

PITFALLS

AGE OF ADDICTS

by Amulya Pillutla

Generation Z has been given several different labels, both positive and negative.

One of the pitfalls of the rising generation is its tendency of becoming easily addicted to not only substances, but also activities such as the use of social media and technology.

In the last couple of years, researchers have identified an increase in alcohol, drug, and nicotine usage in Gen Z. Many people believe that Gen Z is actually less inclined to abuse substances due to their lazy and isolated personality compared to the previous generations. However, researchers have recently found that kids from Generation Z have been using more substances than before.

According to The Rooster, it has been found that the percentage of 16 to 24-year olds using cocaine increased from three percent to six percent between 2017 and 2018. Although many of Gen Z are not using cocaine, there has been an increase in more easily accessible drugs such as LSD and opioids.

In terms of alcohol, it is clear that Gen Z has been drinking a lot less than Millennials and any generation before them. For example, it has been found that the percentage of the youth that does not drink has ris-

en by 32 percent, which means that Gen Z is drinking less than their parents did as teenagers and less than their parents drink today says Fluxtrends. However, that does not mean the culture has fully disappeared, as many Gen Z individuals still partake in drinking (The Atlantic).

Another substance that has recently become a big issue in Gen Z youth is nicotine. As Juuls and other e-cigarettes have become more popular in Gen Z, there has been a steep increase in the number of smokers, so much so that the US government has issued warnings and some have referred to it as an epidemic. Recently the number of kids who consume nicotine daily has increased from 7.6 to 8.1 in the last two years. This is a major increase, especially over a short period of time. Not only are kids smoking nicotine, but they are also using vape pens to inhale THC as well, increasing the consumption of the drug as well.

The most drastic addiction separating Gen Z from previous groups is the attachment to social media. Recently, researchers have found that Gen Z youth spend an average of 3 hours a day on social media and 4 hours and 15 minutes

on their phone in general. Gen Z has become addicted to technology to the point where they are less inclined to leave their homes and more inclined to scroll through social media and update their online personalities. This addiction has given Gen Z another name: iGen.

Gen-Z has been thoroughly impacted by all of the easy to access addictive substance society has to offer them. With all of these substances being dangerous to one's health, it is important the Gen-Z community keeps an eye out for these substances as they can cause social anxiety, mental instabilities, and physical debilitation.



THE END OF THE GOOD OL' DAYS

by Jack Donahue

Generation Z has grown up with their parents reminiscing about their high school days. Referring to them as “the good ol’ days,” parents of Generation Z grew up in a more laid back world than today and, due to this fact, lived more freely from their parents.

The American Physiological Association

(APA) says Generation Z’s parents propensity toward “being a helicopter parent” refers to parents constantly hovering over their child’s life and telling their child what to do and when to do it.

While the intentions of the parents are to help their child, their actions have drastic effects. The APA says that “Children (with

helicopter parents) cannot regulate their emotions and behavior effectively and are more likely to act out in the classroom, to have a harder time making friends and to struggle in school.”

Lucas Wood, a senior at PVHS, attributes the rise of technology to the trend of helicopter parents, “I can’t go a couple of hours without texting my Dad to check in and tell him what I’m doing, where I am, and who is with me.”

According to a Harris Interactive poll, about 29% of parents track their kid’s location. Tracking a child’s life can be detrimental to their development as a person and an adult. “Children need space to learn and grow on their own, without Mom or Dad hovering over them,” the APA says.

Yet despite the constant surveillance of parents, many parents still expect their high school kids to have memorable weekends and summer nights. “It’s a bit hypocritical,” Lucas adds, “To expect me to make memories yet I am often told by my Dad that I can’t hang out because ‘I had fun last night.’” Despite the common practice, many sources believe the surveillance and tracking of children is not the best way to parenting strategy. The APA suggests that parents can be better by setting good examples for them while they are young and reinforcing those values as they grow older instead of constant monitoring to wait for developing kids to make a mistake.

Although many hear remarks of “the good ol’ days,” Generation Z might never see those days themselves.

