



# An Opioid and Other Drug Prevention Guide

For Parents and  
Caregivers



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are thrilled that you have taken the time to read this guide and educate yourselves on ways to prevent your children from risky substance use. Why? Because you are the MOST IMPORTANT influence over their decisions regarding drug and alcohol use during the teen years and beyond. Conversations you have with them early and often about the dangers of opioid abuse and use of other substances are key to shaping their attitudes and behaviors. Time and again, research has shown that:

1. Parents who have permissive attitudes about substance use have teens who are more likely to use them
2. For teens who don't use, they report not wanting to disappoint parents as a key reason
3. Having clear rules and expectations against substance use lets them know you care about them

In this guide we will seek to provide education on addiction and also provide evidence-based advice on how to reduce the chances that your child will engage in substance use. Since even the best of kids and parents can still find themselves in challenging situations, we will provide signs and symptoms of use and advice for what to do if you are concerned.

## Now is More Important Than Ever

Our country is in the midst of an addiction epidemic. From May 2019-May 2020, there were 81,230 drug overdose deaths in the United States: almost 10,000 more than the previous year.<sup>1</sup> Most of these deaths involved an opioid such as heroin, fentanyl, or carfentanil. Few communities have been spared. While there has been significant progress in bringing about more awareness to the issue and improving prevention and treatment options for individuals and families, more work remains in order to best support those who are affected by substance use. Some of the efforts being undertaken today include:<sup>2</sup>

- improving access to treatment and recovery services
- promoting use of overdose-reversing drugs
- strengthening our understanding of the epidemic through better public health surveillance
- providing support for cutting-edge research on pain and addiction
- advancing better practices for pain management and prescribing
- and of course, PREVENTION!

Preventing addiction, or substance use disorders, is easier and more cost effective than treating someone once they have developed it. Research has shown that prevention efforts in youth are effective. However, these efforts can be challenging to implement because they require coordinated efforts by the youth, parents, schools, and communities involved. Through reading this guide, we hope you will learn more about strategies you can take to foster a strong relationship with your child(ren) and increase their chances of remaining drug and alcohol free.

## What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of highly addictive drugs that include heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, prescription pain relievers, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, and many others.



Opioid pain relievers can be safe when prescribed by a doctor for short-term use for significant pain, like that associated with surgery, injury, or illness such as cancer. Opioids are very effective at blocking pain signals in the brain, but they can also cause feelings of euphoria. These numbing and euphoric effects can lead some to seek out opioids for the high, even after their pain has diminished. Repeated use of opioids can lead to a tolerance, necessitating increasingly higher doses to achieve desired feelings. For those who develop an addiction to opioids, their life revolves around seeking out opioids just to feel normal and avoid painful emotional and physical withdrawal symptoms.

## What is an opioid use disorder (OUD)?

An opioid use disorder is a **treatable, chronic medical disease** involving complex interactions between brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with OUD use opioids compulsively and often continue despite harmful consequences.<sup>3</sup>

- **Chronic medical disease:** there is no cure for addiction. The brain of someone with a substance use disorder does not respond normally to mood and mild altering substances. It is not a matter of willpower or morals.
- **Treatable:** Substance use disorders are among the most treatable conditions there are. Through therapy, medication, and support groups, those with addiction can live a happy and fulfilling life in recovery from substance use.

For some people who take opioids, the feelings of wellbeing they experience can lead to a continued desire for using. The nature of opioids, and other drugs, is that the brain adapts and changes in response to the drug necessitating larger doses to achieve the desired feeling. This is called tolerance. The person with an opioid use disorder will begin seeking out the drug in higher frequency and quantity to overcome tolerance. They may even switch to heroin as it is a cheaper and easier to obtain opiate.

As the body becomes increasingly dependent on the drug to function, the user may no longer be seeking out the drug for the high, but instead to avoid painful withdrawal symptoms. Despite loss of relationships, health, money, jobs, hobbies, housing, and other consequences, the person with an opioid use disorder will continue to use until they receive help.

## Signs and Symptoms of an Opioid Use Disorder<sup>4</sup>

<b>Physical Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fatigue and drowsiness</li><li>• Changes in sleep patterns</li><li>• Pinpoint pupils</li><li>• Dark circles under the eyes</li><li>• Rapid weight loss</li><li>• Deterioration of hygiene or personal appearance</li><li>• Health complaints such as being constipated or experiencing nausea</li><li>• Wearing long-sleeved shirts in warm weather (associated with IV use)</li></ul>
<b>Emotional and Behavioral Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Isolating from family and friends and/or change in friends</li><li>• Skipping school or work, drop in grades or performance</li><li>• Lack of interest in hobbies and recreational activities</li><li>• Mood changes such as agitation, increasing depression or anxiety</li><li>• Asking for more money for questionable reasons or missing money or valuables</li><li>• Violating their value system (e.g., lying and stealing to obtain opioids)</li></ul>
<b>Other Signs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Missing prescription medications</li><li>• Empty pill bottles</li><li>• Prescriptions filled at the pharmacy that you were not aware of</li><li>• Small bags or folds often marked with names</li><li>• Paraphernalia used to prepare opioids for consumption including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ syringes or hypodermic needles</li><li>○ shoelaces</li><li>○ piece of rubber hose or string</li><li>○ bottle caps and kitchen spoons</li><li>○ cotton balls</li><li>○ cigarette filters</li><li>○ aluminum foil</li><li>○ lighters or candles</li><li>○ straws</li></ul></li></ul>

*Hope*

Don't give up on someone you love – there is always *hope*. There is always *hope* for someone until there isn't. While there is *hope*, it's our job to do anything we can do to get somebody we love into treatment. ~David Sheff



## The added danger of synthetic opioids

Some of the illegal opiates on the streets today contain very powerful man-made opioids like fentanyl and carfentanyl, which pose a significant overdose risk. Synthetic opioids are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths in the United States. Synthetic fentanyl is sold illegally as a powder, dropped onto blotter paper, put in eye droppers and nasal sprays, or made into pills that look like other prescription opioids.







Some drug dealers are mixing fentanyl with other drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA. As seen in the image on the right, only a small amount of these synthetic drugs can lead to overdose.



Visual of dose of heroin, fentanyl and carfentanyl that would be fatal for the average adult.

## How can I help someone if I am concerned about their opioid use?

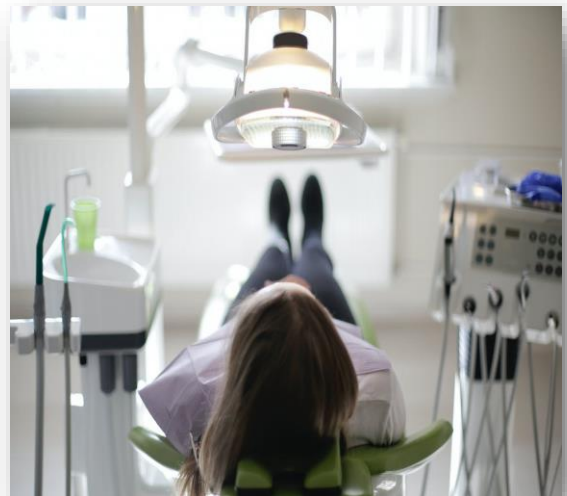
If you have observed signs and symptoms of opioid use disorder in your child or another loved one, it is important to act.

<p><b>Prevent Overdose</b></p> <p>Carry Naloxone! Naloxone, or the brand name Narcan, can be administered during an opioid overdose to help prevent death. To learn more about Naloxone and where you can obtain it, please visit <a href="https://www.samhsa.gov/overdose">The National Institute on Drug Abuse</a>.</p>	<p><b>Find Treatment</b></p> <p>Take your child or other loved one to a treatment provider for an assessment to determine their level of use and the best next steps. Quitting opioids can be hard, but it is possible. With therapy and medication, opioid use disorder can be treated and recovery is possible.</p>	<p><b>Access Support</b></p> <p>If your loved one refuses help, get support for yourself. Seeking the help of a support group or counselor can help you feel less alone and can provide you with advice for setting boundaries in your relationship, coping with your feelings and not giving up hope that your loved one can get better.</p>
<p><b>Signs of Opioid Overdose</b></p> <div>  Blue lips or nails          Dizziness &amp; confusion          Can't be woken up       </div> <div>  Choking, gurgling or snoring sounds          Slow, weak or no breathing          Drowsiness or difficulty staying awake       </div>	<p><b>SAMHSA</b> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration</p> <p>To find a treatment program near you, visit SAMHSA's National Opioid Treatment Program Directory <a href="https://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/">https://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/</a></p>	<p><b>Family Support Options</b></p> <p>The Partnership to End Addiction: <a href="https://drugfree.org/get-support-now/">https://drugfree.org/get-support-now/</a>          Nar-Anon: <a href="https://www.nar-anon.org/">https://www.nar-anon.org/</a>          Smart Recovery: <a href="https://www.smartrecovery.org/">https://www.smartrecovery.org/</a>          Caron Treatment Centers: <a href="https://www.caron.org/support-groups/parent-and-family-support-groups">https://www.caron.org/support-groups/parent-and-family-support-groups</a></p>

In the event that your child is ever prescribed opioids, the following section will prepare you with suggestions to reduce the chances of risk associated with the medication. While not everyone who develops an opioid use disorder began with prescription opioids, it is estimated that 80 percent of heroin users reported using prescription opioids prior to heroin<sup>2</sup>.

## Why might my child be prescribed an opioid?

The decision to provide opioids to a child or teen following injury, surgery or painful illness is one that should be made by you and their doctor after careful consideration and discussion. In recent years doctors and dentists have been receiving greater training and prescribing guidelines around opioids in an effort to combat the addiction and overdose epidemic we are currently experiencing. Opioids are considered generally safe in the short-term when warranted for moderate to severe pain. For instance, if your teen is prescribed opioids for wisdom teeth extraction, a few days-worth of opioids may be prescribed and then pain can be managed with over-the-counter medications and remedies. The longer a person uses opioids, the greater the risk for dependence.



## What do opioids do to the brain and body?





In the short term, opioids can:

- Reduce pain
- Depress your Central Nervous System (reduce brain activity, lower pulse and breathing)
- Cause drowsiness
- Cause mental confusion
- Cause nausea
- Cause constipation
- Create euphoria (a “high” feeling)

## If my child is prescribed an opioid, how can I keep them safe?

It is crucial to ensure that your child follows the guidelines for opioid use and avoids any behaviors consistent with misuse.

<p><b>Opioid Use:</b> Following these guidelines reduces the risk of opioid dependence</p> 	<p>The medication is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Prescribed to you</b></li><li>✓ <b>Taken according to directions</b> at the <b>time prescribed</b> in the <b>amount prescribed</b> for the <b>purpose prescribed</b></li><li>✓ <b>Never shared</b> with others</li><li>✓ For the treatment of <b>severe pain</b></li><li>✓ Closely <b>monitored</b> by physician and taken off when no longer needed</li><li>✓ <b>Never mixed</b> with other drugs</li></ul>
<p><b>Opioid Misuse:</b> These actions greatly increase the chances of opioid dependence or overdose</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Taking a medication in a <u>manner</u> or <u>dose</u> <b>other than prescribed</b></li><li>✗ Taking <b>someone else's</b> prescription- even for a legitimate medical complaint such as pain</li><li>✗ Taking a medication to feel euphoria (<b>to get high</b>)</li><li>✗ <b>Mixing opioids</b> with other drugs or alcohol</li></ul>

## How should I manage the medication?

- Medications of potential misuse, such as opioids, prescription depressants, prescription stimulants, and cough & cold medications, should be under lock and key.
- As the parent or guardian, you should supervise the dispensing of the medication, counting the pills in the bottle to be sure none are missing. Clearly document when the prescription was filled and when a refill will be needed. Be suspicious of any missing medication.
- Safely dispose of left-over medication. Prescription drop box locations exist in communities across the country. For more information about where to find a site near you, [click here](#).
- Communicate with your child about the risks of misuse and be very clear that the medication is not to be shared with others.
- Communicate regularly with your child about the level of pain he/she is feeling, making sure the pain is diminishing with time, and staying alert for any signs that your child is growing dependent on the medication.

Let's move beyond opioids and focus on substance use in general. What makes one teen use substances and another not? If they do use, why might one develop a substance use disorder and another not? These are complicated questions with many possible answers. Decades of research have shown us that there are factors within a child (internal) and within their environment (external) that affect their level of risk. Not all these risks can be changed, but many can be identified and lowered by surrounding a child with protective factors. Let's explore further.

## Youth are more likely to engage in substance use if they:

- are a sensation seeker (take dangerous risks for thrills)
- hang out with friends who use
- think their parents approve
- have strained family relationships
- have unhealthy role models
- have a poor school connection
- have a low perception of harm
- have easy access

- identify as LGBTQ
- lack adult supervision
- have trauma in their background
- suffer with mental illness
- have environmental challenges such as poverty

## Factors that increase risk for addiction include:

- starting use at a young age
- having a family history of addiction
- using substances to cope with mental illness and past traumas

**Let's focus on the positive. Even if you recognize some of these risk factors in your own child(ren), there is still so much you can do protect them from substance use. Take a look at the list below and check off ones which are true for you. Make a plan for how you might incorporate the rest into your parenting going forward.**

	My child is cautious. They tend to shy away from dangerous risks and think before they act.
	I have told my child that I disapprove of them using drugs and alcohol and that I love them too much to allow them to take that risk.
	My child's friends do not engage in alcohol, nicotine or other drug use.
	Our family bonds are strong, and we can lean on one another for support.
	The adults in our household model responsible use of alcohol and medication and stay away from illegal drugs.
	My child is a dedicated student and feels connected to success in school.
	My child has a realistic understanding of the dangers of alcohol, nicotine, and other drug use.
	In our house, there is no access the substances (e.g. alcohol and medications are locked up)
	I provide a safe and supervised environment for my child and any friends they have over.
	I know where to get my child help if they are struggling with their mental and emotional health.



## Finding Balance in your Parenting Approach

Parents and caregivers have a tremendous influence over a young person's decision to engage in or steer clear of substance use. But what is the best way to use this influence? Research into parenting approaches and their role in prevention has shown that a balanced approach to parenting yields the best results. A balanced approach **combines warmth and understanding with boundaries, expectations, and appropriate consequences**. The goal is to let children know what is expected of them and prepare them to handle the responsibilities that come with greater independence, but also ensure that they feel comfortable coming to you when they are in trouble or need some advice.



The following are strategies you can use to help your children and teens stay safe and healthy by being clear in your expectations that they not use alcohol, nicotine, or other drugs.

1. **Take a firm stand** against any form of alcohol, nicotine, or other drug use. Do not serve alcohol to underage teens and do not allow them to bring substances into your home. Resist pressure to give in and let them drink before age 21.
2. **Establish rules, curfews, and consequences** in line with your family values. Be sure your children know the rules and consequences and be willing to enforce them consistently.
3. **Know where your child is.** Make sure your teen is in a supervised, alcohol-free environment. Pick a code phrase (such as: "I lost my contact lens" or "I forgot to feed the dog") that your child can use as a cue for you to come and pick them up anywhere if they are uncomfortable.
4. **Teach refusal skills.** Talk through strategies for saying 'no' and make sure your child knows who to call upon for help. Ask, "Besides me, what other adults can you talk to if you are in an uncomfortable or scary situation?"
5. **Be home when your teen is getting ready to go out and when they return.** When they are leaving, remind them of your expectations that they not drink or use other substances. If you are awake when they come home, it will be easier to determine if they have been drinking or using substances. Impromptu sleepovers can mean they don't want to come home because they are under the influence.
6. **Encourage and support extracurricular activities.** Children who learn to have fun and cope with stress in healthy ways, through sports or other interests, are less likely to turn to drugs and alcohol.
7. **Give your teens responsibility for their problems.** Don't rescue your child from the consequences of their dangerous actions. Ensure they learn valuable life lessons so they will make better decisions in the future.

## Strengthening your parent-child relationship to prevent substance use

Perhaps the most important thing you can do as a parent to prevent substance use by your teen is to build and maintain a strong relationship with them. The Search Institute is an organization dedicated to building strong relationships with youth. Their [Developmental Relationships Framework](#) provides specific relationship-based strategies that can be combined with rules and expectations to create balance in your parenting approach.



**Express Care**

### Show them that they matter to you.

- Be dependable—Be someone they can trust.
- Listen—Really pay attention when you are together.
- Believe in them—Make them feel known and valued.
- Be warm—Show them you enjoy being with them.
- Encourage—Praise them for their efforts and achievements.



**Challenge Growth**

### Push them to keep getting better.

- Expect their best—Expect them to live up to their potential.
- Stretch—Push them to go further.
- Hold them accountable—Insist they take responsibility for their actions.
- Reflect on failures—Help them learn from mistakes and setbacks.



**Provide Support**

### Help them complete tasks and achieve goals.

- Navigate—Guide them through hard situations and systems.
- Empower—Build their confidence to take charge of their life.
- Advocate—Stand up for them when they need it.
- Set boundaries—Put in place limits that keep them on track.



**Share Power**

### Treat them with respect and give them a say.

- Respect them—Take them seriously and treat them fairly.
- Include them—Involve them in decisions that affect them.
- Collaborate—Work with them to solve problems and reach goals.
- Let them lead—Create opportunities for them to take action and lead.



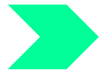
**Expand Possibilities**

### Connect them with people and places that broaden their world.

- Inspire—Inspire them to see possibilities for their future.
- Broaden horizons—Expose them to new ideas, experiences, and places.
- Connect—Introduce them to people who can help them grow.

You are your child's first and most enduring teacher. You can make a big impact when you lead by example, help them develop critical life skills, love them unconditionally, and talk to them early and often about risky substance use. Do your best to stay clear and consistent even as children get older and begin to challenge some of your rules and messaging. Remember, you have life experiences that they do not yet have and can continue to be the voice of reason as they navigate the pressures of growing up.

Here are some tips for having conversations with your child or teen about substance use dangers.<sup>5</sup>



## Keep it relaxed

General conversations about drugs and alcohol do not need to be formal, scheduled sit downs. These conversations are sometimes best when you and your child are driving together, going on a walk, or cooking dinner. Take advantage of opportunities when these conversations may come up naturally. For instance, when...

- you are driving in the car and a song comes on the radio that glorifies drug use
- your child is telling you about a show or movie they just saw that you know portrays underage drinking or drug use
- there is a big media story of the moment about something substance-related
- you are walking together and see someone vaping



## Don't lecture

As soon as they perceive they are being "talked at" a young person will shut down and tune out. Remember that conversations are two-way. Asking open-ended questions is the best way to ensure that you are hearing about their perspectives and opinions. Open-ended questions require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Here are just a few to consider:

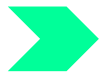


- Why do you think some young people misuse prescription drugs like opioids?
- Do you think it is safer to misuse a prescription drug than an illegal drug?
- Have you experienced any pressure yet to drink, vape or use drugs?
- Would you know what to do or say if you were feeling pressured?
- What are your thoughts about peers who use drugs or drink?
- How can you have fun and manage stress without drugs?



## Answering the dreaded question

“Did you drink or smoke when you were my age?” is a question you will likely be asked. Sometimes this question is asked out of genuine curiosity, sometimes it is an attempt to get the focus off themselves. There is debate among experts about how to handle this, but most agree that telling the truth without going into too much detail is the best approach. If you didn’t use, proudly say this and explain your reasons why. If you did, focus on any negative aspects rather than glorifying it in any way. You can point out that the times are different today, that the drugs are different and more potent now, and that you want them to make better choices than you did. If you have an example of someone, either yourself or someone else in your life, that you can use as a cautionary tale, you may share that with them as appropriate.



## Use Active Listening

Active listening means fully concentrating on what is being said to you. Many people think they are good listeners, but ensuring you truly understand what is being said to you is a skill that requires practice. Here are a few active listening techniques:

- **Use attentive body language**  
Take the time to make eye contact, give an affirming nod, an encouraging smile, or an understanding look of concern.
- **Ask thoughtful questions**  
Search to fully understand what your child is going through by asking open-ended questions that don’t require a correct response.
- **Paraphrase to check for understanding**  
Summarize what you think is being told to you so you can check to make sure you are hearing your teen correctly. For example, “So, you are saying that you are feeling pressured to drink because your best friend wants to start going to parties and you don’t want to lose her, is that right?”
- **Use empathy**  
Try not to dismiss your teen's feelings as wrong or childish, instead, think back to your own struggles and confusion as an adolescent and do your best to really feel what he or she is feeling.
- **Keep it positive**  
Scare tactics, shaming, and guilt trips don’t work to keep teens away from drugs. Approach conversations with an open mind, curiosity, respect, and understanding. Remember how hard it was to be their age and empathize with their struggles.
- **Ask for permission**  
Resist the urge to always tell your teen what to do. Sometimes they don’t want advice or solutions...they just want to be heard and to hear someone say, “That must be really challenging.” If you feel like you have some advice you would really like to give, it will likely be better received if you ask for permission. “It sounds like you have some tough choices you are trying to make. Do you want some advice?”

## Ages and Stages<sup>6</sup>

Conversations about substances need to be age appropriate. Here are some guidelines about what to focus on at each stage of development.

### Elementary School Age



This age group really looks up to adults as teachers and role models for what to do and what not to do. They have been taught to follow rules in order to stay safe. They trust that adults have their best interest in mind. Children are generally very anti-drug at this age. They tend to feel good about themselves and struggle to understand why someone would ever use drugs that are dangerous. **Poison prevention and medication safety rules** are important with this age group.

If your child is in this age range, you can focus on the following:

- Emphasize the importance of good health by talking about things people do to stay healthy, such as brushing teeth after each meal, washing hands, eating good foods, getting plenty of rest and sleep. You can use this discussion to contrast the harmful things that people do, such as taking drugs, smoking, or drinking to excess.
- Discuss how TV advertisers try to persuade children to buy their products, including high sugar/additives-loaded cereals, candy bars, and toys named after characters in cartoon shows that children find appealing.
- Discuss illnesses your child is familiar with that are often treated with prescription drugs. Many children have had strep throat, ear infections, flu, and colds. Discussing such illnesses can help the child understand the difference between helpful medicine and harmful drugs.
- Practice ways to say no with them. Describe situations that may make them feel uncomfortable: being invited to ride a bike where they are not allowed to go, for example, or being offered medicine or other unfamiliar substances. Give them some responses to use in these situations.
- Drug prevention is about so much more than educating about the dangers of drugs. It is about boosting the life skills you need to not do drugs. Work on things like self-esteem, standing up for yourself, and healthy stress management.



## Medication Safety Rules for Children

- Only accept medicine or candy from a trusted adult
- Never take medicine without your trusted adult's permission
- Never take medicine or eat candy that is not labeled
- Never take medicine that is prescribed to someone else
- Medicine is only safe when taken in the amount prescribed at the times prescribed- follow directions!
- If you take the wrong medicine or take too much, always tell an adult
- Report all side effects of medication to your doctor



**Keep medication out of reach of children!**  
**Number for Poison Control: 800-222-1222**

### Middle School Age

At this age, fitting in with peers begins to become a controlling influence. Kids may go from feeling good about themselves to questioning if they are okay and if they are normal. If someone is not secure in who they are, they may feel pressured to follow the crowd and engage in unhealthy behaviors. Middle school can be an emotionally challenging time in development and strong adult role models are vital. Here are some things you can focus on with this age group:

- Teach tweens/teens to recognize potentially problematic situations, such as being at a house where no adults are present and young people are smoking or drinking. Practice ways to say no if they are feeling pressured to drink, vape, smoke marijuana, or do anything else they are uncomfortable with. Make up situations in which they may be asked to try alcohol and other drugs and let them brainstorm what they could do.
- Continue to spend time with your teen to discuss what they feel is important to them. Help to boost their self-esteem by pointing out all the wonderful things about them.
- Talk with them about friendship. Make the point that true friends do not ask each other to do things they know are wrong and risk harm to themselves or others.
- Discuss with them how substance use could impact all the people and things they care about- school, friends, family, appearance, money, sports, health, and their goals.



## High School Age

Throughout high school teens continue to change dramatically. They are learning about themselves and attempting to answer the question, “Who am I?” High school students have a much more realistic understanding of adults and the world around them. Pushing back against adults and their rules are normal as they begin to assert themselves and become more independent, but this doesn’t mean that they no longer need you- they need you now more than ever. Here are some things you can focus on with high school-aged teens:



- Encourage positive activities that can keep them busy and supervised after school. Researchers have found that the hours of 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. after school are periods teenagers are likely to experiment with alcohol and other drugs. Talk with them about joining a sports club, drama club, arts and crafts center, dance studio, or about volunteering to work for a church group or community organization. The busier they are, the less likely they are to be bored and to seek an outlet in alcohol or other drugs.
- Continue to talk with your teen about alcohol and other drug use. Chances are they have friends who use alcohol and other drugs or know people who do. Talk about how alcohol and other drug use threatens lives and may limit opportunities for the future.
- Make sure teens have access to up-to-date information on alcohol and other drugs and their effects. Make an effort to be informed about any new drugs trends and their effects.
- Talk with them about their future and their goals. Help them research options that might work for them for educational and career opportunities and talk about how career paths can be affected by legal consequences of substance use.
- Appeal to their desire to be a good role model for younger siblings or cousins. Remind them how much they are looked up to and express your desire that they set a good example.
- **Connect them with supports or counseling if they express that they are having a difficult time.** The [National Institute of Mental Health](#) is a great resource to learn more or find treatment support.



## Resources and References

The following are suggested resources for further education and advice on substance use prevention.

- The Partnership to End Addiction: [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)
- Get Smart About Drugs: [www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov)
- Operation Prevention: <https://www.operationprevention.com>

### About Caron's Education Alliance

The Caron Education Alliance mission is to provide comprehensive substance use education and supportive services along the full continuum of care, from prevention to recovery, for students, families and professionals using evidence-informed and innovative strategies.

### Caron's Digital Learning Program

Our Digital Learning Program is a comprehensive library of FREE courses centered on substance use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery.

- For Teens- CONNECT 5: Find the NicoTEEN - Free You!
- For Parents - PREP: Prevention Resources and Education for Parents/ Caregivers
- For Professionals –
  - Vaping and Marijuana Trends Among Youth
  - The Impact of Substance Use Disorders on the Family
  - Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment

For more information visit [www.caron.org/digital-learning](http://www.caron.org/digital-learning)



**Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. If you find you have questions or need treatment resources, please give us a call at Caron Treatment Centers and we will be happy to assist.**

**800-678-2332 X 6117/[caronsap.org](http://caronsap.org)**



## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Opioid Deaths Accelerating During Covid-19: Expanded Prevention efforts Needed. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p1218-overdose-deaths-covid-19.html>
2. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2020). Opioid Overdose Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>
3. American Society of Addiction Medicine. (2019). Definition of Addiction. Retrieved from <https://www.asam.org/Quality-Science/definition-of-addiction>.
4. The Partnership for Drug Free Kids. (2018). Heroin, Fentanyl, and Other Opioids: A Comprehensive Resource for Families with a Teen or Young Adult Struggling with Opioid Use. Retrieved from <https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Heroin-Fentanyl-Other-Opioids-eBook-Partnership-for-Drug-Free-Kids.pdf>
5. The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. (2017). Marijuana Talk Kit: What you need to talk with your teen about marijuana. [https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Marijuana\\_Talk\\_Kit.pdf](https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Marijuana_Talk_Kit.pdf)
6. Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention. Washington, D.C.

Disclaimer: This opioid-prevention guide is supported by grant #2019-MU-FX-0001 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Neither the U.S. Department of Justice nor any of its components are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this guide (including, without limitation, its content, policies, or tools provided).