



UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

June 26 is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1987, this day serves as a reminder of the goal agreed to by UN Member States of creating an international society free of drug abuse.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) selects each year a theme for the International Day and launches a year-long campaign to raise awareness about the global drug problem. The theme for 2005 is "Value yourself...make healthy choices".

Value yourself...

The 2005 anti-drugs campaign targets teenagers and young adults, a group that is particularly vulnerable to drug abuse. At this age, peer pressure to try illicit drugs can be strong and self-esteem is often low. Moreover, those who take drugs tend to be either misinformed or insufficiently aware about the health risks involved.

While young people talk a lot about the "highs" induced by illegal drugs, they may not be aware of the many "lows". Negative effects vary depending on the type of drug consumed, the doses taken, and the frequency of use. In some cases, drug abuse can cause serious depression, panic, irregular heartbeat, respiratory problems, and even sudden death. Furthermore, while under the influence of drugs, users may wrongly decide to have unprotected sex or share needles, thus increasing their chances of contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

...make healthy choices

Leading a healthy lifestyle requires making choices that are respectful of body and mind. To make these choices, youths need guidance from parents, teachers, and other role models who should not only persuade them to stay away from illegal drugs, but also encourage them to engage in healthy activities. Sports are a good example.

Young girls and boys who practice sports learn skills and values that will stay with them for a lifetime: self-confidence, discipline, teamwork, and fair play. Through sports, participants are confronted with ethical questions that can guide them in finding the right answers on and off the playing field. Sports also improves their health and well-being.

UNODC campaign themes since 2000

- 2004: "Drugs: treatment works"
- 2003: "Let's talk about drugs"
- 2002: "Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS"
- 2001: "Sports against drugs"
- 2000: "Facing reality: denial, corruption and violence"



**VALUE
YOURSELF**
... make healthy choices