



Five Minutes a Day to Drug Free Kids

Tom Monson

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To Matt



Forward

The greatest joy of my life was the moment of the birth of my son, Matthew. The greatest sadness of my life was the moment I learned of his death. It isn't supposed to be that way.

His death was in 1992. That's when I decided to write this book.

I knew I could never get him back, but I believe his legacy could be to help save the lives of other kids and the anguish and pain of other parents.

They tell us to talk to our kids about drugs, but what do we know? How can we have a meaningful conversation about something we know little about?

I won't sugarcoat it by calling it misinformation, but you have to know that there are people out there that will lie to your face about how safe drugs are. Worse, they will lie to your kids to get them to try them. They are either stupid or they look at your kid as a profit center.

Why? I explain it in the following pages.

Here's the truth. In my research, I've heard hundreds of stories about people and drug abuse, and the only good story I ever heard was when someone told me, "And then I got off drugs."

The purpose of writing this book is to encourage open discussions about drug and substance abuse. My hope is that you will utilize this information to have frequent and candid conversations with your children on this topic.

In my teachings to parents I like to use this comparison:

Let's say we lived in a small village in the middle of a vast jungle. At an early age, our children have to go into the jungle to gather fruits and vegetables for our tables.



But, in the jungle, there is a beautiful silver and gold snake. If you get near the snake it will bite you and the venom can make you very sick or even kill you. Would you send your child out into the jungle without telling them about the snake?

And yet, we do send our children out in the world and tell them to stay away from drugs.

Considering the number of overdose deaths every year and how it is rapidly increasing, we need to do better.

The consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs has turned into a massive industry. It's not just the legal companies that produce and distribute these substances that benefit; growers, processors, manufacturers, and other parties involved in the supply chain also stand to profit when your child engages in substance abuse. Additionally, if your child becomes addicted, other industries such as law enforcement, treatment centers, prisons, and funeral homes may seek to capitalize on their economic value. This is because drug and substance abuse has grown into a trillion-dollar business, and unfortunately, your child may become a valuable asset in this economy.

And finally, I'd like to add one final thought. Dead is forever. You will never get them back. Do all you can to get between your kids and drugs.

Introduction

Why should you teach your children about drug and substance abuse? The old adage, “If you don’t teach your children about drugs, someone else will.”

I’m not talking about someone on the street or in a dark alley somewhere. I’m talking about right in their bedroom or your living room.

Just to give you some perspective, social media sites are openly exposing vulnerable teens to drugs and alcohol. Celebrities such as Justin Bieber, Drake, and Cardi B post pictures of themselves drinking and getting high on a variety of platforms.

Snoop Dog, Miley Cyrus, and other celebrities openly promote the use of pot.

Not only that, movies are subtly and sometimes openly promote cigarette use through what is called product placement (a company pays the movie company to feature their products).

What’s the point? The proliferation of drugs and alcohol in our society is primarily driven by money.

Money and Substance Use/Abuse

According to CNN, minors in the United States consumed over \$17.5 billion worth of beer and liquor in 2022, with only three of the 9,000 beer-making companies accounting for these sales. The 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that 29% of high school students had consumed alcohol within the past 30 days.

The legalization of marijuana increases tax revenue. In 2023, legal weed sales will be over \$20 billion. Of that, approximately 25% will be paid to the tax man. Is that why they want it legal?

Social Influence

Besides seeing celebrities and social influencers promoting drug use, they see friends and families engaging in the same behavior. This combination of “everyone around them using,” increases the chances of them believing that it is accepted behavior.

A study of 2,000 teens by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that teens who often visit popular social media platforms were more likely to drink, use drugs, and buy tobacco.

Studies show when teens see photos of other teens drinking and smoking weed, 75% felt that these activities are acceptable and felt encouraged to experiment with these behaviors.

Without a constant balance of quality information, the odds are very high that your child will experiment with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Dangers of Experimentation

In the past, someone experimenting with drugs wasn't nearly as dangerous as it is today. A lethal dose of fentanyl can be obtained just by inhaling some of the residual powder or by touching a tablet. Designer drugs, made from chemicals, can alter the brain chemistry to turn an unsuspecting user into a zombie. So it is important to encourage our kids to never experiment with drugs or even alcohol or tobacco.

(You will learn more about the dangers of each drug in the *Information About Drugs* section of this book.)

Who's Job Is It Anyway

Over the last 30 years, I've talked to all kinds of people and many parents believe that their kids have the opportunity to learn about drug and substance abuse in the classroom. And, this may be true. Chances are, however, it isn't going to happen.

I've talked with school principals who believe their schools do not have any problems with drug or substance abuse. I know for a fact, this isn't true because I've interviewed kids who attend their schools who promote Pharming Parties (Pharming is a way to abuse prescription and over-the-counter drugs), keggers, raves, and more.

The only way to make sure your kids get the right information about drug and substance abuse is to give it to them yourself!

It's Your Fight!

No matter how we define a good life, that's what we want our children to have when they grow up. Productive, happy, peaceful, or whatever it is, it won't happen if they are brain damaged, disabled, disfigured, or dead.

Most of us do not want our kids to live a life trying to make it from one "high" to the next, degrading themselves, and living as a slave to drugs, alcohol, or other substance-related issues. (Note: "High" is a misnomer, it's more like trying to not go through withdrawals or be miserable.)

It takes more than setting a good example to make sure they don't experiment or use drugs. It takes a lot more.

The truth of the matter is there is someone out there that will tell your kids that it is safe to use drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products. They will tell them all kinds of lies or uninformed utterances to get your kid to use one of these dangerous or harmful substances. Or, they will trade your child's life or health just to make a buck. You see, anyone who sells illegal substances to children does not care about the life they may be destroying or taking.

Even legal substances like alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are illegal when sold to underage children.

Make a Commitment

If you use it, the information in this book can be one of the most powerful weapons in your fight to keep your children drug-free.

But, the information in this book only represents part of what you need to know about the dangers of drugs and drug use. Additionally, your knowledge is only part of the equation for drug-free kids.

The commitment is using knowledge. This is not a one-time talk you have with your children. If you continue the discussion, your children will not only build up resistance when the choice has to be made, but they will also gain some self-esteem because you took the time and showed them how much you care.

It's personal because they're your children.

The Three Things

The three things you can offer to help keep your children drug-free.

YOU: You and your willingness to often and openly discuss the pros and cons of drug use, will be the single, best deterrent for your children to remain drug-free.

FACTS: Knowledge is power. Information is the main ingredient of knowledge. The more you know about the subject of drugs, their side effects, and dangers, the better you will be able to educate your children.

YOUR TIME: You have to give your children the necessary time to continually educate them about the hazards of drug use. Without your input and influence, your children will have to find out for themselves about drugs. (Often the method selected by the young to learn, is trial and error.)

Let's Be Real

There is no guarantee that your children will not use drugs. As parents, the only thing we can do is to tell them about the choice that they will have to make someday. Help them understand what can happen if they choose to use and help them understand what their life will be like if they decided to be drug-free.

WHAT ARE DRUGS?

Substances that alter either the state of mind or the chemical balance of the user are found in drugs. alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens, marijuana, narcotics, opiates, sedatives, and tranquilizers are all considered drugs and most are potentially lethal.

Mental and bodily functions are controlled by a delicate balance of natural chemicals and substances in your body. Occasionally an illness or some other condition will cause a permanent or more often, a temporary imbalance in body chemistry, which can be corrected by an artificially manufactured substance or a substance found in nature. Sometimes when people are sick, a drug can speed up the process of recovery or remove some of the discomforts the illness may be causing.

Doctors prescribe medications and drugs for many reasons. Unfortunately, sometimes drugs intended to heal, or make someone more comfortable, are misused for the temporary enjoyment of people, looking for a possible solution to find relief from bad or undesirable feelings they may have.

If people knew the dangers of introducing chemicals that could disrupt the natural balance of chemicals in their bodies, they wouldn't have to even think about taking drugs, let alone drugs that were manufactured in bathtubs, garages, and warehouses.

Using body and/or mind-altering substances under any circumstance can cause users to die, sometimes immediately and sometimes slowly and painfully. The quick death caused by these substances includes violent seizures accompanied by convulsions, uncontrolled vomiting of blood, and savage, bloody automobile or industrial accident.

Dangers of Drugs in General

Drugs are dangerous. If not taken properly, even medication prescribed by the family doctor can have dangerous side effects and cause serious illness and injury or indeed death. Medications sold over the counter to combat minor illnesses, like the symptoms of the common cold, can have the potential to have serious side effects and may even kill.

People using illegal, non-prescription drugs are playing an extremely dangerous game.

Drugs and Automobiles

The senseless and tragic loss of life associated with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants is unimaginable.

WARNING: THESE STATEMENTS ARE GRAPHIC:

Many police officers recount absolute horror stories of the dangers of driving while intoxicated. Here are some examples:

He arrived at a scene and witnessed the disfigured remains of a three-year-old child co-mingled with the twisted tricycle she was riding. She was run over by an automobile piloted by a man too drunk to stand. What was worse the drunk was beating and screaming at the dead child for ruining his life.

He had to watch the autopsy of a 19-year-old boy whose head was crushed by a telephone pole. Alcohol slowed the driver's reaction time causing him to lose control of his speeding vehicle and crash into a telephone pole.

Law enforcement officers have to witness the aftermath of these senseless tragedies, needless suffering, and anguish that could have been prevented had these intoxicated drivers found a better way to get home.

Possibilities of Addiction

There has never been a drug addict who experimented with a drug and believed they would become addicted. People who experiment with drugs are sure that one pill, one snort, or one harmless smoke will not lead to a craving for more.

It is not until the overpowering craving, whether psychological or physiological, takes hold that the person realizes he or she really can't, or doesn't want to go without. Often, the addict does will not admit that they are addicted.

The problem is, most people will not admit that they are hooked. Like an alcoholic, they may tell you: "I don't have a problem," or "I can quit anytime I choose." It is not until some tragic event (also known as bottoming out) that addicts can recognize the fact that they need or are willing to ask for help.

Of all drugs, the most addictive are cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin, morphine, nicotine, and alcohol. In many cases, it's just one dose of these drugs that causes chemical dependence, which causes the user to "need" more of the chemical.

Chasing the Dragon

They call it chasing the dragon because the first time someone uses the high is amazing. That's the dragon. Chasing it is trying to find that feeling again. Many lifetimes have been wasted trying to find that first-time high. And of course, they never can.

Conclusion

Science has done wonders to increase our life expectancy and our quality of life; however, it is still important for us to remember that drugs are dangerous and they have to be afforded the respect that is given to any other potentially lethal substance. For this reason, we all need to learn how to use them for our benefit and protect others from potential dangers. Practice safe drug use

when prescription drugs are being taken as a part of medical treatment, and never take drugs without a prescription.

Illegal Drugs and Drug Use

If legal drugs, manufactured under the strictest of standards are dangerous, how can anyone expect drugs manufactured in uncontrolled circumstances to be safe? Illegal drugs are manufactured in bathtubs, kitchen sinks, semi-trailers on the road, storage sheds, motels, barns, and other unclean conditions. (And these are the substances that drug users put into their bodies.) Thousands of deaths are reported every year by illegal drugs that were tainted, improperly mixed, or contained lethal, or unidentified substances.

Hospitals, nursing homes, morgues, and graveyards are full of tragic victims of illegal drug usage. Loss of memory, loss of sight, varying degrees of loss of mental functions, loss of different bodily functions, loss of judgment, and comas are all on the casualty list of drug users. Add to this the number of people who suffered drug-related injuries and deaths, and one begins to see the scope of the danger associated with using illegal or illicit drugs.

When legal drugs are used illegally, they can become ugly. Abuse, overuse, and uneducated use can all take lives.

Why Illegal Drugs Are Dangerous

Beyond the potential side effects, physical damage, and death that drugs offer, there are other possible more dangerous factors.

Illegal drugs are dangerous because they are not manufactured under controlled circumstances. The strict guidelines and procedures used in making legal drugs are not followed by the criminals who manufacture illegal drugs. Dangerous substances, made without strict control procedures, quality control, and testing facilities cannot be safe.

Legitimate drug manufacturers spend years developing and testing new drugs and manufacture them under the strictest of conditions. When a legal drug is offered for sale, its effects have been studied for years. Controlled experiments and studies are done to assure that there is a minimum risk to the user.

When an illegal drug is offered for sale, it has not been tested and its effects are only known after it has been used.

Even if an illegal drug is lethal and kills users, it will continue to be sold to other users. There is no such thing as a recall of tainted dope. People who sell these drugs don't care about the end user they only care about their money.

Illegal drugs are dangerous because they are taken without medical supervision or in controlled doses. Doctors and pharmacists spend years studying the effects drugs and medications have on your body. They know how limited doses of certain substances will affect the body's chemical balance, and exactly how much should be taken. Even if the drug has an adverse effect, a patient

can call the physician and they can prescribe something to immediately counteract the negative effect.

With a bad reaction to illegal and mostly unknown substances, medical teams can only guess what the problem is. At best, an attempt to counteract a negative reaction is dangerous.

Many times drugs are cut (reduced in potency from their raw state), with other lethal substances (such as strychnine and Drano) which if used by themselves could kill the user. This significantly adds to the dangers of illegal drugs.

Children at Risk

You can bet your children are going to be exposed to drugs as they grow up. The more they know about the dangers drugs offer, the more likely they are to choose not to do them.

You can also be sure a situation will arise when someone they consider to be a friend will offer them something that will "make them feel good." Possibly it may be something your children will have to do to become part of the group, gang, or club.

As parents and protectors, it is our primary responsibility to inform our children about the dangers and possible long-term effects of using drugs and narcotics. We have to get the message across that these substances are dangerous, that drugs can cause them to die, become confined to a bed or wheelchair for the rest of their life, become disfigured or maimed, and cause grief and heartbreak to others. All these things may result during the altered mind-state, while they are under the influence of illegal substances.

Hospital emergency rooms are full of people, young and old, who have suffered illness or injury because of the direct effect of drugs or injuries caused by the slowed reactions of intoxicated drivers.

Many times kids feel that the person selling them the drugs is OK. He or she is a good guy and what they are doing isn't wrong. Your kids have to understand that people who sell drugs do it for the money. They don't care about who they sell to.

They give out samples to get the prospective customers hooked. They also want to get the friends of their customers hooked. Drug dealers are only interested in the money. The more the better -- which means that getting more customers is their main goal.

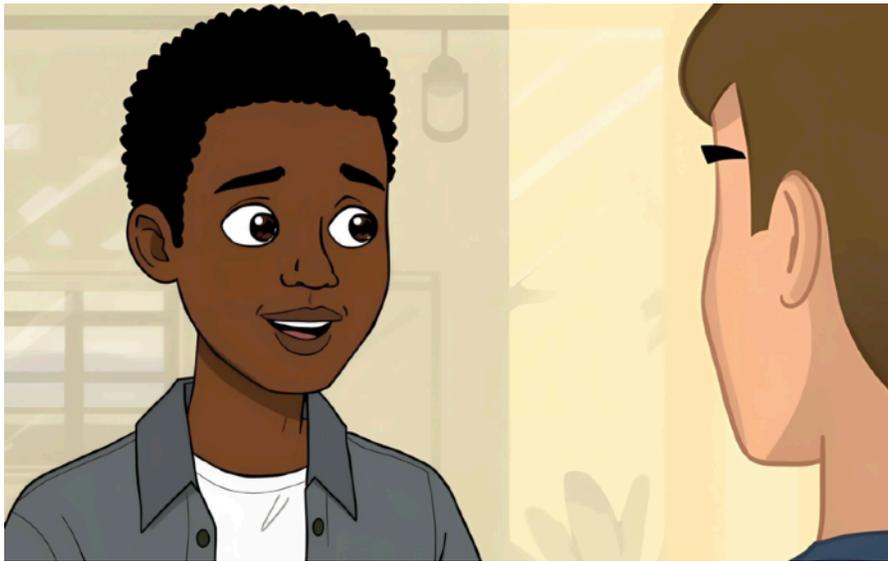
Kids need to be told in an open discussion about why people sell drugs, and they need to be told often. It is just like the cola companies and the fast food restaurants; they tell us often which is *the right one* and which one *tastes the best*. You need to constantly instill the value of *being drug-free* and how your children will benefit from living a sober life.

On the other side of the coin, kids need to know what it means to be drug-free. This is where you can be creative and talk about athletes, successful people of all kinds, and what it is like to be free.

Why Kids Use Drugs

Teens and pre-teens often use drugs as a result of peer pressure or as an experiment. Often high school and college students use speed to add extra hours to their day for study or whatever.

Many kids take drugs because they are bored. Often they take drugs to have fun because they haven't learned how to have fun without drugs or alcohol. Whatever the reason, most of the time, kids take drugs because they don't realize the danger they're putting themselves in. Just knowing the harm they may do to themselves may be enough to get them to stop.



Setting an Example

Setting a good example is always a good deterrent, but by itself, it isn't the best method of prevention. The most effective way to help your children make the best choice when it comes to whether or not to do drugs is by both living an example and teaching them about the possible consequences.

If you use intoxicants, expect your children to believe it's OK. If you demonstrate the value of living clean, and if they see or hear about the opposite, they can make a comparison between the consequences of "not using" and "using." They will be able to draw upon this when making their own decision about drug use.

Let them know how you feel about the subject of drugs and alcohol. Show them through your actions. Talk to them freely and openly about the subject.

If you choose to use alcohol, one of the things you have to demonstrate to them is that you are not breaking the law because you are at the legal age for using alcohol. You also have to demonstrate you are in control and that alcohol does not control you. (Also, you will be

interested to learn that studies show when people under the age of 21-22 use alcohol, they stand a very high chance of becoming *physically dependent* on alcohol. How many alcoholics started drinking in their teens or earlier?)

If you do drugs, then how can you expect your child to do it differently? We learn what we live. By doing illegal drugs, you are, in effect, telling them, "It's OK to do drugs."

It is also very important to talk to your children about drugs and most important to let your children talk to you about drugs. This will give you an indication of how your influence has impacted their lives. A real side benefit is that your children will gain self-esteem by having these conversations with you.

One of the most powerful things you can tell them is that you understand that being a kid nowadays is difficult and that you understand some of the challenges they face.

Discussing the drug problem with your children is the first step in prevention. You don't have to know all about drugs, or you don't have to be able to present the case well. All you have to do is talk to the children about the idea, and make the statement, that you have their "*best interests in mind.*" Tell them you care about and love them, and you wouldn't want to see them do anything that could destroy or end their life.

Prevention

It is generally accepted that the overall scope of drug prevention involves the following three stages:

1. *Primary Prevention*. This is to keep an individual from using any drug or gateway drug in the first place.
2. *Diversion*. This is to identify the occasional or experimental use of drugs and stop it.
3. *Intervention and Recovery*. This is to get users into a program that may save their lives.

Consider drug use as a door to an ugly room. *Primary Prevention* works to keep young people from even opening the door -- if they know what dangers lurk behind the door, they may not open it. *Diversion* is used when they have opened the door and are looking inside, through experimentation and occasional use -- if they understand the dangers of leaving the door open, they may close it. *Intervention and Recovery* are necessary when they have gone inside -- you need to go inside and get them out. More often than not, you will need some help.

The best time to start working on prevention is when they are young before they have had a chance to start.

Don't think that they are either too young or too old to know what is good and bad for them. The opportunity to learn is with us all our lives.

Primary Prevention

You can teach your children what they need to know to make an informed decision about the use of drugs. By spending a little time with them continually, you can inform them what may lay ahead if they choose to use it. You can reduce the chance of them killing themselves or paying a big price for a bad choice.

How To Keep Your Kids Off of Drugs

As parents, we can't look to schools, law enforcement, or juvenile authorities to teach our kids about the dangers of drug use. Like it or not, it's our responsibility.

If there were a job description for being a parent, one of the first responsibilities would be to insure the health and safety of our children. Drug use prevention gives our children a better chance for a longer, healthier, and more satisfying life.

One factor to increase the chances of success in preventing your children from getting involved in drug use is your belief that you can make a difference. Look at how education has reduced the consumption of cigarettes. In recent years, consistent commercials, debates, and warnings that smoking cigarettes can cause cancer and other negative health effects, have had a dramatic effect

on cigarette use. This improvement in health consciousness should be encouraging to any parent who wonders if education will help. And remember: you can't over-educate about dangers.

You don't have to be educated in medicine or pharmacology -- as long as you are willing to find out what you need to know, you can teach your children about drugs. Even a little of the right kind of information is better than nothing. You can find the answers you'll need in several places.

Your library can supply you with the information you need -- to teach your children about living a long, happy, clean life -- free of drugs and associated problems. (In the back of this book is a list of resources you can consult about drugs and the effects of drug use.

Talk to Them

Children will be more willing to listen if the benefits of not doing drugs are explained to them.

Start positive conversations with them:

"Your brain will be crisp and clear for solving the many challenges you will encounter in life."

"Being able to deal with your problems will give you the greatest freedom in life."

"You will be able to enjoy life by living without drugs."



It's About Choices

Every day, our children are presented with choices. They will choose between doing some things and not. As parents, we are constantly influencing their choices. We can do this because we have learned what can happen if they make the wrong choice. Here are a few examples:

We tell our children not to play in the street because they may be struck by a car and killed or maimed.

We tell our children not to play with fire because they may burn down the house or injure themselves.

We tell them not to talk to strangers because they may be kidnapped, molested, or killed.

We tell our children not to take candy from strangers because they may be poisoned, abducted, molested, or killed.

Then we tell them not to do drugs without telling them the consequences of their action.



The most important thing parents can do is to talk to their children about what can happen if they do drugs. Not only will they be able to make a better choice, but by opening a dialogue with our children, we will be able to instill our values, and strengthen their self-esteem.

Like it or not, when the true test comes, and they are asked to decide between doing drugs or not, you probably won't be there to offer your input. Chances are someone they know, either at school or in her circle of friends will offer them some sort of drug. The more they know before they are asked to make the decision, the better the chances are that they will make the right decision.

Give them the information they need to make an informed decision about the consequences of doing drugs.

Gateway Drugs

It's important to understand that kids who use drugs usually start their journey by using substances that are commonly called gateway drugs.

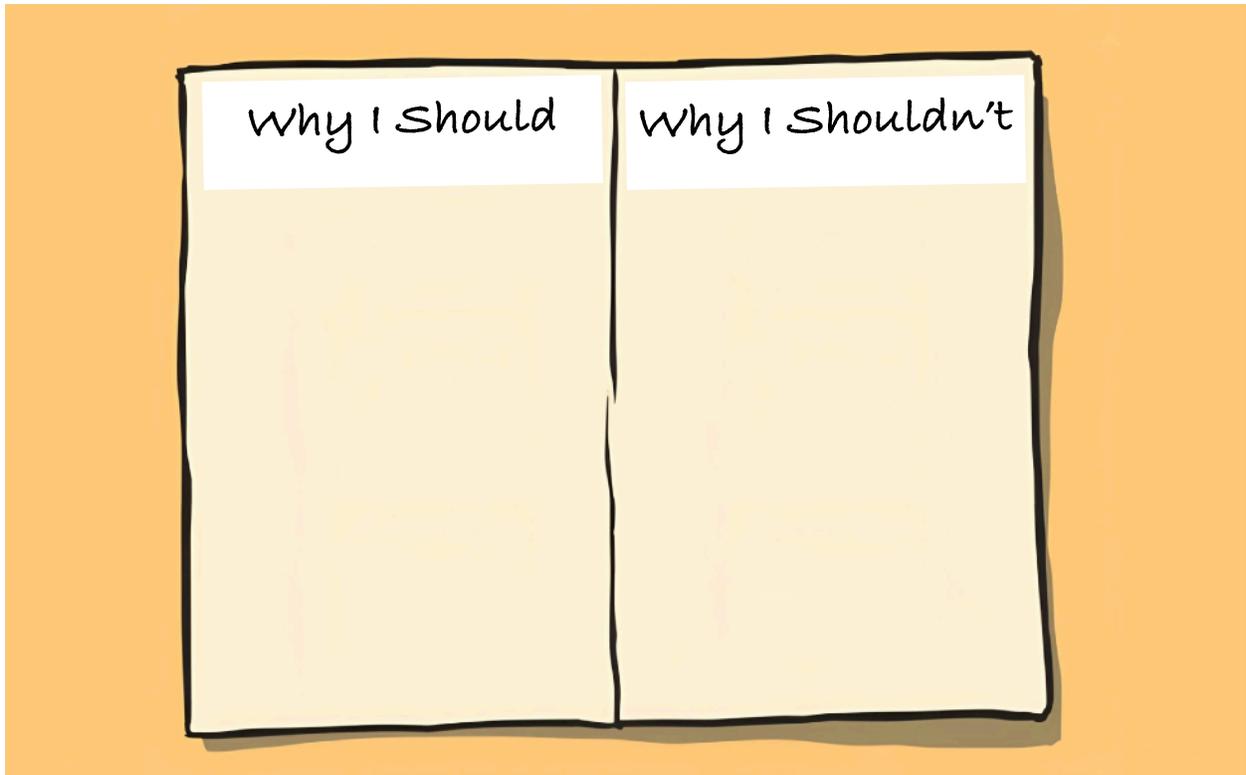
Gateway drugs are drugs that many people believe to be harmless or substances that offered little risk. While they in themselves may not be initially deadly, they do pose risks.

These substances, marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol not only offer the potential for exposure to other more deadly drugs, but research has shown that the odds are significantly higher that users have a greater probability to experiment with more lethal and addicting substances.

Also known as transition drugs the pattern of the user usually involves taking a beer or a wine cooler, or some form of tobacco, then moving on to using marijuana.

A recent study showed that an individual who didn't do any type of gateway drug was far less likely to do any other more lethal/potent drug.

Many young people in drug treatment list alcohol and tobacco as their first drug experience.



An Exercise

Here is an exercise to help your children make a good decision about whether or not to use drugs.

Benjamin Franklin, a wise and astute individual, had a very simple but effective method of making important decisions.

Whenever Ben was faced with an important decision, he would take a plain piece of paper and draw a line down the center. Then on one side, he would write all the reasons he should and on the other side, he would list all the reasons why he should not do it. The decision was made based on merit and the number of items on each side of the line.

Simply put, he would list the pros and cons of the decision to see which made better sense.

You can do the same thing with your children. (This will also help them whenever they are faced with any important decision.) Sit down with them and on a sheet of paper draw a line down the center. On one side write "*WHY PEOPLE DO DRUGS,*" and on the other side write "*REASONS TO STAY DRUG-FREE.*"

Start on the *WHY PEOPLE DO DRUGS* side. Ask your children, "*Now, why do you think people do drugs?*" Then be quiet and let your children answer. Give them enough time to respond. Let them tell you what they think. This will give you some valuable information about what they are thinking and what kind of influence their outside surroundings are providing. When they have answered, write their answer on this side.

Why People Use Drugs

There are only a few reasons for people doing drugs. List the reasons they give first, then explain some of the other reasons. In the example that follows we have listed three of the reasons, people do drugs.

1. They don't like the way they feel. Possibly they have a problem with their self-image or their self-esteem. They think that the drug may make them feel better. Many times they don't realize that the effects of the drug will only last for a little while. (The problem is they feel worse when the drug wears off, which causes them to want to take more, which increases the potential for addiction.)
2. They are influenced by other people. Often called peer pressure, this pressure most often comes from within the individual. Their need to belong or their desire to look cool may be the real pressure, not some other kid forcing them to use.
3. They hear about or see others who do drugs, and want to experiment. Most people are influenced by TV and movies. Children see people on television or in the movies drinking or taking some form of a drug and their natural response is to be curious. Later, if the opportunity presents itself, they may try it just to see what it is like.

Why Be Drug Free

On the *"REASONS TO STAY DRUG-FREE"* side, list the reasons why they should remain drug-free. List the hazards they will avoid, the feelings of the parents, the lost money, the legal considerations, the health risks, the possibility of death, and any of the other things you and your child can think of. Get as many answers from your child as you can, so this becomes his or her decision. This side of the paper should fill the entire page.

In your discussion with your children, remember, an open, non-judgmental discussion -- talking frankly about the pros and cons -- will be the greatest deterrent and help them make the right decision about drug use.



Positive Reinforcement

It is almost a certainty that your children will have to decide whether to use drugs or not. Knowing what the consequences of their actions are, will be a strong deterrent to drug use. Once your children have made the decision not to do drugs, you have to reinforce the correctness of their decision by constantly reminding them that they have made the right choice.

In life, as with our children's choices, there are no guarantees. Children who know better, sometimes choose to do the least desirable thing. They may choose to do drugs, or hang around with the wrong people. If you have done nothing to educate them about the dangers of doing drugs, then you may share in some of the responsibility. If you have done everything you can do

to educate them about the consequences of their actions, they have to shoulder the responsibilities.

Since many parents only have limited information about drugs and are only able to tell their children that drugs are bad, it is critically important that the parent know at least some of the basics about what taking drugs can do to them.

Just telling them that drugs are bad, isn't enough. They need to know why drugs are bad. They need to know what drugs can and will do to their bodies. They need to know what will happen to them if they are caught doing drugs, selling drugs, or being with people who do or sell drugs.

The truth is, your children already know something about drugs. Their friends, other adults, television, movies, music, websites, magazines, and people who would sell them drugs have all told your children something about drugs. Some of this information is correct, some are merely substance for stories, and some are misleading information from users and dealers who would have your children believe that taking drugs really won't hurt them.

At the point when your children are asked to decide about using if they have the facts, they can make an informed decision. If they don't have the right information, they will base their decision on what the person offering them the drug tells them. Remember, the person offering them the information may be someone who has no knowledge about the potential effects or it may be the pusher -- who has a financial interest in them saying yes -- and is deliberately misleading them.

The key to prevention is to help them make the right decision now, without the pressure of their friends or the circumstances surrounding the event. Any time the decision comes up again, they will have to do the more difficult task of having to reconsider. Chances are they'll know exactly what to say and how to say it.

Other than following your children everywhere they go, there is no way you can prevent them from being exposed to drugs. The best thing to do is to help them decide now, that they are going to be drug-free.

Role Playing

You may also want to reinforce the decision to be drug-free by role-playing a potential incident.

Role-playing can be done in several ways. It can be fun and create a more constructive dialogue between you and your children. It doesn't have to involve elaborate demonstrations. It can be as simple as sliding a paper clip across the table and telling them: *"This is speed (or use another kind of drug). It will have a bad effect on your body. It may kill you. But, it may make you feel good for a few minutes. Do you want to take it?"*

Another way to role play is when you are explaining the effects on the body. Practice with them by asking: *"Would you put something like that in your body?"* Ask questions that set them up to say, *"NO, NO, NO."* Because when the time comes that they need to say the *"NO"* that counts, they will have practiced it so many times, their response will be almost automatic.

Role play often. Your consistency will be critical in determining the effectiveness of teaching your kids not to do drugs. Take the opportunity when it arises, and share stories about drugs and drug use.

Be consistent with what you do and what you teach.



Getting Started

What is the best age to start? Ask yourself: *"What are the age(s) of my children?"* For you, this is the best age to start. Start talking to them when they can understand the meaning of "NO" and what it means to harm themselves.

Take the initiative. Start your discussions today and keep them going. Don't wait until a convenient time, because one may never come.

If you think you don't have the time, then make the time. It takes less time now, to deal with prevention than it will, later on, to deal with the results of the problem -- taking them to the hospital, committing them to a treatment center, or going to their funeral. Right now you have the choice.

Don't think that your kids already know about the dangers of drugs. Just because you think drugs are potentially dangerous, doesn't mean they share your views. Maybe you know something they don't.

Don't stop talking to them about the problem. Take every opportunity to let them know how you feel about drugs and what you think. Every time you see a commercial about using alcohol or a program that shows someone using drugs, talk to them.

Reinforce your message at every opportunity by asking questions:

"I wonder why that person is doing that drug?"

"I wonder if they know what that does to their body?"

"What do you think?"

How To Start the Conversation

It's easy; just do it. Open your conversation with a simple statement about something that has just happened related to the subject, like: *"Look what I got; it's about drugs."* Show them this book and tell them, *"I have found some really interesting information about the dangers of drug use."*

When you ask questions, give them enough time to answer. Don't try to force answers from them because they may just say what they think you want to hear. Encourage them to talk freely to you about the subject and make sure you don't react or get angry about their answers. **Remember:** they may not know or understand everything about the problem. Who does?

Above all, take your children seriously. Give them respect for their opinions and let them share the responsibility of protecting themselves from the possible effects of drug use.

Read the INFORMATION ABOUT DRUGS SECTION and learn about the dangers of the different types of drugs, and then discuss them with your children. If you have any personal knowledge of people who have had experiences related to drug use, share the stories with them. Encourage them to share any stories that they may have.

Use Information About Drugs with the idea that you can give your children the knowledge of what may happen if they decide to use drugs. (Some of it may seem repetitious, but it has been designed to reinforce the dangers found in different drugs.)

Dealing With Peer Pressure

An important part of your discussions should be to show them how to deal with friends who offer them drugs. By dealing with the question of social pressure now, you can help them make a decision they may have to make later.

If they learn how to answer someone who offers them something that may harm them, they don't have to think about it. They already know the right answer.

Ask the question: "What if a friend of yours offers you some drugs?"

Let them answer, and tell them that you can see how they would come up with an answer like that. Whatever it is, agree with their reasoning because any disagreement may turn off communication.

Ask the question, "Why would someone who knows how dangerous drugs are, offer them to a friend?"

There are two possible answers:



1. They don't know how dangerous drugs are.
2. Maybe they don't care.

If you allow them to draw their conclusions, it will have a much greater effect than if you just tell them the conclusion you want them to draw. Arm them with possible answers and solutions:

1. They should know that their choice is doing drugs or doing something else. Teach them to say, *"No thanks, I have something better to do."* Ask them, *"What would be better than doing drugs?"* Do they have any hobbies? Are there things that interest them? Do they like to go to the library?

Role-play with them by telling them, *"take this."* Then pass them a button or paper clip. Tell them that it will make them feel good. Wait for their response. Teach them to tell you, *"No I have something better to do."*

2. An outright "NO" is the best response. Help them understand that telling your friend "NO" is all right. Tell them that a good response is "NO, drugs interfere with my mental and physical growth, skills, and ability. Drugs are dangerous, both now and later."

3. Help them understand that hanging around with people who do not do drugs is healthier and that it is in their best interest to stay away from parties and gatherings where drugs are likely to be used.

Another thing you can do is to invite their friends and their parents to a *drug-free party*. Show them some of the ways to have fun without drugs.

Instill in them the knowledge that no matter what time they call you or where they are, if they need you to come to pick them up, you care enough about them that you will help take them out of a dangerous situation.

Things To Help Them Say No

- Help your children to learn how to deal with stress.
- Help your children learn how to make good decisions.
- Help your children learn how to solve problems.
- Help your children learn to build healthy relationships.
- Help your children learn how to have fun.
- Help your children learn how to overcome frustration.
- Help your children learn how to deal with pain.
- Help your children learn to change things they don't like.
- Help your children learn to accept things they can't change.

And help your children learn to recognize the difference between the things they can and cannot change.

What Else Can You Do?

Don't stop by just educating your children. Offer your newfound information to other parents.

Join a group of other parents who are also interested in prevention. If there are none in your area, start one. You are a good candidate because you have taken the first step.

Your effectiveness as a parent-educator will increase if more people in your community are working with you in prevention. The result will be that more kids will not use drugs.

The Search Institute of Minneapolis, MN (www.search-institute.org) has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. There are eight categories of assets, four External and four Internal. Each Asset is listed in bold. (Printed with permission of Search Institute.)

At home, it is crucial for family life to provide young individuals with love and support. Maintaining positive and open communication between parents and youngsters encourages them to seek advice and guidance from their parents. Research has shown that when a young person has the support of three or more non-parent adults in their life, they tend to fare better. Additionally, having caring neighbors who value their well-being is important.

Schools should provide a nurturing and supportive environment that encourage young individuals to reach their full potential. Parental involvement in education is also a vital aspect of a child's academic success.

In the community, young people thrive when they are given meaningful and productive roles that are recognized and valued by adults. When they dedicate an hour or more per week to serving and contributing to their community, it bolsters their self-worth. Young people should feel secure in their home, school, and neighborhood environments.



Boundaries and expectations are essential for healthy development. Clear rules and consequences for behavior should be established by both families and schools. Neighbors can also play an active role in monitoring the behavior of young individuals in the community. Positive adult role models, including parents and other adults, as well as supportive friends, can help young individuals develop responsible behavior and high aspirations.

Engaging in constructive activities during leisure time is essential for healthy development. This includes dedicating time to artistic pursuits, participating in youth activities, engaging in religious institutions, and spending quality time reading.

Young people with internal assets such as academic motivation, engagement in school, strong homework habits, care for their school's well-being, and a love of reading tend to be more successful in their academic pursuits.

Positive values such as kindness, social justice, moral conviction, honesty, responsibility, and restraint help young individuals develop healthy social competencies, including problem-solving

skills, empathy, and cultural awareness. It is essential for young individuals to learn how to resist negative peer pressure and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Developing a positive identity, including personal control, self-confidence, a sense of purpose, and an optimistic outlook on the future, is important for young individuals to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Diversion



There is a grey area between when it is time to put your efforts into PRIMARY PREVENTION and DIVERSION.

Primary prevention refers to efforts aimed at preventing a problem from occurring in the first place, while diversion refers to efforts aimed at redirecting individuals away from the criminal justice system or other negative outcomes once a problem has occurred.

The grey area between primary prevention and diversion refers to situations where it may not be entirely clear whether it is more effective to focus efforts on preventing the problem from occurring or redirecting individuals who have already experienced the problem.

In these situations, a comprehensive approach that includes elements of both primary prevention and diversion may be most effective. This could involve addressing underlying risk factors for the problem while also providing targeted interventions for those who are at higher risk of experiencing it.

For example, you found out that your 12-year-old child is smoking marijuana. Many of the devices found in PRIMARY PREVENTION will be effective in diverting your child away from further use.

But, you have to get them to stop.

It's time to divert your children's behavior! You have to get involved and reverse a decision they made that can have devastating effects on the entire family.

They decided to do drugs, and most agree, to start was a bad choice. Now they have to make another choice: **to stop**. This is where you can and should influence their decision.

An important note: The decision has been made and even though it was a bad decision, you should be careful if you decide to challenge it. (Challenging them may make them defend their choice, which in turn, may serve to reinforce it.)

Nor should you put them down or do anything that could cause a loss of self-esteem. This too could reinforce their bad decision. You may want to tell them something like: *"I can understand how someone could decide to do drugs. Of course, if someone knew all the dangers involved with drug use, maybe he or she would reconsider that decision and stop."*

It is important that you present all the facts about drug use and how potentially dangerous it is. (The section in the back of this book on individual drugs will help you with the facts about how dangerous illegal drugs are.)

Intervention

What to do when you think your child is using drugs

If you believe that your child is using drugs, you need to get help. It doesn't matter why you think it; whether it is based on evidence or other information, **get some help!**

If you are like the rest of us, it isn't easy to admit that your child may have a problem. But, do not ignore this problem; the chances are good that it will not go away. The most important thing to do when you believe your child is using drugs is to get some help. Find the professional that can address your needs and the needs of your child.

The subject of getting off drugs is something that people study for years. To try to cover it adequately in this book is not possible. The best advice is to get some professional help.

Often parents blame themselves. They think it may be something they have or haven't done. The reason your child is using isn't important. What is important is that you get some help.

Denial can be dangerous and could cost the life of someone you love. The sooner you act, the sooner your child will be able to get the help he or she needs.

Tough Love

Tough love is a parenting or counseling approach that involves setting strict boundaries and consequences for a loved one's behavior. The purpose of tough love is to encourage personal responsibility and accountability and to help the person overcome self-destructive or addictive behavior.

Tough love can involve setting clear expectations and consequences for behavior, such as imposing curfews, withholding privileges, or setting conditions for financial support. It can also involve interventions or treatment programs that help the person overcome addiction or other negative behaviors.

While tough love can be effective in some situations, it can also be difficult and emotionally challenging for both the person receiving it and the person providing it. It's important to approach tough love with a balanced approach, combining accountability with support and compassion.

It's also important to remember that tough love is not appropriate or effective in all situations. For some people, a more gentle and supportive approach may be more effective in promoting personal growth and positive behavior change. Ultimately, the best approach will depend on the individual circumstances and needs of the person involved.

On a personal note, when my adopted son was living on the streets, I was given the "Tough Love talk" by both professionals and other parents.

All I can say is this, Carrol O'Connor, the well-known actor, once said, "You have to do anything you can to get between your child and drugs."

Tough love dictated I would have him learn about the consequences of this very dangerous behavior until he realized the errors of his ways. Personally, I feel it's nonsense. I did everything I could to bring him home and help him get clean.

I'm happy to tell you that today, 20 years later, he is doing well and living a good life.

Personally, I believe tough love is like letting your kid play on the freeway, hoping that he learns that it is dangerous and shouldn't be playing there.

In my opinion, tough love is for your to have a continuous dialogue about the dangers of substance use and drug abuse are and possibly living what you are teaching.

Warning Signs

No sign will pop up on your child's forehead saying that he or she is having a drug problem, but if you are alert enough you can see some of the indications.



Actions

As our children grow older, we may observe changes in their behavior and actions that we attribute to normal development. However, it's important to be aware that some of these changes could be indications of drug use. While these changes may be subtle, as parents, it's essential to remain vigilant.

Some of the common warning signs of drug use in children include alterations in mood or behavior, disruptions in sleep patterns, poor personal hygiene, changes in appearance, and a decline in academic or athletic performance. If you notice any of these warning signs, it's crucial to address your concerns with your child.

Other warning signs may include your child spending more time alone in their room or away from home, a sudden change in grooming habits, withdrawing from family activities, and demonstrating a lack of responsibility.

By remaining alert and taking proactive steps to address your concerns, you can help your child overcome any potential drug use and promote their overall health and well-being.

Behavior

Changes in behavior can be warning signs of drug use in children. These changes may include becoming more aggressive or more withdrawn. Mood swings may also be a cause for concern, especially if your child quickly goes from happy to sad.

Other warning signs of drug use may include a decline in academic performance, such as poor grades in school or a drastic change in grades. Poor attendance in school is also a potential warning sign that your child may be struggling with drug use.

If you notice any of these warning signs, it's important to take action. Talk to your child and try to get to the root of the problem. If you suspect that your child is using drugs, seek professional help from a healthcare provider or substance abuse treatment specialist.

Remember that drug use can have serious consequences for your child's health and well-being. By being attentive to changes in behavior, mood, and academic performance, you can help your child address any issues they may be facing and get them the help they need to overcome drug use.

Physical Evidence

There are certain physical items that may be associated with the use of illegal drugs, and while they may not be a definitive warning sign on their own, they should make parents or guardians more vigilant. Here are some items and how they may be used:

- Roach clips: used to hold small amounts of drugs that are too small to hold with fingers.
- Water pipes: used for smoking marijuana and other drugs.
- Brass or glass pipes: used for smoking certain types of drugs.
- Cigarette lighters and matches: if your child doesn't smoke cigarettes, the presence of these items may be cause for concern, especially if burnt matches are found around the child's room or other frequented places.
- Eye drops: used to get rid of redness caused by drug use.

Aside from physical evidence, there are other physical symptoms that may be associated with drug use. A change in personal appearance or hygiene may also be a warning sign. It's important to be attentive to any changes in your child's behavior or appearance and to address your concerns with them in a supportive and non-judgmental manner. If you suspect that your child is using drugs, seek professional help from a healthcare provider or substance abuse treatment specialist.

Summary: Parents should look for changes in their child's personal appearance and grooming habits. Warning signs include a lack of concern for their appearance, unkempt hair, and excessive use of makeup. These changes may indicate drug use or low self-esteem. Parents should be observant and address their concerns in a supportive manner, seeking professional help if needed.

Recovery

It would take 10 books to explain the process and different types of treatment for someone to recover from an addiction.



My purpose here is to give you an idea of what is involved and why it's important to prevent or intervene in your child's drug use.

Drug addiction is a chronic disease characterized by drug seeking and use that is compulsive, or difficult to control, despite harmful consequences.

Brain changes that occur over time with drug use challenge an addicted person's self-control and interfere with their ability to resist intense urges to take drugs. This is why drug addiction is also a relapsing disease.

Drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Using drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, treatment for drug addiction generally isn't a cure. However, addiction is treatable and can be successfully managed. People who are recovering from an addiction will be at risk for relapse for years and possibly for their whole lives.

Relapse is the return to drug use after an attempt to stop. Relapse indicates the need for more or a different treatment.

Why People Die in Recovery

The human body is an amazing piece of equipment. It is always trying to maintain a normal level of everything.

When someone starts using drugs, their body will try to bring its chemistry back to normal. It does this by producing its own chemicals called hormones. Hormones counteract the effect of the drugs. Over time, the user has to take higher doses of drugs to achieve the same high. The more drugs they take the more hormones their body produces.

When someone stops using drugs, the body quits producing as many hormones and the body goes back to its normal state.

If the user uses again, more often than not, they will use at their last dosage and their body cannot tolerate a high amount of drugs and the user overdoses. This is why relapse is dangerous.

Drug Treatment

There are several options for treating drug addiction and it can be expensive. Based on average costs, an inpatient program can cost as much as a four-year college degree.

But then again, many parents will not spare any expense when it comes to the health and well-being of their children.

Inpatient Treatment

Inpatient treatment is where patients are admitted to a treatment center on a full-time basis, receiving supervised and highly structured care for their drug and alcohol abuse.

When a person enters inpatient treatment, they become a full-time resident of the facility and receive personal care and support all the time they are there. They may stay alone or live with a roommate. They will live a highly structured life. They will meet with a therapist, on a one-on-one basis or attend group therapy sessions several times per day.

The average stay is 30 days, but more time may give a better outcome for long-term recovery and improve the chances of a successful recovery.

Some of the benefits of inpatient treatment are patients are supervised around the clock by healthcare professionals ensuring their safety. This is important for someone in detox. Inpatient Treatment removes drug addicts from negative influences that may trigger them to use again. At many inpatient facilities, patients are in supportive environments that foster a lasting recovery.

Outpatient Treatment

Outpatient treatment isn't as intensive as inpatient treatment and can be easier to fit into a person's life.

Staying sober during inpatient treatment is easier because you are basically locked up. When someone goes back into the world, they're faced with real-world problems. This is when sobriety is challenged and can lead to relapse.

With outpatient treatment, comes a lot of help and support to cope with the stress of normal life. An addict learns ways to deal with ongoing problems. This prevents them from becoming overwhelmed.

Outpatient treatment's goal is to move a patient into a long-term recovery that will last. The patient learns skills to live a sober life before they no longer need outpatient care.

Outpatient treatment is also supportive of post-inpatient treatment adding to the successful journey to sobriety.

If a patient tries to get sober on their own, it will be more difficult and the possibility of relapse is much greater.

Outpatient treatment is also less expensive which can be a critical factor for people who do not have health insurance.

12-Step Programs

A powerful peer support group that can help people recover from addiction is a 12-step program. These programs aren't necessarily the right method for everyone, they can help those struggling with substance abuse issues learn ways to cope and find comfort and acceptance in a loving community as they recover.

Summary

There are many good books on the subject of overcoming problems with substance abuse in children and teens.

Your kids are worth the time it'll take to find out what to do. If you do nothing, they may make it on their own, but if you take the time you will greatly increase their chances for a good life.

It is up to you. At the first sign of trouble, get some help. Your local health department or police department will be able to give you the names of centers and hotlines.

Get help before it is too late. Your child may be only experimenting, but an experiment could end in a tragedy if it is not addressed in time.

Don't give up on your kids!

Substances of Abuse

Both legal and illegal drugs fall into several categories. The most common drugs are listed below.

Alcohol

Alcohol is found in beer, wine, wine coolers, whiskey, scotch, vodka, gin, food, wood alcohol, rubbing alcohol, moonshine, and various other assorted distilled alcoholic beverages. Although widely used and considered by some as a non-deadly substance, alcohol-related deaths around the world have dramatically increased over the last decade. Research shows that one in ten adults has some form of alcohol addiction. Alcohol is the substance most abused by teenagers. Alcohol is also the number one killer of teenagers.

Alcohol and Children

Alcohol presents many problems for children and teens.

A young brain isn't fully formed until a person is in their early twenties. When alcohol is introduced into the brain, the brain believes it must always have alcohol to survive. That's why so many alcoholics start drinking when they are in their early teens.

A young person's liver isn't mature and as effective as an adult and as it tries to filter out, what it thinks is poison, it often can't and the young person dies of alcohol poisoning. Thousands of kids die each year from alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol depresses the central nervous system and causes low blood glucose (sugar). Children who drink alcohol can have seizures and coma; they could even die.

Studies show students who do not drink perform better in school than students who do.

Dangers of Alcohol

Alcohol slows reaction time by depressing the central nervous system. This can cause the user to become involved in automobile accidents (50% of auto accidents are alcohol-related), industrial accidents, and household accidents. Death or injury is common because the user is not able to react timely to a given situation to prevent his or her death or injury.

Alcohol can cause anxiety. Anxiety is the feeling of uneasiness, apprehension, or dread. People who drink to overcome anxiety often become more anxious as a result, which causes the process to escalate.

Alcohol can cause brain damage. Many thousands of brain cells are damaged and destroyed when they come into contact with alcohol.

Alcohol can cause cancer. Research shows that people who drink alcohol increase the possibility of certain types of cancer.

Alcohol can cause ulcers. The protective lining of the stomach is destroyed by contact with alcohol and then the acids of the stomach can erode the walls of the stomach even further.

Alcohol can cause cirrhosis of the liver. Cirrhosis is a degeneration of the liver cells, marked by increasing weakness, lethargy, and stupor.



Alcohol can cause mental problems. Users can experience personality changes, with hallucinations and self-destructive tendencies.

Alcohol can cause hypertension, or high blood pressure, which can result in a heart attack, stroke, paralysis, or death.

Alcohol can cause respiratory arrest. This stops the breathing of the user, which, in turn, can cause either severe brain damage, coma, or death.

Alcohol can cause blackouts. Often users don't remember what they have done during an episode. Users often say and do things that they wouldn't otherwise do.

Alcohol can cause impotence. Continued use of alcohol can cause an individual to lose their ability to function sexually.

Alcohol can cause neuritis. This condition is an inflammation of the nerve endings which can be extremely painful.

Alcohol can cause mental disease. Despair and depression leading to suicide are common among chronic users of alcohol.

Alcohol can cause birth defects. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) results in babies being born with birth defects, mental retardation, behavioral problems, learning disabilities, deformed limbs, and cleft palates (also known as harelip).

Alcohol can cause premature death. On average, persons who are considered to be heavy drinkers, reduce their life expectancy by about 10 years.

Alcohol is addicting. Researchers have yet to identify persons with susceptibility to alcohol dependency or addiction. People who are addicted to drugs and alcohol are found in all social and economic classes. The chances of becoming an alcoholic are increased when alcohol is used by teens and pre-teens. When the delicate chemical balance of a youth's body is altered by alcohol, it creates a greater dependency on continued use, developing into chronic abuse. Maturity of the part of the brain (the hypothalamus) most affected by alcohol generally occurs at or near the age of 21. Drinking before maturity increases the probability of developing physical

alcohol dependence. Countries that permit youth to use alcohol have a higher rate of adult alcoholism.

Alcohol is also a gateway drug. Many times the use of alcohol is the first step to other drug use. (See Gateway Drugs)



A final note about alcohol tells us that if you believe it is better for them to drink at home, why not tell them about the dangers of alcohol and that drinking anywhere is a bad idea until their body and brain are fully mature.?

Bath Salts

Bath Salts are synthetic stimulants sold online, in convenience stores, and in “head shops” under various brand names. They resemble Epsom salts. They are disguised and sold as bath salts, plant food, or research chemicals.

Also called Bliss, Blue Silk, Cloud Nine, Drone, Energy-1, Ivory Wave, Lunar Wave, Meow Meow, Meph, Ocean Burst, Pure Ivory, Purple Wave, Red Dove, Snow Leopard, Stardust, Vanilla Sky, White Dove, White Knight, White Lightning,

Users snort, sniff, take it orally, smoke it, or inject it as a solution.

Dangers of Bath Salts

Effects from using Bath Salts are reported as confusion, acute psychosis, agitation, combativeness, aggressive, violent, self-destructive behavior, rapid heartbeat, hypertension, hyperthermia, prolonged dilation of the pupil of the eye, breakdown of muscle fibers that leads to



Bath Salts - DEA Photo

the release of muscle fiber contents into the bloodstream, teeth grinding, sweating, headaches, palpitations, seizures, paranoia, hallucinations, and delusions.

An overdose can cause insomnia, irritability, dizziness, feelings of empathy, stimulation, alertness, euphoria, sensory awareness, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, suicidal thoughts, and seizures.

Other symptoms are rapid heart rate can lead to stroke or heart attack, sweating, nausea, vomiting, prolonged panic attacks, and death.

Club Drugs

Club drugs are a group of drugs most often used by teens and young adults at bars, nightclubs, concerts, and parties to heighten sensory perceptions and reduce inhibitions. These drugs include MDMA/Ecstasy, Herbal Ecstasy, Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine.

The sources, chemicals, and possible contaminants used to make many club drugs are not widely known. This makes it difficult to determine the consequences of using these drugs.

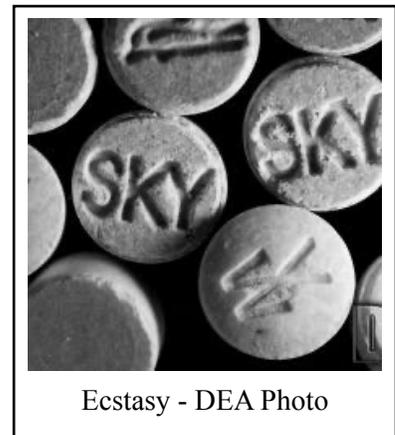
Ecstasy

MDMA, better known as ecstasy, is a synthetic, psychoactive drug that acts as a stimulant and a hallucinogen. Also known as XTC, X, E, Adam, Eve, clarity, hug, beans, love drug, lovers' speed, peace, uppers, or molly.

How Is Ecstasy Used?

MDMA is usually taken orally either as capsules or tablets, but may also be crushed and snorted. It is occasionally smoked but rarely injected. Ecstasy is rarely used alone--it is common for users to mix Ecstasy with other substances such as alcohol and marijuana.

Ecstasy produces feelings of increased energy, euphoria, emotional warmth, and distortions in time, perception, and tactile experiences.



Ecstasy - DEA Photo

What Are the Risks Associated with Ecstasy Use?

Ecstasy can be dangerous to overall health and, on some occasions, lethal. Some of the effects include increases in heart rate and blood pressure and other symptoms such as muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, and chills or sweating. In high doses, Ecstasy can interfere with the body's ability to regulate temperature which can lead to a

sharp increase in body temperature (hyperthermia) resulting in liver, kidney, cardiovascular system failure, or death.

Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam)

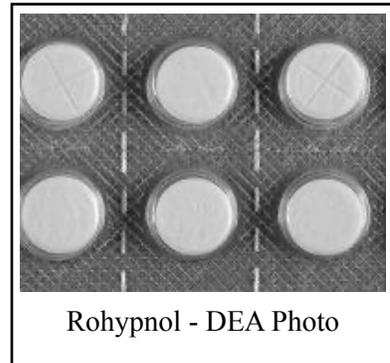
Flunitrazepam is a central nervous system depressant and is classified as a benzodiazepine. It is not approved for medical use in the United States, and its importation is banned.

It is commonly known as the 'date rape' drug because it can be odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Users may call it a forget-me pill, Mexican Valium, R2, roche, roofies, roach, rope, or wolfies.

How Is Rohypnol (flunitrazepam) Misused?

Flunitrazepam is usually ingested orally in a pill form or dissolved in a liquid; the drug can also be ground up and snorted.

It is used for its intoxicating effect. It is best known for being placed in the alcoholic drink of an unsuspecting victim to prevent resistance to sexual assault, leaving the victim unaware of what has happened.



What Are the Risks Associated with Rohypnol Use?

Flunitrazepam causes amnesia, decreased reaction time, impaired mental functioning and judgment, confusion, aggression, and excitability. Like other [benzodiazepines](#), chronic use of Rohypnol can produce tolerance, physical dependence, and addiction. When mixed with alcohol and/or other central nervous system depressants, it can be lethal.

GHB - Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid

Gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), also known as Xyrem®, is a central nervous system (CNS) depressant that is prescribed to treat narcolepsy (a sleep disorder). It exists naturally in the brain, but at much lower concentrations than when GHB is taken recreationally.

Much like Rohypnol, this drug is available in an odorless, colorless, and tasteless form. Users may call it easy lay, G, Georgia home boy, GHB, goop, grievous bodily harm, liquid ecstasy, liquid X, or scoop.

How Is GHB Misused?

GHB is usually ingested orally, either in a liquid or powder form. GHB dissolved in a liquid such as water, juice, or alcohol has been packaged in small vials or small water bottles.

GHB is misused for its intoxicating effects. Like Rohypnol, it is better known for being placed in the alcoholic drink of an unsuspecting victim to prevent resistance to sexual assault, leaving



the victim unaware of what has happened.

GHB also has anabolic effects and has been used by bodybuilders to aid in fat reduction and muscle building.

What Are the Risks Associated with GHB Use?

Coma and seizures can occur following the use of GHB. Combined use with other drugs such as alcohol can result in nausea and breathing difficulties. Regular use of GHB can lead to addiction and withdrawal which includes insomnia, anxiety, tremors, increased heart rate and blood pressure, and occasional psychotic thoughts.

Ketamine

Ketamine is mostly used in veterinary practice as an animal tranquilizer. It causes detachment from pain and the environment. Ketamine is manufactured commercially as a powder or liquid. When sold illegally, it is usually a white crystalline powder.

Users may call it Cat Tranquilizer, Cat Valium, Jet, Jet K, K, Kit Kat, Purple, Special K, Special La Coke, Super Acid, Super K, and Vitamin K.

How is Ketamine Misused?

Powdered ketamine is cut into lines known as 'bumps' and snorted, or smoked in marijuana or tobacco cigarettes. Liquid ketamine is injected intramuscularly or mixed into drinks. Ketamine is found by itself or in combination with MDMA, amphetamine, methamphetamine, or cocaine.

The drug has hallucinogenic effects, which means that it changes thinking, perception of time and emotions, distorts vision and hearing, and causes hallucinations. Similar to Rohypnol and GHB, it has also been used to 'spike' drinks prior to sexual assault.



Ketamine - DEA Photo

What Are the Risks Associated with Ketamine Use?

Low-dose intoxication impairs attention, learning ability, and memory. At higher doses, ketamine can cause dreamlike states and hallucinations. Flashbacks can occur several weeks after use. Ketamine may also cause agitation, depression, cognitive difficulties, unconsciousness, delirium, and amnesia.

Cocaine/Crack Cocaine

Cocaine is also called Coke, Snow, Nose Candy, and Blow.

Cocaine is a stimulant that affects the central nervous system. It immediately dilates the pupils of the eyes and elevates the blood pressure. It increases the heart rate, breathing rate, and temperature of the body.

Dangers of Cocaine/Crack Cocaine

Cocaine and crack cocaine disrupt the brain's electrical activity and neurotransmitters. Long-term memory and recall abilities can be reduced or destroyed.

Cocaine and crack cocaine are extremely addictive. The progression of addiction is such that the user's needs increase with more use. (In tests with laboratory animals, the subjects were found to ignore the other basic physical needs of eating, drinking, and sex in favor of cocaine, taking in more and more until death occurred.) The time it takes to be addicted is shortened by injection or by smoking (in crack or rock freebase form).

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause respiratory arrest, which is a total shutdown of the lungs and an accumulation of fluid on the lungs, resulting in a "death rattle" and gasping for breath.

Cocaine use can cause AIDS, hepatitis, and endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart). These and other communicable diseases are caused by injecting any drug with shared or contaminated needles.

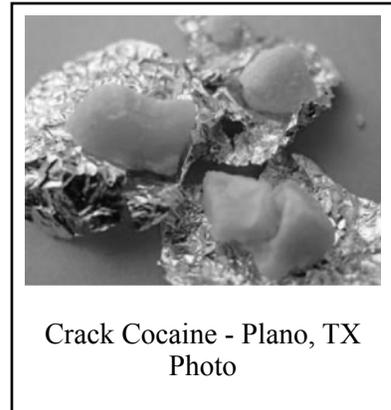
Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause cardiac arrest or congestive heart failure, which is increased pulse rate, and elevated blood pressure, followed by extremely high heart rate and high blood pressure (which could result in hemorrhage or congestive heart failure).

Freebasing Cocaine can result in injury or death by fire. Preparation of freebase, which involves the use of volatile solvents, can result in a fire or explosion.

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause severe mental depression. Discontinuance of the drug will cause a severe state of depression. This factor also contributes to addiction to the drug.

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause sexual dysfunction. While at first cocaine may seem to enhance sexual performance, continued use decreases the sexual drive, and could finally result in impotence.

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause insomnia, which is a serious condition that also causes other side effects like disorientation, depression, and loss of physical strength.



Crack Cocaine - Plano, TX
Photo

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause loss of appetite. Studies show that without proper nutrition, many other side effects can occur. A person's state of health is directly related to his or her nutritional intake.

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause mental illness. Tactile hallucinations, which are the feelings that someone or something is touching the user; and paranoia, which is "the false belief that people are out to get you," are two often reported side effects of using cocaine.

The use of cocaine and crack cocaine can cause death by cardiac arrest as well as respiratory failure. Heart attacks and complete respiratory shutdown are related to many deaths associated with using cocaine and crack cocaine.

Cocaine and crack cocaine can cause birth defects. Malformations, visual problems, learning disabilities, retardation, and a high incidence of miscarriage are all caused by pregnant mothers who use cocaine during pregnancy. Another problem is that the fetus is deprived of its life-sustaining blood flow. Infants are also subject to agonizing withdrawal symptoms. Cocaine babies are many times more likely to die from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Occasional use of cocaine can cause a stuffy or runny nose, while chronic use can ulcerate the mucous membrane of the nose.

Depressants

Depressants are also known as Downers, Barbs, Yellow Jacket, Ludes, and Red Devils. They include Valium, Librium, Miltown, Seconal, and Amytal.

Depressants are a type of drug that helps people relax or sleep. For many years this type of drug has been prescribed by doctors to help patients reduce dangerous levels of stress. Depressants are found in sleeping pills, barbiturates, tranquilizers, and sedatives. Alcohol also acts as a depressant.

The effects of depressants are in many ways similar to the effects of alcohol. Small amounts can relax muscles and calm the user.

Larger doses can slow reflexes, slur speech, impair judgment, lower blood pressure, increase body temperature, hinder coordination, and pervert perception.

Very large doses can cause respiratory depression or arrest, muscle spasms, convulsions, coma, severe withdrawal symptoms, and death. The combination of depressants and alcohol can multiply the effects of the drugs, increasing the risks.



Depressants - Wikipedia

Dangers of Depressants

Depressants can cause coma. Due to the narrow margin between the drug required to get the user "high" and a lethal dose, overdose is common. Coma and subsequent death follow.

Depressants can cause heart attacks and irregular heart rhythms.

Depressants can cause mental problems, hallucinations, disorientation, delusions, rage, and emotional changes.

Depressants can cause incontinence; involuntary bowel movements and urination are attributed to muscle spasms and relaxed restraining muscles.

Depressants can cause skin rashes. These skin problems manifest themselves in various forms of skin rashes from mild irritation to a condition similar to hives. The most severe condition is exfoliative dermatitis, a condition where the skin falls off in scales.

Depressants can cause lethargy. Due to the altered state of the user, feelings of apathy, drowsiness, and listlessness are often the results of taking this type of drug. Under medical supervision, these conditions may be desired, but in trying to function in our world they can become deadly.

Depressants can cause double or blurred vision.

Depressants can cause anxiety. The altered state of mind caused by the various depressant drugs can affect the mental process of a user. Over-reacting to minor circumstances or conditions surrounding the user can result in unnecessary feelings of anxiousness or dread.

Depressants can decrease the sex drive. The user's general apathy and a sometimes state of euphoria will have a direct negative effect on the desire to procreate.

Depressants can cause blood disorders. Anemia and altered blood sugar levels are just two of the problems associated with the use of depressants.

Depressants can cause respiratory depression. Users sometimes experience a reduction in both the volume and rate of breathing. This can lead to respiratory arrest and death.

Depressants can cause liver damage. Jaundice, a condition where the user's eyes and skin turn yellow, can result and other complications can develop where the liver becomes diseased and fails to function properly which results in several types of blood disorders.

Depressants are addicting. Regular use of depressants can result in physical and psychological addiction. It is common for users to feel that they cannot function without the drug. The result can be that finding and using these drugs becomes the main goal in life for these individuals.

Depressants can cause withdrawal symptoms. Abrupt secession of the drug can bring on withdrawal symptoms, including anxiety, insomnia, twitching, dizziness, nausea, vomiting,

excessive sweating, tremors, delirium (which can result in a psychotic episode), convulsions, and death. Withdrawal can be more serious and traumatic than heroin withdrawal. In almost all cases of discontinuance of depressants, medical supervision and monitoring are required to protect the user from both mental and physical harm or death.

Depressants can cause birth defects. Babies born to mothers who are using or who have taken depressants during pregnancy can have birth defects, respiratory problems, and behavioral problems. Babies born to mothers who abused depressants during pregnancy may also be physically addicted to the drugs and suffer from withdrawal symptoms shortly after or during birth.

Fentanyl

Fentanyl is also known as Fire, Friend, Girl, Goodfella, Great Bear, Fent, Fenty, Gray Stuff, He-Man, Heineken, Huerfanito, Humid,. Jackpot, King Ivory, Lollipop, Murder 8, Nal, and Nil.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is made in a lab from precursor chemicals instead of from poppies. It is 20 to 50 times more potent than heroin and 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine. According to the DEA, 2 milligrams of fentanyl is generally considered a lethal dose for most people. This is equivalent to a few grains of salt.

Fentanyl is much cheaper to make than other opioids. It is also easier to smuggle because small amounts are very powerful.

When Fentanyl is used in combination with Heroin, on the street it is called China White, Poison, and TNT. The NIDA also cautions users that mixing Fentanyl with street-manufactured heroin and cocaine can dramatically increase the potential for tolerance, addiction, and a fatal overdose.

Clandestinely produced fentanyl is usually a powder added into other drugs (cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine even marijuana) or pressed into counterfeit pills that can look like OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax, Alprazolam, Adderall, Ecstasy, Molly, or other pills/tablets.



Fentanyl - DEA Photo

Dangers of Fentanyl

There are many side effects associated with Fentanyl which are also common with the use of over-the-counter medication, prescription drugs, and illicit drugs. Studies show the following side effects for users: headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, dehydration, shortness of breath, constipation, euphoria, swelling of the feet, and lack of concentration.

Overdose may result in unconsciousness, coma, cardiac arrest, cardiovascular collapse, severe respiratory problems, lung issues, and allergic reactions.

It is also common for sudden death to occur when Fentanyl is used when mixed with other substances.

The overdose-death rate in the United States has risen dramatically over the past few years. This may be due to the fluctuation in the potency of the substance.

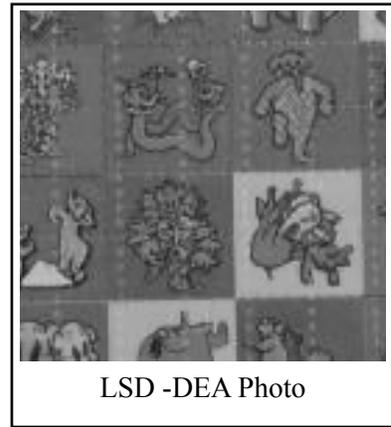
Hallucinogens

There are several forms of hallucinogens. The most common are LSD, PCP, peyote, mescaline, and psilocybin. Hallucinogens are also called, Angel Dust, Killer Weed, Acid, Microdot, Sugar Cubes, Mesc, Buttons, and Magic Mushrooms.

Even though the effects on the mental process are about the same, they range in severity from a mildly altered state of mind to violent, psychotic, and destructive episodes.

There is no known medical use for these substances. They are used for one purpose: to alter the mental state of the user.

The most lethal of these drugs is PCP. This drug disrupts the user's intellect and the part of the brain that controls instincts. This can result in all sorts of self-destructive, risk-taking activities, which in turn cause numerous accidental deaths. These episodes not only kill the users, but many innocent bystanders also become victims.



LSD -DEA Photo

Because PCP blocks pain receptors, violent events may also result in serious self-inflicted injuries.

The effects of PCP vary, but users frequently report a sense of detachment and alienation. Also, feelings of impending death or doom may appear which causes users to lose self-control. Time and body movement are reduced which increases the dangers of using machinery or driving while under the influence. This danger increases by a reduction of muscular coordination and lessened physical senses.

Dangers of Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens can cause convulsions. Violent, uncontrolled episodes of loss of voluntary control of muscles are attributed to the use of large doses of many of these drugs. Many times the amount of the drug and the potency of the substance manufactured under uncontrolled circumstances will vary significantly, making the users unaware of exactly how much they are taking.

Hallucinogens may cause mental disorders. Users often experience panic, confusion, suspicion, anxiety, and loss of self-control.

In later stages of chronic use, users often exhibit paranoid and violent behavior and experience hallucinations.

Hallucinogens may cause mental retardation. Loss of the ability for abstract thinking is one of the reported side effects of the use of some psychoactive drugs.

Hallucinogens may cause brain damage. Since strychnine is used as a base for hallucinogenic drugs, primarily LSD, it stimulates the nervous system and brain stem. Strychnine is an extremely poisonous alkaloid and can have deadly side effects.

Hallucinogens may cause heart damage. Since many hallucinogens are cut with amphetamines, a common reaction to these drugs is an increase in the user's heart rate to dangerous levels, which can result in damage to the heart itself and other forms of circulatory collapse.

Hallucinogens may cause a stroke. Due to the common reaction of increased blood pressure, users subject themselves to the increased possibility of suffering from the paralyzing effects of a ruptured blood vessel in the brain.

Hallucinogens may cause malnutrition. Since a loss of appetite is very common, a user often does not eat appropriate foods or may suffer from undernourishment.

Hallucinogens may cause sleep deprivation. Users often suffer from sleeplessness which in turn can cause many other mental disorders such as paranoia, depression, and anxiety.

Hallucinogens may have long-term effects. Delayed effects, or flashbacks, can occur years after drugs have been taken, even when use has been discontinued. This can be especially dangerous if the episode occurs when the user is engaged in a hazardous activity or operating a motor vehicle.

Heroin and Narcotics

Heroin, a narcotic, is also known as Horse, Smack, Black Tar, Big H, and Brown. Other narcotics are Percodan, Morphine, Talwin, Paregoric, and Codeine.

Narcotics are drugs that are important to the practice of medicine. They are primarily used for pain relief. Originally they were derivatives of opium, but today many synthetic substances fall into this class of drugs.

Dangers of Heroin and Narcotics

Narcotics are extremely addicting. Both psychological and physical dependence may develop from either short-term use or repeated use. Users feel that they cannot live without the drug. For the user, finding and using these drugs become the primary goal in life.



Narcotics can produce withdrawal symptoms when discontinued. Abrupt termination of the use of the drug can bring on withdrawal symptoms, including anxiety, insomnia, twitching, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sweating, tremors, delirium (which can result in a psychotic episode), convulsions, and death. In almost all cases of discontinuance of narcotics, medical supervision and monitoring are required to protect the user from both mental and physical harm or death.

Narcotics can cause death. Since the levels of pure drugs found in street doses vary, it is not uncommon for users to overdose. An overdose may produce slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, and coma, resulting in the possibility of death. Since the tolerance to narcotics develops rapidly, the potential for an overdose of prescription drugs also exists -- resulting in a similar condition leading to death.

The use of narcotics may cause blood disease. Application of these substances with contaminated syringes may cause the user to contract AIDS, Hepatitis, Endocarditis, or other diseases.

Narcotics can cause a heart attack. Continued use of these drugs can lead to infections of the heart linings and valves.

Narcotics can cause respiratory arrest. Many times the lungs of users fill with fluid, causing a rattle. The added stress can lead to the failure of the lungs to work effectively, often resulting in the death of the user.

Narcotics can cause skin disease. Abscesses, which are large lesions usually emitting puss, are not uncommon for sustained users of narcotics.

Narcotics may cause accidents. Due to the loss of coordination, any use of dangerous machinery or driving an automobile may be extremely dangerous, not only for the user but also for passengers or innocent bystanders.

Narcotics can cause reduced sexual drive. Due to the reduced libido of users, the natural motivation for sex is reduced or eliminated.

Narcotics may cause blood disorders. Aside from blood disease contracted by using infected needles, narcotic users may also suffer from blood ailments like anemia.

Narcotics can cause birth defects. The use of narcotics and narcotic addiction in pregnant women can lead to premature babies, stillborn, or addicted infants. Babies born to addicted users also experience severe withdrawal symptoms and many cases result in death. Newborns of mothers who used narcotics during pregnancy also have an increased risk of death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Inhalants/Deliriants

Deliriants and inhalants, commonly called psychoactive drugs, are a group of chemicals that can cause a mind-altering experience. These chemicals are found in glue, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids, paint thinner, gasoline, and aerosol cans. The compounds found in inhalants are varied, and their effects on the body are difficult to classify; therefore it is also too complex to categorize the long and short-term effects.

Many times children begin using inhalants as early as age seven or eight.

The immediate negative effects of most inhalants include nausea, sneezing, coughing, nosebleeds, fatigue, lack of coordination, and loss of appetite.

Dangers Of Inhalants And Deliriants

Inhalants can produce heart failure. Sudden death has been reported with first-time use of inhalants and it has occurred after several uses. Due to the increase in the pulse rate, other complications may also be manifested.



Inhalants -DEA Photo

Inhalants can cause a stroke. The sudden increase in blood pressure can burst blood vessels. If this occurs in the brain, loss of motor function may result in irreversible paralysis.

Inhalants can cause respiratory arrest. By depressing the central nervous system, inhalants can cause breathing to cease resulting in death.

Inhalants can impair judgment. With impaired or lack of good judgment, individuals may do something that they wouldn't normally do, such as run in front of an automobile or climb to a high place without protection or perception of danger, resulting in serious injury or death.

Inhalants can cause the involuntary passing of urine and feces. Muscle control is lost and users often fail to control their waste functions. Often users may just lose the desire to not dirty themselves.

Inhalants can cause hepatitis. Long-term use may result in inflammation of the liver, also known as hepatitis which can cause permanent damage to the liver.

Inhalants can cause brain damage. The deprivation of oxygen and the direct effects on the chemical balance of the brain offer a potential for the irreversible destruction of their mental capacities.

Inhalants can cause damage to the central nervous system. Ticks, involuntary spasms, tremors, and loss of motor functions can result from a single use of an inhalant. Repeated sniffing of concentrated vapors over time can permanently damage the nervous system.

Inhalants can cause death by suffocation. By displacing the oxygen in the lungs and by depressing the central nervous system of the user, a single dose in high concentrations can cause breathing to stop.

Inhalants can cause psychotic behavior. Deeply inhaling the vapors, or using large amounts over a short time, may result in disorientation, violent behavior, unconsciousness, or even death.

Inhalants can have other physically destructive effects on long-term users. Weight loss, fatigue, electrolyte imbalance, and muscle fatigue have all been reported as the physically destructive side effects of inhalant use.

Marijuana/Cannabis

Marijuana is also known as Pot, Reefer, Grass, and Weed.

Marijuana acts as both a depressant and a hallucinogen. Its active ingredient, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) gives cannabis its psychoactive effects. THC is also the primary ingredient of HASHISH and HASH OIL.

Today's marijuana is about 10 times stronger than that found in the '60s and '70s.

All forms of cannabis, including hashish and hash oil, have negative physical and mental effects. Several regularly observed physical effects of marijuana are a substantial increase in the heart rate, bloodshot eyes, a dry mouth and throat, and increased appetite.

Dangers of Marijuana/Cannabis

Marijuana can cause memory loss. The use of marijuana may impair or reduce short-term memory and comprehension, alter the sense of time, and reduce the ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination, such as driving a car.

Marijuana can cause learning difficulties. Motivation and cognition may be altered, making the acquisition of information difficult. Continued use of marijuana can lead to "burn out" which causes users to be dull, slow-moving, and inattentive -- also known as "space cadets" and "vegged out" -- this is a condition that is usually unknown to the user.

Marijuana can cause mental problems. Research has indicated that the use of cannabis can produce paranoia and psychosis. Scientists are researching the possibility that the brain is permanently damaged.

Marijuana can cause cancer. Because users inhale the smoke deeply and hold it, marijuana is damaging to the lungs and pulmonary system because the lungs have longer contact with the chemicals found in the smoke. Recent studies indicate that cannabis contains over 400 chemicals



Marijuana -DEA Photo

and that marijuana smoke contains more cancer-causing agents than that found in tobacco smoke. One marijuana cigarette can have the same negative effect on the lungs as 17 to 20 tobacco cigarettes.

Marijuana/cannabis can cause respiratory problems. Research has clearly shown that the use of marijuana/cannabis weakens the lungs' ability to fight bacterial infections which can lead to bronchitis, pneumonia, and other lung ailments.

Marijuana can damage the reproductive system. Studies indicate that both the male and female reproductive organs have been damaged by marijuana use. Also, the hormonal balance of users can be dramatically upset by the use of marijuana/cannabis.

Marijuana/cannabis can cause long-term addiction. According to research conducted by the U. S. Department of Education: "Long-term users of cannabis may develop psychological dependence and require more of the drug to get the same effect. The drug can become the center of their lives."

Marijuana/cannabis can cause birth defects. Babies born to mothers who used marijuana during pregnancy are smaller in birth weight and can have heart problems and learning difficulties.

Marijuana can lead to the use of other, more deadly drugs and so is called a gateway drug (See Gateway Drugs -- Page 43). Users are exposed to individuals that are ready and willing to sell them more addictive, potentially lethal drugs. Research shows that 93% of cocaine users used marijuana first. The more individuals use marijuana, the greater the chances are that they will go on to use cocaine.

There have been over 6,000 studies and research projects conducted about the use and effects of using marijuana/cannabis. Not one has indicated that using marijuana/cannabis is safe. Even medical treatment for glaucoma and cancer, indicate health risks continue.

Synthetic Marijuana

K2 /Spice is a synthetic designer drug that was designed to offer a high similar to THC, found in marijuana.

Also known as Spice, K2, Blaze, RedX Dawn, Paradise, Demon, Black Magic, Spike, Mr. Nice Guy, Ninja, Zohai, Dream, Genie, Sence, Smoke, Skunk, Serenity, Yucatan, Fire, and Crazy Clown.

It's sold as herbal and is anything but natural. It is a manufactured chemical. It is found at small convenience stores, head shops, gas stations, and on the Internet.

Even though they are labeled not for human consumption, users know what they are for.



It is most often smoked with a pipe, a water pipe, or rolled in cigarette papers. In addition, liquid cannabinoids are designed to be vaporized through both disposable and reusable electronic cigarettes.

Dangers of Synthetic Marijuana

State public health and poison centers have issued warnings in response to adverse health effects associated with the abuse of herbal incense products containing these synthetic cannabinoids.

Overdose deaths by heart attack, tachycardia (elevated heart rate), elevated blood pressure, unconsciousness, tremors, seizures, vomiting, hallucinations, agitation, anxiety, pallor, numbness, tingling, acute kidney injury, acute psychotic episodes, dependence, intense hallucinations, severe agitation, disorganized thoughts, paranoid delusions, and violence are all associated with smoking products laced with these substances.

Methamphetamine

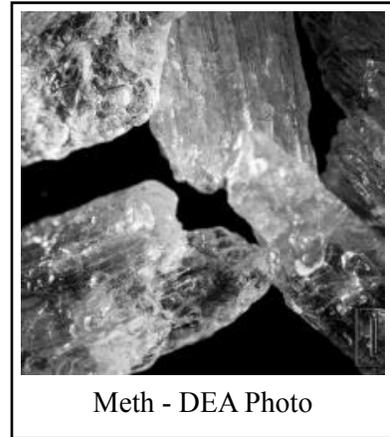
Methamphetamine is a powerful, highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Crystal methamphetamine is a drug that looks like glass fragments or shiny, bluish-white rocks. It is chemically similar to amphetamine, a drug used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and narcolepsy, a sleep disorder. People smoke, swallow, snort, and inject methamphetamine.

Since methamphetamine causes users extreme highs, it is highly addictive.

Methamphetamine is also known as party favors, speed, crank, ice, chalk, wash, trash, dunk, gak, pookie, cookies, Christina, no doze, white cross, cotton candy, rocket fuel, and scooby snax.

Slang terms for using meth are getting geared up, chicken flipping, hot rolling, getting fried or foiled, tweaking, zooming, and getting scattered or spun out.

Terms for meth mixed with other illicit drugs are fire, shabu, twisters, hugs and kisses, biker coffee, and party and play.



Dangers of Methamphetamine

People who use meth often give up food and sleep for days at a time.

Long-Term Effects, people who inject methamphetamine are at increased risk of contracting infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.

Methamphetamine use can also alter judgment and good decision-making abilities leading to risky behaviors. Long-term methamphetamine use has many other negative consequences, including extreme weight loss, addiction, severe dental problems, intense itching that leads to

skin sores from scratching, anxiety, changes in brain structure and function, confusion, memory loss, sleeping problems, violent behavior, paranoia—extreme and unreasonable distrust of others, and hallucinations—sensations and images that seem real though they're not.

In addition, continued use of methamphetamine can cause changes in the brain's chemistry that can cause coordination, impaired verbal learning, emotional, and cognitive problems.

Although some of these brain changes may reverse with time, other changes may never recover. A recent study suggested meth users have an increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease, a nerve disorder that affects movement.

Even small amounts of methamphetamine can result in faster breathing, rapid and/or irregular heartbeat, and increased blood pressure and body temperature.

Methamphetamine Production

Methamphetamine production involves several very dangerous chemicals. Toxic effects from these chemicals can remain in the environment long after a lab has been shut down. These chemicals can also result in deadly lab explosions and house fires.

Meth is often made in small clandestine laboratories, with relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients.

Nicotine

The taking of nicotine is usually associated with smoking cigarettes, using chewing tobacco, or using snuff.

Dangers of Nicotine

In 2022, almost one-half of a million people died because of smoking. These deaths are a result of cancers of the lip, pharynx, oral cavity, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, larynx, cervix uteri (women), kidney and renal pelvis, bladder, liver, colon, and rectum. In addition to cancer heart disease, rheumatic heart disease, pulmonary heart disease, and other forms of heart disease. Other vascular diseases include atherosclerosis, aortic aneurysm, and other arterial diseases. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic airway obstruction.



Cigarettes - Canva

Nicotine has a doubly dangerous effect because not only does nicotine cause problems but the effects of the transfer agents, smoking, or chewing can also be extremely dangerous. These transfer agents also cause cardiovascular (heart) problems, respiratory (lung) conditions, and various forms of cancer. Additionally, just being around someone who smokes can cause these same problems.

Nicotine can cause birth defects. Nicotine has been known to be detrimental to the development of a fetus during the last three months of pregnancy. Babies born to mothers who use nicotine may suffer from subsequent respiratory problems and diminished lung capacity.

Nicotine is extremely addictive. Individuals who smoke more than 15 cigarettes per day may be addicted to nicotine. Other symptoms of addiction are wanting to smoke during the first half hour of the day, wanting to smoke most during the morning, and not being able to go anywhere comfortably without cigarettes or tobacco.

Many people believe that Nicotine is more addictive than heroin.

Steroids/Anabolic Steroids

Steroids are used in weight training and by athletes to improve their performance. They are often used by high school and college students. Often they are used for quick gains in muscle strength.

These powerful compounds are closely related to the male hormone testosterone.

Due to the potential health risks, steroids are seldom prescribed by physicians. Medical uses are limited to certain kinds of anemia, severe burns, and some types of breast cancer.

Dangers of Steroids/Anabolic Steroids

There are over 70 known negative side effects of steroid use.

The systems most seriously affected by steroid use are the liver, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems.

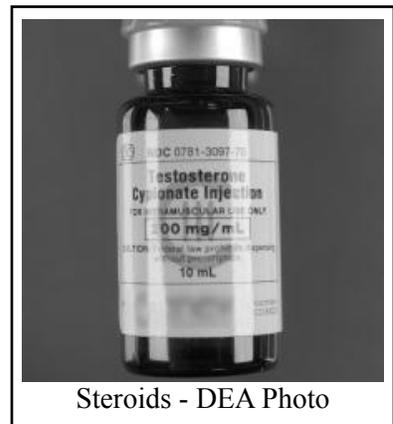
Steroid use by males can cause withered testicles, sterility, and impotence.

Steroid use by females can cause the development of irreversible masculine traits, breast size reduction, and sterility.

Anabolic Steroids may cause psychological disorders. The negative psychological effects include very aggressive behavior known as "Roid" rage and depression. These effects show up in both males and females who use steroids. Steroids cause aggressiveness and combativeness which may result in any number of personal injuries or violent death.

Anabolic Steroids have numerous, delayed side effects. While some side effects of Anabolic Steroids appear quickly, others, such as cancer, heart attack, and strokes, may not occur until years after the user has discontinued the use of steroids.

Steroids cause liver cancer and other liver disorders which may result in other complications. When the liver becomes diseased and fails to function properly, there is a possibility of several types of blood disorders.



Steroids - DEA Photo

- Steroids cause severe acne.
- Steroids cause jaundice, a condition where the user's eyes and skin turn yellow.
- Steroids cause purple or red spots on the skin. A permanent discoloration or uneven darkening of the skin may result.
- Steroids cause swelling of the feet and lower legs that may persist for many years after use stops.
- Steroids cause uncontrolled trembling or twitching of the muscles.
- Steroids cause persistent and unpleasant breath odor.

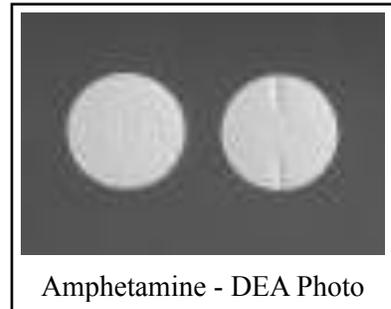
Stimulants/Speed

A type of amphetamine, speed is a central nervous system stimulant that causes high levels of dopamine (a chemical that stimulates pleasure) to be released.

Stimulants/speed is also referred to as uppers, cross tops, crank, ICE, Black Beauties, chalk, glass, go, redneck cocaine, Tina, and tick-tock.

There are several types of amphetamines. They include cocaine, crack, amphetamines, Dexedrine, Fastin, Ritalin, Adderall, Benzedrine, and methamphetamines.

Originally, amphetamines were developed to combat the effects of asthma, and today are still used for medically supervised weight loss programs.



Amphetamine - DEA Photo

Dangers of Stimulants/Speed

Speed is addicting. There is a high potential for addiction to amphetamines. When users stop taking speed, they become listless, tired, and often depressed. The only way they feel they can get going again is to take another dose of the drug. This cycle continues until users feel like the only way they can feel "normal," is to continue using.

Speed can cause malnutrition. Many cases of anorexia have been associated with the use of amphetamines and speed. This condition can result in damage to other organs and the blood associated with a lack of proper nutrition.

Speed can cause sleep deprivation. One of the reasons people take speed is to prevent them from falling asleep during times when they need to function for longer periods. One of the major problems associated with the use of speed is that the user often will continue to go without sleep for an extended time after the drug has been discontinued. Lack of sleep can cause other problems, especially mental disturbances.

Speed can cause anxiety. Users often are extremely tense and often exhibit suicidal tendencies. Even if the drug is discontinued, these symptoms often last for weeks.

Speed can cause loss of body control. High doses of amphetamines can cause users to experience uncontrolled shaking, loss or absence of physical coordination, and physiological breakdown.

Speed can cause heart failure. An injection of amphetamine creates a sudden increase in blood pressure. This can manifest in a stroke, a deadly fever, or a heart attack. High doses can result in a rapid or irregular heartbeat, which can also lead to heart failure.

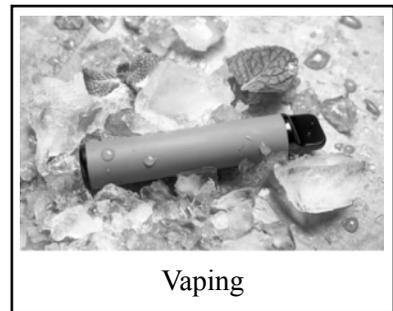
Speed can cause mental problems. In addition to physical effects, users of speed report feeling restless, anxious, and moody. The effects are increased with higher doses. Long-term use can result in amphetamine psychosis which includes hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia. When drug use is discontinued, these symptoms usually stop.

Speed causes accidents. Because of a distorted view of their capabilities, users often fail to properly estimate their abilities and take unnecessary risks. According to research, people who take amphetamines are more accident-prone. While heavy amphetamine use will keep drivers awake and active for long periods, it also causes a loss of coordination, and an increase in irritability, and according to one study, users are four times more likely to be involved in an automobile accident. When you add the blurred vision that often accompanies the use of speed, the possibility of an accident increases.

Vaping

Vaping is often marketed as a safer alternative to smoking, but this idea is dangerously misleading. Many vaping products contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that can harm developing brains and trap young people in lifelong addiction. The aerosols inhaled from e-cigarettes are not just “harmless water vapor”—they contain toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and ultrafine particles that can seriously damage the lungs. Some flavor additives have even been linked to severe lung diseases, and there have been tragic cases of respiratory illness and death related to vaping.

Young people may be drawn in by sweet flavors and the belief that vaping is risk-free, but research shows it can impair memory, attention, and learning. Even more troubling, vaping is often a gateway, making it more likely that teens will transition to regular cigarettes or experiment with other drugs.



Increasingly, kids are using vaping devices to inhale not just nicotine, but also marijuana concentrates and other dangerous substances. These products are often much stronger and less predictable, increasing the risk of addiction, poisoning, or severe lung injury. Don't be fooled: vaping is not safe, especially for kids and teens—it is a risky experiment that can have lifelong and even fatal consequences.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What do drugs do to you?

ANSWER: A drug is a substance that changes the natural state of the body of the user.

QUESTION: Why are illegal drugs dangerous?

ANSWER: Drugs are dangerous for many reasons but here are only three. First, they alter the user's natural-chemical balance, which can cause health problems and may cause permanent disability, mental problems, or even death. Second, most illegal drugs are not manufactured under any type of guidelines or procedures and most often have not been tested for their effects on people. Third, they are taken without any type of medical supervision and in quantities that vary. They may be too much for the body to handle, and an overdose may cause severe health consequences or death.

QUESTION: Why are some drugs legal and some illegal?

ANSWER: Legal drugs, the ones prescribed by doctors and physicians, have been tested for their purity and effect on the body and have been used for years in the practice of medicine. Illegal drugs, ones sold on the street, have not been tested for their effect on the user nor have they been manufactured under strict controls. Often the illegal drugs are brought in from other countries and are sold to unsuspecting people who become dependent on the drugs. They usually will spend their entire life trying to get more of the drug, causing them to steal and commit other crimes.

QUESTION: Which drugs are most dangerous?

ANSWER: The drugs that are the most dangerous are drugs that have the greatest effect on the user, the ones that are the most addictive, and the ones that are not manufactured in clean or controlled surroundings. Drugs like cocaine, depressants, and amphetamines are very addictive and the difference between the amount of the drug to get high and the amount that kills is very close. Alcohol is also one of the most dangerous drugs because users often don't believe that their reactions or actions have been altered. They get into an automobile or into another situation where slowed reflexes and altered perception can be dangerous.

QUESTION: Why do people take drugs:

ANSWER: People take drugs for many reasons. They don't like the way they feel. Their friends or family take drugs, and they want to be part of the group. They are bored and don't think they have anything else to do. They want to see what it is like to take the drug.

QUESTION: Why do people sell drugs?

ANSWER: People sell drugs to make money.

QUESTION: Do people who sell drugs, take drugs?

ANSWER: Sometimes users need to make money to buy more drugs by selling them. Most often the people at or near the top of drug sales organizations do not use; they know what drugs do.

QUESTION: How do people get hooked on drugs?

ANSWER: When the body chemistry has been changed, it is uncomfortable, sometimes painful, to go back to the natural state. It is easier to continue using. Often people who are hooked on drugs don't believe they are hooked.

QUESTION: What do I do if someone offers me drugs?

ANSWER: Say, "No, Thanks, I have something else (better) to do."

Additional Reading

Back In Control, Gregory Bodenhamer, Prentice Hall Press, 15 Columbus Circle, New York, New York 10023.

Everything You Need To Know About Chemical Dependence, Vernon E. Johnson, Johnson Institute, 7151 Metro Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55435.

Facts About Drugs and Alcohol, Mark S. Gould, M.D., Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Ave. New York, NY 10103.

Growing Up Drug-Free, A parent's Guide to Prevention, U.S. Department of Education, National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20852 1-800-634-0100 - FREE PUBLICATION.

Parents Who Help Their Children Overcome Drugs, Barbara Cottman Becnel, CompCare Publishers, 2415 Annapolis Lane, Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Physicians' Desk Reference, Medical Economics Company, Inc., Post Office Box 10689, Des Moines, Iowa 50336.

The Pill Book, Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10103.

57 Reasons Not To Do Drugs, M.M. Kirsch, CompCare Publishers, 2415 Annapolis Lane, Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Sources: DEA, NYC Health

Where To Find Help

Many local *law enforcement agencies* have community relations, resources, and drug prevention officers.

Your community will have *public health departments*. They will be able to offer assistance or direct you to another agency or organization.

Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have a chapter in almost every city in North America.

Your community has *other parents* facing this same problem. They can be found through churches, school systems, parent-teacher organizations, Alcoholics Anonymous, hospitals, and community or neighborhood watch groups.

Your personal or family *physician* will be able to offer some solutions for the problem.

An internet search can also be helpful but be cautious because everyone does not have the same intention to help your children.

The National Institute of Health has a database of drug treatment centers and lots of information. Visit: <https://nida.nih.gov/>.

To find a treatment center, visit: <https://findtreatment.gov/>

A great resource is the National Institute on Drug Abuse. NIDA.NIH.GOV Their mission is to advance science on drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health.

An *Internet search* can also provide you with options.