



# DRUG ABUSE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

A Guide for Parents and Staff



Substance use can do the following:

- Affect the growth and development of teens, especially brain development.
- Occur more frequently with other risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex and dangerous driving.
- Contribute to the development of adult health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.
- The earlier teens start using substances, the greater their chances of continuing to use substances and developing substance use problems later in life.

## KNOW THE SIGNS

### Changes at Home



- Avoids eye contact
- Wanting more privacy, locking doors, etc.
- Sneaking out at night
- Stealing money or valuables from parents or siblings
- Missing prescription or medications
- Lack of motivation

### Behavioral Changes



- Mood swings and irritability
- Unexplained outbursts
- Unusual hyperactivity
- Unwarranted paranoia
- Appears depressed or withdrawn
- Appears confused or disoriented

### Changes at School



- Missing school or skipping classes
- Drop in grades and performance
- Getting into trouble/fights
- Loss of interest in extracurricular activities

### Changes in Appearance



- Dilated pupils or blood shot eyes
- Circles or bags under eyes
- Slurred speech
- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Odor on breath
- Poor coordination or clumsiness
- Stained teeth
- Change in grooming habits
- Skin changes

### Physical Evidence of Use



- Drug paraphernalia
- Smell of tobacco, alcohol or marijuana on clothing or breath
- Cigarette lighters, ashtrays, wax paper
- Small bags with white powder or green herbs

## HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

Talking to your children about drugs and alcohol may be one of the most difficult conversations you have with your kids, but it's one of the most important conversations you will have.

### Start Early



- Kids get information from peers and social media, so start these conversations early.
- Avoid "yes" or "no" questions.
- Ask them what drugs they are aware of and their effects.
- Ask what their friends say about drugs.

### Connection



- Establish a positive relationship to help them feel more comfortable asking questions.
- Listen without judgment to support open communication

### Share Information



- Provide information on the consequences of drug use.
- Keeping age and maturity in mind, show pictures of how drugs and alcohol can change people over time.
- Explain how drugs can affect their ability to do what they love.
- Set a positive example with your own actions.

### Plan



- Discuss scenarios that may come up with their peers and create a plan.
- Help them create a response. (example "No I'm good", "I don't do that stuff")
- Keep in mind this is not just a one-time conversation.

## GETTING HELP



**Coping skills:** Emphasize healthy coping over labeling and blaming



**Self-care:** Taking care of yourself will lead you to be better able to take care of others.



**Connect:** Family or individual therapy



**Acceptance:** As hard as it is to face the fact that our children are struggling, acceptance will lead to being able to push forward to find solutions



**Supports:** Find a support system with people you trust without the fear of judgment or gossip or people who have been through similar situations.

## RESOURCES

There are a lot of resources that can help you and your child. Please reach out.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

**1-800-662-4357 24/7, 365 days a year**



Are you looking for help for you or a loved one? Do you need information on treatment services or providers? Call the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health Substance Use Disorders (SUD) Services.

**1-800-654-3937 24/7, 365 days a year**

So many other parents and families have gone through, and are going through, the same challenges you're facing now. Support is free and confidential. Specialists are ready to listen and help you find answers for yourself and your child.

**Text 55753**



All 4 Youth is a partnership program between the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health and Fresno County Superintendent of Schools for children and youth ages 0-22 years old experiencing difficulties that affect them at school and at home.

**559-443-4800 M-F 8 am - 5 pm**



The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for your loved ones.

**1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-273-8255**

**Crisis Text line: 741741**



## ONLINE RESOURCES

For additional resources click the image below.



Click the above image to access even more resources related to drug abuse awareness and prevention.

# We are here for you and want to help!

# #UnifiedAtHome