

# REAL TALK

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WWW.MISSFLORIDAREALTALK.COM



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Miss Florida 2019

### What is Real Talk?

Real Talk is a comprehensive, educational program designed for high school and college students that discusses the dangers of drugs and alcohol, particularly in relation to how these behaviors can result in substance abuse and addiction. Real Talk highlights the realities and differences between mental and physical effects of alcohol on the brain, as well as emerging trends among youth relating to experimentation with different substances.

### Who presents Real Talk?

Miss Florida and local representatives are the official presenters of Real Talk. Each has gone through training in order to be able to effectively conduct the presentations in schools.

### Why is Real Talk important?

1/7 people in the USA will face addiction, per the 2016 Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health (page 3). Knowledge is power. Real Talk aims to equip students with the information they need to make responsible decisions and avoid the unintended consequences of experimenting with or abusing drugs and alcohol.

### Where does the Real Talk curriculum come from?

The curriculum for the Real Talk program has been adapted from the Alcohol Literacy Challenge, which has revolutionized classroom-based prevention efforts by changing students' beliefs about the effects of alcohol through cutting-edge brain science and media literacy education. The Alcohol Literacy Challenge curricula is included in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)'s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

### How many students have been reached with the Real Talk program?

In just three years, Real Talk has reached more than 7,500 students in over 35 presentations, all across the state of Florida-- and that number is growing by the day!



February 10, 2017- St Johns Country Day School,  
appearance by Courtney Sexton in Jacksonville, FL



April 11, 2018- New Smyrna Beach High School,  
appearance by Sara Zeng in New Smyrna Beach, FL

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## Topics Covered

- Alcohol facts and figures
- Physical vs. Mental Effects of Alcohol
- Binge Drinking
- Substance Abuse & Hazing resulting in accidental deaths
- Abuse of Benzodiazepine (Depressants such as Xanax and Klonopin)
- Abuse of Stimulants (Adderall, Vyvanse, Study drugs)
- Laced and "fake" drugs
- The increased danger of combining substances
- The disease of addiction
- Genetic predispositions
- The brain science behind drug abuse

## Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, over 27 million people in the United States reported current use of illicit drugs or misuse of prescription drugs, and over 66 million people (nearly a quarter of the adult and adolescent population) reported binge drinking in the past month. Alcohol and drug misuse and related disorders are major public health challenges that are taking an enormous toll on individuals, families, and society. Neighborhoods and communities as a whole are also suffering as a result of alcohol- and drug-related crime and violence, abuse and neglect of children, and the increased costs of health care associated with substance misuse. It is estimated that the yearly economic impact of substance misuse is \$249 billion for alcohol misuse and \$193 billion for illicit drug use.

Despite the social and economic costs, this is a time of great opportunity. Ongoing health care and criminal justice reform efforts, as well as advances in clinical, research, and information technologies are creating new opportunities for increased access to effective prevention and treatment services. This Report reflects our commitment to leverage these opportunities to drive improvements in individual and public health related to substance misuse, use disorder, and related health consequences.

Most Americans know someone with a substance use disorder, and many know someone who has lost or nearly lost a family member as a consequence of substance misuse. Yet, at the same time, few other medical conditions are surrounded by as much shame and misunderstanding as substance use disorders. Historically, our society has treated addiction and misuse of alcohol and drugs as symptoms of moral weakness or as a willful rejection of societal norms, and these problems have been addressed primarily through the criminal justice system. Our health care system has not given the same level of attention to substance use disorders as it has to other health concerns that affect similar numbers of people. Substance use disorder treatment in the United States remains largely segregated from the rest of health care and serves only a fraction of those in need of treatment. Only about 10 percent of people with a substance use disorder receive any type of specialty treatment. Further, over 40 percent of people with a substance use disorder also have a mental health condition, yet fewer than half (48.0 percent) receive treatment for either disorder.

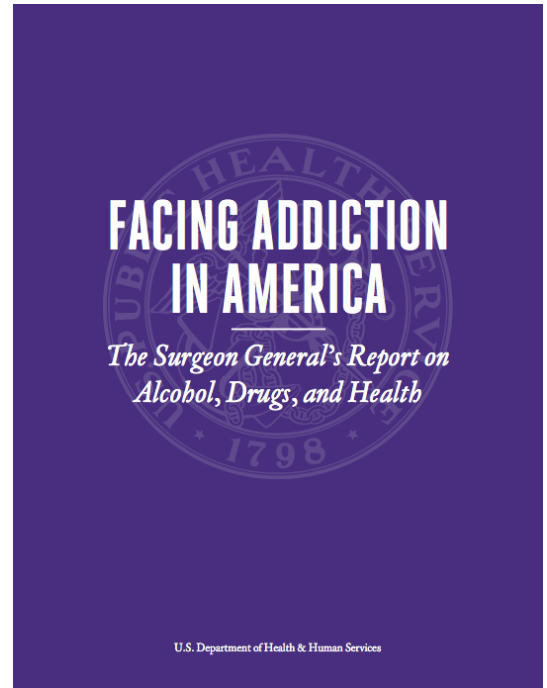
Many factors contribute to this "treatment gap," including the inability to access or afford care, fear of shame and discrimination, and lack of screening for substance misuse and substance use disorders in general health care settings. Further, about 40 percent of individuals who know they have an alcohol or drug problem are not ready to stop using, and many others simply feel they do not have a problem or a need for treatment—which may partly be a consequence of the neurobiological changes that profoundly affect the judgment, motivation, and priorities of a person with a substance use disorder.

#### References:

1. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2016). Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed tables. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
2. Sacks, J. J., Gonzales, K. R., Bouchery, E. E., Tomedi, L. E., & Brewer, R. D. (2015). 2010 national and state costs of excessive alcohol consumption. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 49(5), e73-e79.
3. National Drug Intelligence Center. (2011). National drug threat assessment. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

#### Footnotes:

- i. Binge drinking for men is drinking 5 or more standard alcoholic drinks, and for women, 4 or more standard alcoholic drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.



### Addiction is a disease:

Addiction is a chronic disease characterized by drug seeking and use that is compulsive, or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences. You wouldn't try to treat a chronic medical condition, like diabetes, without professional help. Addiction shouldn't be different.

### Nearly 70% of those who try an illicit drug before the age of 13 develop a substance use disorder within 7 years:

Those who are exposed to drugs at an earlier age are at far greater risk to develop an addiction later in life. Middle school students, and even those in elementary school, are experimenting with drugs, often, without any knowledge of the side effects or possible outcomes.

### Alcohol is a depressant:

Despite perceived mental effects like sociability and, alcohol depresses the central nervous system, (including the brain), which slows down heart rate, breathing and reaction times. When combined with other depressants, like Xanax, its effects can be lethal.

### Every person can react differently to the same substance:

Human bodies are not machines. Some people are more prone to developing addiction than others based on genetic predispositions and environmental factors. One person may try a drug and never do it again... the next person could develop a debilitating substance abuse problem after just one try. Never encourage others to experiment with drugs-- even if you've tried them yourself.

### Just because it's legal, doesn't mean it's safe:

Cigarettes are legal, yet their negative health effects are widely understood. If a doctor prescribes medication, it's only safe if used appropriately by the person prescribed, at a certain dose, for a specific length of time. When abused, almost any substance can cause permanent damage or death-- especially when combined with other drugs.

### Marijuana isn't "harmless":

Marijuana is 3x stronger now than it was in the 1970's. Unless it's prescribed by a doctor, there's no way to know if the substance is "laced" with another type of drug (like PCP, a potent hallucinogenic), fungi or dangerous pesticides, which can kill or otherwise permanently harm a user. Likewise, despite medicinal marijuana recently being legalized, recreational use is still illegal and punishable by law.

### Prescription painkillers can lead to heroin:

Prescription painkillers, like Oxycontin, Hydrocodone and Vicodin, are in the same family of drugs, called "opiates", as heroin. Because they are similar in chemical makeup, they produce a similar "high". Rx painkillers are "controlled substances", making them difficult to obtain and expensive, which is why many people who become dependent on these legal drugs wind up developing an addiction to heroin.

### And heroin is more dangerous than ever:

Heroin is becoming stronger and stronger, and was recently found to be laced with extremely dangerous substances like animal tranquilizers and Fentanyl, a very potent, highly addictive painkiller. This has caused thousands of overdoses deaths, resulting in a 900% increase in the last 3 years.



### Take a look at what school administrators and teachers are saying about Real Talk...

“ Miss Florida's presentation was engaging, thought-provoking, and offered valuable, research-based information in a student-friendly format. Students left the presentation talking about what they learned which was above and beyond other drug abuse prevention programs. I highly recommend Real Talk for any high school audience! ”

- Krista Diamond, Director of Counseling Services  
Carrollwood Day School, Tampa, FL



January 29, 2017- Miss Florida Courtney Sexton poses with Carrollwood Day School administrators after speaking to their 9-12 grade students.

“ Real Talk with Miss Florida was just what our students needed. I haven't seen our students sit so attentively and participate so actively in an assembly ever. The information was presented factually but in real terms and situations that our students could relate to and implement in their lives. Courtney was able to reach the students in a way our faculty never could. I would strongly recommend this program to all schools! It is time well spent. ”

- Natasha Sherwood, Headmaster  
Tampa Bay Christian Academy, Tampa, FL



November 16, 2016- Miss Florida Courtney Sexton pictured with WPHS HOPE instructor Bobby Garris after speaking to Garris' freshman classes.

“ Real Talk was an outstanding presentation to our freshman at Winter Park High School. Courtney was a poised speaker and had our student's undivided attention from the start. ”

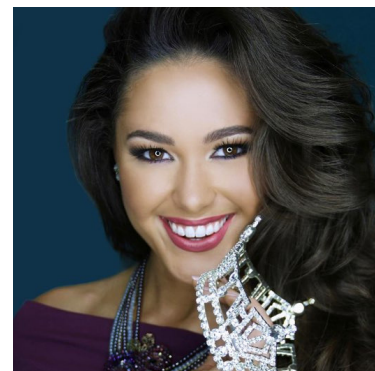
- Bobby Garris, HOPE Teacher & Assistant Athletic Director  
Winter Park High School, Winter Park, FL

## Advanced Recovery Systems Partners with Miss Florida to Educate Students about Substance Abuse and Addiction

Miss Florida 2016 Courtney Sexton will tour Florida high schools with "Real Talk" presentation to create a dialogue about drug and alcohol abuse in teens

ORLANDO, Fla., Nov. 1, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS), a leader in behavioral healthcare management, and the Miss Florida Scholarship Pageant have announced their collaboration to educate high school students about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. As the spokesperson for the partnership, Miss Florida 2016 Courtney Sexton will be visiting schools across the state for a "Real Talk" with students.

"I am very excited to get started and address a serious problem teens are facing every day," said Courtney Sexton, Miss Florida 2016. "Many may not even realize how quickly misusing drugs or alcohol can become a full-blown addiction. I hope to use my time as Miss Florida to spark conversations among students that this isn't cool—it's dangerous and potentially deadly."



Sexton's 40-minute "Real Talk" presentation is based on prevention techniques included in The Alcohol Literacy Challenge™, developed by nationally-recognized researchers Michael Dunn, PhD and Thomas Hall, PhD. The Alcohol Literacy Challenge™ is the first classroom-based prevention program that specifically challenges students' beliefs about the effects of drinking alcohol. Sexton will use this curriculum as a springboard to educate students on the risks associated with newly emerging drug trends and equip them with skills on how to abstain from dangerous behaviors.

Nearly 1 in 4 high school students have been offered, sold or given illicit drugs on school property and more than 58 percent of 12th graders have used drugs in the past year. Approximately 35 percent of 12th graders have consumed alcohol in the past month—and alcohol is responsible for about 4,300 deaths of people under age 21 each year. In addition to well-known substances like marijuana and alcohol, teens have also started abusing common household items, like cough syrups, cleaning solutions and aerosol cans, to produce a high or hallucinogenic effect.

"With our nation's tragic addiction epidemic on the rise, we believe that education and support during this formative time can be critical in preventing substance abuse and empowering teens to make healthy choices in the future," said Allison Walsh, Vice President of Business Development for Advanced Recovery Systems. "We are thrilled to partner with the Miss Florida Scholarship Pageant and Courtney, who can help us break down the barriers surrounding these important issues and create meaningful conversations that will help to save lives."

### About Courtney Sexton, Miss Florida 2016

Courtney Sexton, 23, from Starke, was crowned Miss Florida in July 2016, representing Orlando. Sexton went on to represent the Sunshine State at Miss America 2017, where she was named the winner of the non-finalist interview award. She is a second-year graduate student at the University of Central Florida, studying Health Administration. In addition to the "Real Talk" school tour, Sexton will travel the state promoting her personal platform of volunteerism: "Get Up! Get Moving! Volunteer!" She is a state ambassador for Miss America's national partner, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and serves as a literacy spokesperson for the Everglades Foundation advocating the protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

### About The Alcohol Literacy Challenge

Based on the research of Michael Dunn, PhD and Thomas Hall, PhD, The Alcohol Literacy Challenge™ (ALC) is the first classroom-based prevention program that specifically and systematically challenges students' beliefs about the effects of drinking alcohol. The ALC has been recognized by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Education as an effective, evidence-based prevention program.

### About Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS)

Advanced Recovery Systems (ARS) is an integrated behavioral healthcare management company dedicated to the treatment of addiction, substance abuse, eating disorders, and mental health issues. ARS's network of treatment centers and recovery residences include The Recovery Village (Umatilla, Florida); The Recovery Village Ridgefield (Ridgefield, WA); The Recovery Village Palmer Lake (Palmer Lake, CO); Next Generation Village (Sebring, Florida); Orlando Recovery Center (Orlando, Florida); The Recovery Village Columbus (Groveport, OH); and Next Step Village (Maitland and Eustis, FL). Visit [www.AdvancedRecoverySystems.com](http://www.AdvancedRecoverySystems.com) for more information.

### Miss Florida Scholarship Pageant, Inc.

The Miss Florida Scholarship Pageant, Inc., has a strong focus and commitment to the young women of Florida; it is more than a title, it is a movement of empowering young women in the state to achieve their dreams by providing quality scholarship assistance and honoring their commitment to helping others. Visit [www.MissFlorida.org](http://www.MissFlorida.org) to learn more.

Contact: Allison Walsh, 407-401-9321

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