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The University of Dayton

News Release

April 2, 1991
Contact: Jim Feuer

UD STUDENT GROUP HELPS OTHERS FACE SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

DAYTON, Ohio -- Some students may believe that they or their friends have a substance abuse problem but either are hesitant to contact established campus organizations or may not know where to turn for help. That's why a University of Dayton student formed the Peer Intervention Network (PIN).

The student-run program is intended to be "a liaison between students and various professional programs," according to John Skinner, a criminal justice major in his junior year. "The goal is to answer any questions students may have about substance abuse and to increase their awareness regarding drugs and alcohol. Students need a resource that will inform them about existing substance abuse programs both on and off campus."

Skinner started PIN after an informal survey of 240 UD students indicated that 68 percent had no knowledge of existing drug and alcohol abuse programs on campus. In addition, 53 percent of those surveyed said they would feel most comfortable in initially confiding in a friend, while only 19 percent said they would confide in an adult or counselor. Nearly 90 percent said there was a need for a program such as PIN.

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Students make initial contact with PIN by sending their first names and last initials to a special post-office box. A PIN member then sets up a meeting "where rapport and trust is built with students," says Skinner. "At that first meeting, we give them an assessment sheet so they can privately get an idea of the extent of their problems.

"Depending on the students' wishes, we can set up meetings and appointments, go with them or just give them names and numbers of possible treatment programs. Then we can continue to provide support if they want it."

Although PIN is not a counseling service, its five members have received training from UD's Counseling Center in basic skills. But "under no circumstances does PIN attempt to counsel or advise students concerning their substance abuse problems," says Skinner.

"We don't swear abstinence, and we're not here to pressure anyone. We're here to let people know they're not alone."

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For media interviews, call John Skinner at (513) 223-8991.