

ALETHEIA



FEBRUARY 2020

DRUGS/DRINKING



# aletheia

[A-LAY-THEE-UH]

(n.) *truth , disclosure*  
(greek)

## ABOUT US

Aletheia is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School. Inspired by Los Gatos High's Reality Check and Monta Vista's Verdadera, Aletheia was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and/or taboo issues within the Lynbrook community. Each issue of the publication comprises of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, professional articles relating to that month's theme, and other resources compiled by the student staff. Finalized issues are published and distributed to the school. Past issues may be found on our website, under Archives.

The content in Aletheia is composed by the students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Ideas and thoughts expressed within the publication are not necessarily reflected by the school administration or staff.

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# STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

\*all submissions were submitted anonymously. Note that the views of the submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of Aletheia or of Lynbrook High School\*

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When I first got to High school, I didn't really think about drugs/drinking. It didn't seem like a big deal on Lynbrook's extremely academic focused environment. I honestly just didn't know that people were doing any types of drugs. I didn't even know how easily minors were able to get them. I knew there were a few kids in middle school who would go to Rainbow Park after school and smoke weed or some sh\*t. But I never thought I would be anywhere near close to friends with them. Towards the end of first semester freshman year, the girl who sat next to me in a class started vaping, drinking, taking her friends' prescriptions, etc. and was getting close to those people. She would come to class after lunch on god knows what. I could see that she wasn't completely there and she wasn't who she used to be. I promised myself that I would never in a billion years ever put something in my body that would f\*ck with it that way. I feel really bad for her because she was so genuinely nice and really smart, but she doesn't try academically anymore so people just think she's all looks and no brain.

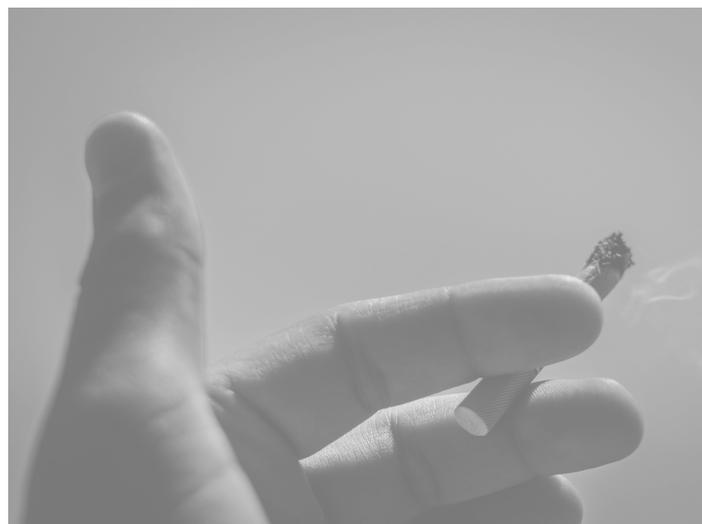
Towards the end of freshman year and that summer, I had a lot of external influences that were surrounded by drugs and alcohol. I think the people I followed on social media were a big factor in my shift in mentality about that stuff. They portrayed things like underage drinking as a major part of their teen years and that was something I didn't want to miss out on. FOMO played a huge role in why I wanted to start drinking: I didn't even want to seem cool or anything. I just wanted to have the same stupid stories about screwing up as a teenager that I heard from adults for myself.

I drank alcohol a few times and went to a few parties starting in sophomore year. But I've never done drugs. I don't want to go into detail cause my friends might know. :/

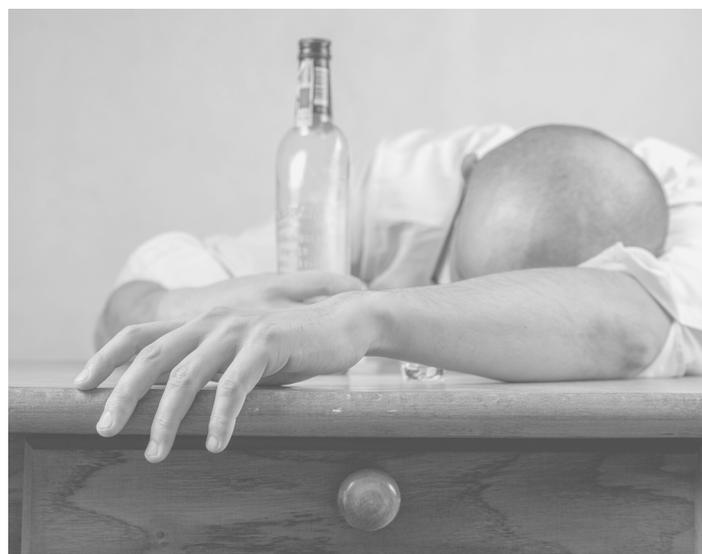


I haven't had the same urge to party and get drunk after I started junior year. It's not worth it at all. I had a friend that was really into drinking and partying. But I stopped talking to him because he had no life outside of it. Eventually he moved away and I'm so glad I got that negative influence out of my life. If you have genuine friends and interests there are so many better things to do with yourself. It's also so much more fun to experience high school memories sober, and not have to miss out on your education to go juul in the bathroom cause you need your nicotine fix. Now that I'm a senior, I'm really glad I never got addicted and caught because colleges see that, and it can affect your future. I know people working on college apps that have to tell admissions officers about their "infractions." So to all the underclassmen out there, it might seem cool in the moment, but your life is longer than 4 years, think about the rest of it.

I mean it's obvious why I wouldn't do drugs right? I'm scared. Not only are they harmful, but they're also addictive. I'm scared that I'd get so addicted that I'd lose sense of what is happening around me. I get it. Life is stressful, and it sucks. But I mean I still have to deal with it because I don't think it's worth throwing away. I've heard people say that drugs are like an escape from reality and stuff. But what if you escape so far that you never return? Reality's like a jail. It's horrible but at least you're safe. Escaping from it, you may feel free, but you'll never be able to sleep comfortably because every moment you'd be scared of being caught.



Lyndonbrook is so contradicting in regards to drugs. I've heard many students talk about how "they don't care who does drugs" because it's their personal preference, but I also hear about kids getting kicked from their friend groups because of their choices. Although I understand that under some circumstances, kids can get uncomfortable, it's inconsiderate to just abandon someone when they start using drugs/drinking. Nobody does those things simply because they want to. There's always more to it.



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**D**rinking is an escape. That escape is not real, and just an illusion. An illusion that's just a false sense of pride. But even that is enough to console me. All my life, I've lived with an inferiority complex. I could never match my father's expectations and that was the one thing I wanted so bad. His acknowledgment. Do you know what it's like to not be able to make your own decisions? I mean you're given the freedom and choice to make one, but you always care about what the other person is going to think of you if you make the wrong choice. And that's my problem. I always think about what the other person thinks about me. I do it all the time and I can't help it. It's a habit. Sometimes, I do it so much that I start to cry. But I don't want to show anyone my vulnerable side because I won't meet their expectations then. I cry silently. Holding it inside. Pressing my palms into my eyes, and breathing in all the cries. Sometimes I even hear my head thumping and beating as though it's my heart. It's like I'm sick, and it's not even an understatement. The stress can drive me to such a point that I actually start to jitter and I breathe heavily, from my mouth and I feel cold. I feel alone and crazy. Drinking. It calms me. It makes me feel superior. It makes me feel like I'm rebelling while not being seen by anyone. It's quite. It's desolate. And it makes me clumsy. It lets me be content with how I am. No, it's not even that, it just doesn't let me think about those things. I just take in the scent. I taste the different flavors. Sometimes mahogany, sometimes oak. I just want to let go. Drinking helps me let go.

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"Do you know what it's like to not be able to make your own decisions?"



# ANONYMOUS TEACHER INTERVIEW

*In terms of modern-day laws and everything, how do you feel about it drinking?*

*Then what do you think should be the legal age? Or would you keep it the same?*

I would say that my take on drinking is that I'm okay with it as long as it's done in moderation. And I grew up in a family that people consumed beer and wine and it wasn't frowned upon. So, personally, I'm okay with it. Do I think there should be limits as to what you're allowed to do? And at what age? Sure. I don't know that you want to have 15 year olds getting drunk. So it makes sense. I mean, some of the laws make sense in regards to say, like a drinking age, or a minimum age, but that's similar to any substance that is technically is doing harm to you.

I don't know. I mean, I think it comes down to a social element. You don't in cultures in which you see more drinking, right, or youth drinking. This is purely anecdotal. So, I don't know how, factually, if this is true. I found that those that have been repressed and not allowed to drink, at least when they were older and allowed to drink, tend to do it more so than they would have, say, earlier. So you know, if you're introduced that alcohol consumption is acceptable at a relatively young age, and you know, you might have a glass of wine with dinner when you're 15, your propensity to want to drink excessively might be different later on. So because you've been exposed, and it's become a part of the society, or accepted norms, you don't tend to drink. Or, at least anecdotally, I've noticed that you don't tend to drink in excess because it's always been there. Not like it was regulated. So I don't know that necessarily.

I think that you need some sort of limit. But I don't know what precisely that limit perhaps should be. Parental discretion. So you might have a hard line, but it might also be flexible, like an "up to the parent" kind of thing. So like, maybe you're not legally allowed to buy alcohol until you're the age of 21. But if your parents want to, they can give you a beer at 14. I wouldn't do that. But I would argue some parental oversight. I mean, that would be reasonable to me.

*What was the drug and drinking culture like during your time in high school?*

It was... there was a lot of drinking. And a lot of marijuana use was popular or common when I was in school. So drinking culture has always kind of been there. It tends to ebb and flow in terms of the amount but it's always kind of there. Marijuana use is the same thing. After I was out of high school, you did see a shift towards arguably harder substances being used at the high school level. But that was after I was here. In the more affluent areas. You did see that if you went to a function that was at a house of someone who was more affluent, that was, say, from a different school. You might see hard narcotics being used. More people having things like cocaine, etc. with them. There were some people when I was the school that were doing LSD, acid, and what was the other? Mushrooms, and what is it called? I gotta think of it. It's a hallucinogenic...ecstasy. And then that became much more popular amongst people after. Like that was coming in when I was in high school, and then became more popular after I was out of high school. So you saw ecstasy use, people were doing methamphetamines at one point late after I was out of out of high school.



*Would you advocate for no drugs or drinking or would you advocate for a moderate level? Would you ban drugs and drinking if you were able to?*

There should be some sort of drinking regulation criteria because, I mean, it's a proven fact that alcohol is not good for you. And it does cause...you're creating a social situation where those that choose to do it and or do it in excess, create a burden to some degree on those that do not or choose not to, or do it in moderation. Right, there should always be some sort of penalty for that. I mean, you have drunk-driving deaths. You have the medical expenses as a result of having to take care of people that drank in excess. Liver damage, kidney damage, just general alcoholism. And so, all of that stuff is stuff that the people doing it should probably be the ones paying for it to some degree. So increased taxation on it regulation of the substance makes sense.

I would be okay more with moderate levels. Banning things tends to not be the best. Bans tend to not work. I mean, you see that with drug culture today. You banned narcotics, people who want narcotics will get them. So it creates just a black market for it.

# PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

TRICIA MLNARIK

Learn something new over the holidays? Watching Marie Kondo on Netflix, I recently learned a new strategy for folding clothes that has been a revolution for organizing my wardrobe. We all learn helpful and unhelpful behaviors—many times outside of our awareness—by observing what others model for us. In media and social media, models often depict that drinking is safe and exciting. Yet, these models fail to represent ways in which drug and alcohol use can interfere with relationships, health, or achieving our goals. In our American culture, we see widely displayed ads for beer and spirits alongside sporting events where athletes perform at peak levels of physical capability. And in colleges, along with being known for higher learning and academic rigor, many institutions have a reputation for binge-drinking parties or fraternities or sororities that promote frequent alcohol intake as a “normal” part of the college lifestyle. Overall, we may get the message that drugs and alcohol are acceptable and widespread methods to cope, relax, socialize, and have fun.

We may also observe a message that substance use can be a way to solve our problems: the “liquid courage” to talk to a love interest, a bit of marijuana to help with pain, anxiety or difficulty sleeping. And with the progression from middle to high school, not only do academic challenges become more complex, but the personal—the social and emotional hurdles—get higher. It is tempting to find a quick fix for some of these problems and hurdles; using substances to resolve unwanted feelings or uncomfortable social situations.

As we have seen from the student submissions here, some have chosen to participate in substance use as an escape from painful emotions or as a remedy for FOMO—a guarantee they do not leave any stone unturned in the breadth of high school experiences. Yet we’ve also heard that for some, they are aware that stakes are high when using drugs or alcohol. Specifically, risks that assumptions are made about a person who uses drugs or alcohol or that friendships may be lost if choices do not align with one’s friend group. What I believe is important is discernment and critical thinking about this part of one’s life rather than doing what is modeled without consideration of one’s personal beliefs, values, and goals. We know that the behaviors and habits that are formed early in life may form a mold that is difficult or seems impossible to break later in life. Decisions made by teens have the potential to impact them for years to come.

When we actively engage in reflection of the role we want drugs and alcohol to play in our lives and we look beyond the feel good messages we see in media, we notice there are a variety of ways we can approach problems without resorting to substance use.

When you are immersed in your own Netflix binge-watching, or a social media or real-life equivalent, I encourage you to actively consider and evaluate what you observe to reach a decision that is aligned with your goals and values. Also, as a therapist and a mom, I hope for more visible and active role models that demonstrate healthier means of coping with the emotional and social factors that contribute to drug use. Talking about feelings with friends or trusted adults, engaging one's playful and carefree side, connecting with nature, and developing self-compassion are some ideas to start approaching problems in a manner with fewer negative outcomes.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tricia Mlnarik is a co-founder of DBT Center of Silicon Valley, a private-practice therapy clinic specializing in Dialectical Behavior Therapy for adults and adolescents.

Tricia is a DBT-Linehan Board of Certification Certified DBT Clinician and frequently uses DBT to help clients heal from trauma. She enjoys working collaboratively with clients as experts of their own experiences and goals.

She holds dual licensure as both a Marriage and Family Therapist and a Professional Clinical Counselor. She began training in Dialectical Behavior therapy in 2007 and holds a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Santa Clara University. When not at work, Tricia likes to hike, dance and spend time with her daughters.

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### Substance Abuse Assessment & Treatment:

- Adolescent Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) and Teen Intervene programs at TherapyWorks: [mytherapyworks.com/asap](http://mytherapyworks.com/asap)

### Substance Abuse Case Management:

- Scott Henrywestwood, MA, LAADC, CADC-II, NCAC-II, SAP, CEAP, CIP, WTS-E: (408) 203-0964; Accredited Counseling & Intervention Services, Inc. [1190 Park Ave Unit B San Jose, CA 95126] [www.counselingandintervention.com](http://www.counselingandintervention.com)

### Substance Use Hotlines & Support Meetings:

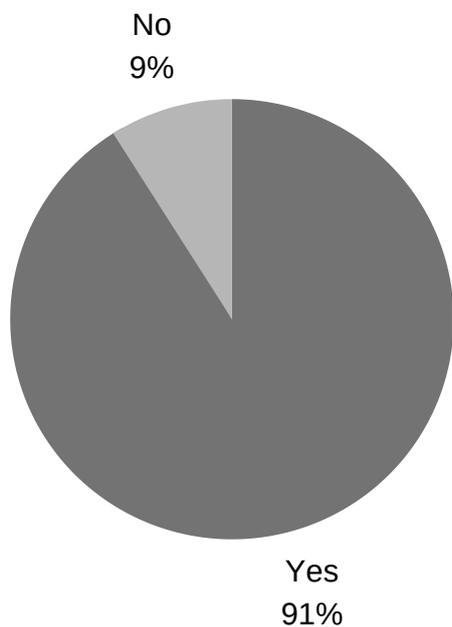
- SAMHSA, 24/7, free and confidential Alcohol/Drug Abuse Hotline: 800-662-HELP
- Santa Clara County Assessment & Referral for Alcohol and drug treatment: (800) 488-9919
- Marijuana Anonymous Hotline: (408) 450-0796; [madistrict3.org](http://madistrict3.org)
- Narcotics Anonymous [Clean Teens & Young People Meetings]: [sjna.org](http://sjna.org)
- Local AA groups for youth 24 hour helpline: (408) 374-8511; [aasanjose.org/young-people](http://aasanjose.org/young-people)

### Therapists Specializing in Substance Abuse:

- Melissa E Miller LMFT: 4010 Moorpark Ave #118 San Jose CA 95117; (408) 576-8333; [memillerlmft.com](http://memillerlmft.com)
- Alicia Hess, LCSW 60529 Counseling for Youth & Families: (408) 597-4959; [aliciahesscounseling.com](http://aliciahesscounseling.com)

## SUBSTANCES THAT STUDENTS HAVE TRIED (AT LEAST ONCE) BEFORE THE AGE OF 18:

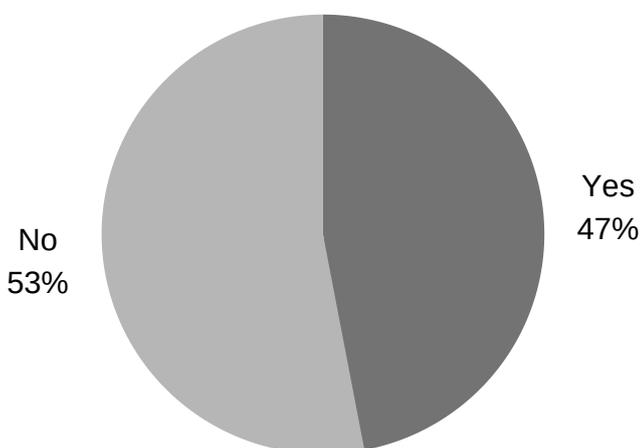
### Alcohol



### Tobacco



### Marijuana



### Prescription Drugs

