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The Current Vaping Crisis ~ Information for Parents and Educators

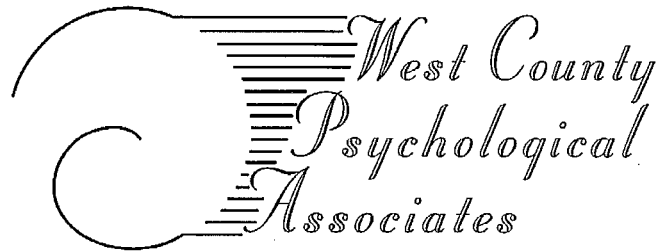
1 message

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**The Current Vaping Crisis ~
Information for Parents and Educators
Tony Tramelli, M.A., L.P.C.**

There has been extensive news coverage over the past few weeks about e-cigarettes and THC vaping devices. What started off as a few mysterious "vaping-related illnesses" has turned into hundreds of hospitalizations and at least seven deaths confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control.

Much of the focus of the investigations into these illnesses has been on counterfeit or black-market THC vaping devices. (THC is the main psychoactive compound in marijuana that gives users the high effect.) These devices are often called "dab pens" or "wax pens." They consist of a pen-like battery and a cartridge that is filled with THC concentrate. Drug dealers can purchase empty cartridges and packaging online that resemble THC products from cannabis dispensaries in states where they are legal. These empty cartridges are filled with homemade THC oil that is oftentimes mixed with dangerous cutting agents, making the oil thicker and increasing the quantity. The cartridges are then packaged in the counterfeit packaging and sold to consumers who believe they are purchasing a legitimate and regulated product. There are several brands in particular that everyone should be aware of as dangerous and potentially life-threatening. These brands are "Dank Vapes," "Mario Carts," and "Chronic Carts."

While the investigation into THC products is extensive and ongoing, there are a number of confirmed reports of severe illnesses in individuals who have only used the JUUL and similar name brand e-cigarette products. JUUL is a vaping

device that resembles a flash drive, and can be charged using a USB port. A mother of three in Texas spent 18 days in a medically induced coma due to the illness. She started using JUUL three years ago. An Illinois teenager is suing JUUL after he almost died due to a vaping-related illness. His doctors tell him he has "the lungs of a 70 year old." The teen had only been using the JUUL for two years. It is clear beyond any doubt that these products, e-cigarettes, and THC vapes are incredibly dangerous.

JUUL Labs, which produces the JUUL, claims that their products were designed specifically for former adult smokers, and that they in no way advertise to a youth market. Whether they intentionally do so or not, it is clear that a large number of teens who are using vaping products are choosing the JUUL. Because of their sleek design and resemblance to flash drives, JUULs are easy to conceal and to use in a number of locations: school, bedrooms, cars, etc. JUUL may also be appealing to underage users because of the different flavors that are available. JUUL Pods (small plastic containers filled with flavored nicotine liquid) come in traditional tobacco and menthol flavors, but users can also choose from a very wide variety of flavors, including mango, cool cucumber, fruit medley, and crème brulee. Because of their specific appeal to minors, the Food and Drug Administration has recently announced its intention to take flavored vaping products off the market.

JUUL, e-cigarettes, and THC vaping devices do not appear to be a passing trend among youth. Yet the extensive coverage that we have seen on the news and online has brought about a unique opportunity for the public - people are ready to quit! If vaping is something you or your loved one is struggling with, there are resources available and safe, proven methods for quitting. To speak to a therapist, please contact West County Psychological Associates at 314-275-8599



Tony Tramelli, LPC received his Master's in Counseling from Webster University with a focus in mental health counseling. Tony works with individuals, couples, and families on a number of issues. These include depression, anxiety, grief, behavioral issues, academic problems and issues surrounding marital concerns, divorce and family transition. In addition, Tony provides therapy for individuals, couples, and families struggling with issues around technology, including gaming addiction and internet pornography addiction. He also provides presentations and seminars to schools on technology related topics.

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