Contingency Management with Adolescents and Their Families

Friday Night Party Scenario

It is the end of finals week and Steve has always disliked school. He finds the exams to be stressful and has never really found an effective way to study. Friday has finally arrived and he is burned out. He has spent the week fighting with his parents each night about studying for the exams and has gone to bed angry. As a result he has been tired each day and is not confident he did well. He knows that will mean more fights at home if he does not get B’s or better.

In the parking lot at the end of the day he runs into a couple buddies who let him know they are meeting at Kevin’s house to celebrate end of midterms. Kevin’s parents are away so Steve knows this could mean a wild party with drugs and alcohol. He says he’ll be there because he dreads the idea of talking to his parents when he gets home. He knows a drink or two might make him feel better after this long week and a buzz will make it easier to suffer through listening to their complaints about him.

On his way to Kevin’s house he calls his mom and tells her everyone is getting together at Kevin’s house for movies and pizza to celebrate the end of exams. His mom tells him that is fine since she know Kevin’s parents.

At the party everyone keeps telling Steve he looks stressed and needs to lighten up. He’s no fun when he is like this so they offer him a beer. One beer turns into many as Steve starts to enjoy the party and feels relaxed for the first time in days.

Too drunk to drive home, Steve stays over at Kevin’s. The next morning he drives home and is able to sneak back into his room before his parents wake up. He changes his clothes, brushes his teeth and washes up hoping this covers the smell of the party. A few hours later his mom is pounding on his door telling him he can’t sleep forever because he has chores to do. Steve’s head is pounding and he feels horrible. He yells he’ll be right out. This goes on for another hour. Eventually the pounding stops as his mom gives up trying to wake him. He knows this means he’ll be in trouble later but right now his head is spinning.

By lunch Steve is feeling better. He gets a shower and walks downstairs for some food. On the way he sees that mom went ahead and just did the laundry and walked the dog. He grabs some food out of the kitchen and heads to the TV. Mom is clearly mad at him but she is ignoring him and does not mention the party, coming in late or the chores. Steve feels a little bit better because now he can play video games all day because the chores are done.