



## SUBSTANCES

**Using substances during the teen years can change the brain and have negative long-term effects on learning, emotions, and decision making.**

■ **Opioids/Fentanyl** – these drugs used to be called narcotics and are a controlled substance often prescribed by a healthcare provider to treat severe body pain, like after surgery, dental work, or for chronic pain, such as headaches and backpain. The body creates “feel good” chemicals called dopamine in response to opioids, which is why they are so addictive. Opioids can also be made illegally and sold as street drugs, such as heroin and fentanyl. Opioids are often mixed into other street drugs as pills and powders that the user is unaware of and can cause dangerous poisonings or fatal overdose.

■ **Alcohol** - is a liquid substance that acts like a depressant, slowing down chemical signals in the brain and body, and usually comes in the form of beer, wine, liquor, ciders, seltzers, etc. Alcohol also makes “feel good” chemicals and is addictive. Alcohol is often associated with “binge” drinking and can lead to alcohol poisoning and/or death.

■ **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes/Vaping** – Tobacco can be smoked as cigarettes or cigars and chewed; however, recent popular forms of tobacco use include inhaled e-cigarettes and vapes; these can look like USB drives, pens, toys, etc. All forms of tobacco have highly addictive nicotine and added chemicals that are harmful to the brain and body and lead to addiction and long-term health risks.

■ **Marijuana** – is dried cannabis flowers that have mind-altering effects from a chemical called THC. Weed, pot, herb, etc., are other names and can be smoked in hand rolled cigarettes, glass pipes, water pipes call bongs, and very concentrated forms called dabs, shatter, etc. Marijuana can now be smoked in vape pens like tobacco, and is legally available as gummies, cookies, and candy, called edibles. Marijuana can worsen mental and lung health, impair concentration and brain development, and can lead to addiction and long-term issues.



## SIGNS, SYMPTOMS & EXPOSURE

### ■ Opioid use can look like:

- Drowsiness more than normal
- Sweating
- Nausea/vomiting
- Headaches/dizziness
- Mood changes
- New pills or powders/dust

### ■ Opioid overdose can look like:

- Deep heavy sleep or won't/can't wake up
- Slow or no breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Pinpoint/tiny eye pupils
- Gurgling sounds

### ■ Alcohol use can look like:

- Low energy
- Slurred speech
- Clumsy and poor body coordination
- Changes in mood, angry, irritable
- Problems in school, grades, or activities
- Behavior changes
- Smell of alcohol on breath
- Finding alcohol bottles

### ■ Tobacco/Nicotine/Vaping use can look like:

- Being anxious and irritable
- Thirsty and drinking more liquids
- Nosebleeds
- Less caffeine cravings
- Smell of smoke or fruity scent
- Hard time breathing or exercising
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unusual pens, USB drives, and devices

### ■ Marijuana use can look like:

- Red or bloodshot eyes
- Increased hunger or snacking
- Paranoia or being anxious
- Slow reaction times
- Being lazy or tired a lot
- Smell of smoke or fruity scent
- Pipes, lighters, unusual devices, candy wrappers



# CAN WE TALK?

## A Guide to Navigating Conversations About Substance Use



Conversations between parents and youth can be challenging at times, especially when it comes to developing skills that encourage youth to make healthy choices.

This guide will help you navigate those tricky conversations!

If you are in a mental health crisis or just need someone to talk to, please call:

**ALASKA CARELINE AT 877-266-4357**

**OR DIAL 988**

Both are open 24/7/365.

\*Note: other languages, format, font

Scan Me!





## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are traits or qualities that help keep us healthy across our lifespan. Protective factors can negate the impact risk factors have on our wellness.

### Protective Factors

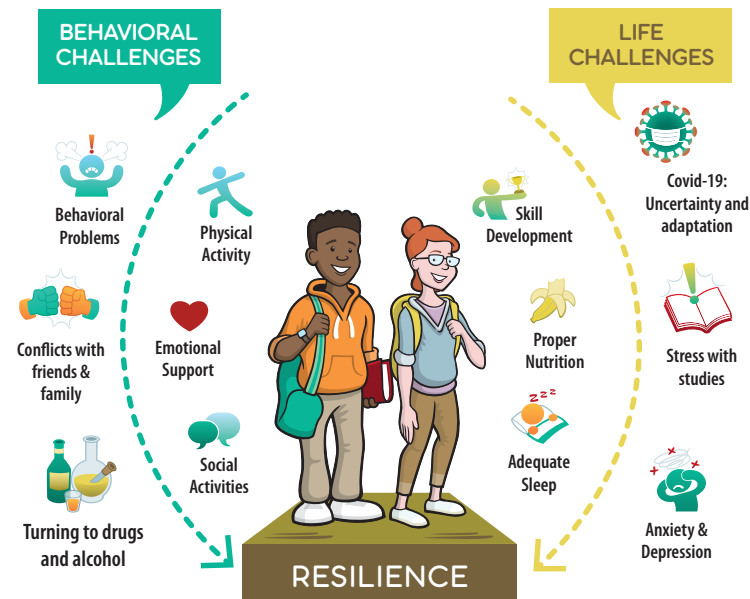
Some protective factors include eating healthy foods and good exercise and sleep habits. Having a healthy social connection with friends and emotional support is good too.

**Youth:** Find a common activity to do with friends and family often such as being outdoors, going to social events like sports games or the movies, or find starting a hobby with a friend or family member.

**Parents/Guardians:** Stay connected with the friends and peers that your children spend time with and encourage honest conversations with their parents or guardians to maintain open good communication and support.

**Resilience Skills:** Resilience is the ability to face and adapt to challenges and to overcome them. A person with strong resilience skills can handle disappointments because they don't let setbacks keep them from success. Examples of resilience skills: Self-confidence, optimism, flexibility, responsibility, Problem-solving, self-awareness, patience, communication, and teamwork.

## ADOPT PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO FACE CHALLENGES



Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that are associated with a higher chance of negative outcomes.

### Modifiable vs. Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Some risk factors can be changed or **modified** to lower risk of negative health outcomes. Examples include behaviors, habits, stress from school, conflicts with friends or family, and/or use of drugs and alcohol.

Some risk factors can't be changed or are **non-modifiable** and can lead to higher chances of negative health outcomes treatment is not provided. These might be things like health conditions, genetics, childhood trauma, etc.

**YOUTH:** Ask your parents/guardians about family health history for things you might need to look out for. Try to spend less time on electronic devices like phones, TVs, tablets, and video games, and put them away at least an hour before bedtime.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN:** Engage in conversations with your children early and often and encourage open dialogue about family health, especially during annual healthcare checkups. Encourage your children to follow a healthy daily routine for proper sleep and nutrition; setting a good example is good for you too!

## WE ARE HERE TO HELP!



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