, to reduce physical and emotional pain).
- Some young people do drugs to change the way they feel. Often they want to change their situation. If they're depressed, they want to become happy. If they are stressed or nervous, they want to relax. By taking drugs, people often think they can be the person they want to be.
- Some young people take drugs to stay awake so they can study or to escape the pressures from academic life.
- Some young people take drugs because they want to fit in and not be the only one who is not participating.
- Some young people take drugs because they are bored. They turn to drugs for a little excitement because there is nothing else that interests them.
- Some young people are influenced by the entertainment world that make drugs appear attractive and cool.
- Some young people take drugs because they think it makes them seem grown-up.
- Some young people take drugs because they want to rebel. They turn to drugs not so much for themselves, but to make a statement against someone else, such as their families or society in general.
- Some young people take drugs because they want to experiment.