



# PREVENTION



## WHY TEENS USE

### ACCEPTANCE

Teens feel the need to fit in with friends, to become popular or be “where the action is.”

### CURIOSITY

Youth hear about “highs” and want to find out what it feels like for themselves.

### EASY ACCESS

If pills, alcohol or other drugs are easy to obtain, they are more likely to experiment.

### MODELING

When youth see adults use alcohol, drugs and/or tobacco, they are more eager to try.

### SELF-MEDICATION

They use medication to cope with pressures of problems or as an antidote to deal with issues.

### SEEKING INDEPENDENCE

Some teens believe using is a way of self-expression and a way to test their individuality.

### WIDELY USED DRUGS

TOBACCO ALCOHOL PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER MARIJUANA

The following organizations offer information and resources that can help you and your family.

New York State Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports  
[oasas.ny.gov](http://oasas.ny.gov) | 518-473-3460

[CombatAddiction.ny.gov](http://CombatAddiction.ny.gov)  
[www.Talk2Prevent.ny.gov](http://www.Talk2Prevent.ny.gov)

The Partnership at Drugfree.org  
[drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org) | 855-378-4373

American Council for Drug Education  
[acde.org](http://acde.org) | 800-378-4435

Families Against Drugs  
[familiesagainstdrugs.net](http://familiesagainstdrugs.net)

Al-Anon and Alateen  
[al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) | 757-563-1600

Faces and Voices of Recovery  
[facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org)  
202-737-0690

SAMHSA's Center for  
Substance Abuse Treatment  
[samhsa.gov/about/csat.aspx](http://samhsa.gov/about/csat.aspx)  
240-276-1660

Substance Abuse and  
Mental Health Services  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) | 877-SAMHSA-7

National Institute on Drug Abuse  
[www.nida.nih.gov/nidahome.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/nidahome.html)  
800-662-HELP

National Council on Alcohol  
& Drug Dependence  
[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org) | 800-NCACALL

**FOR HELP & INFORMATION**  
OASAS.NY.GOV

**CALL:** 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369)

**TEXT:** HOPENY TO 467369



Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports



Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports

# YOU CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE

A Guide to Teen/Young Adult  
Substance Abuse



# PREVENTION: EXPERIMENTING

# YOU CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE



## PREVENTION

### TAKE ACTION

When you suspect a young person may be using alcohol and/or drugs, it is important to take action.

#### PREPARE YOURSELF

Work with what happened rather than why it happened. Don't blame someone else, yourself or the individual. Don't be shocked or judgmental because there are many innovative ways to conceal use. Don't be afraid and/or hesitate to investigate further by searching their belongings, cell phone or computer. Speak to their friends or ask them pointed questions.

#### CONFRONT THE ISSUE

Don't let anger or fear overwhelm your effectiveness in dealing with the person that you believe might be abusing a substance. Cool down or take a walk before you begin the conversation.

#### HAVE A CONVERSATION

Putting your head in the sand is counterproductive. Accept that the individual you care about may be using so that you can begin the conversation.

#### SET STANDARDS

Take a stand. Say "NO" clearly and firmly. Carry through on consequences.

#### ASK FOR HELP

There are many confidential resources available for caregivers and mentors - if you ask!



#### PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Loss or increase in appetite; unexplained weight loss or gain
- Inability to sleep or unusual laziness
- Smell of substance on breath or clothes
- Nausea, vomiting, sweating, shakes of hands, feet or head
- Red, watery eyes; pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare, thick tongue, slurred speech

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Any one of the following behaviors can be a symptom of normal adolescence. However, keep in mind that the key is change. It is important to note any significant changes in an individual's physical appearance, personality, attitude or behavior.

#### BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Change in attitude/personality
- Change in friends and new hangouts
- Change in activities, hobbies or sports
- Drop in grades or work performance
- Isolation and secretive behavior
- Moodiness, irritability, nervousness and giddiness

Ask school health professionals for help or seek assistance from an addiction medical professional, mental health or substance abuse counselor.

#### FACTS

There is no greater influence on a young person's decisions about alcohol or drug use than the support system around them, including parents, teachers and mentors. To successfully keep kids drug-free, responsible individuals must provide active support and positive role modeling.

Guardians and active role models, like coaches, are key in preventing underage drinking and drug use. By establishing boundaries, you can take a clear stand against alcohol and other drug use.

Current brain research shows that the brain is not fully developed until the mid-twenties. Adding chemicals to a developing brain is a very risky endeavor — and one that can lead to health problems and higher risk for addiction, even death.