

Brightside Health

Teenage Substance Use: What families should know

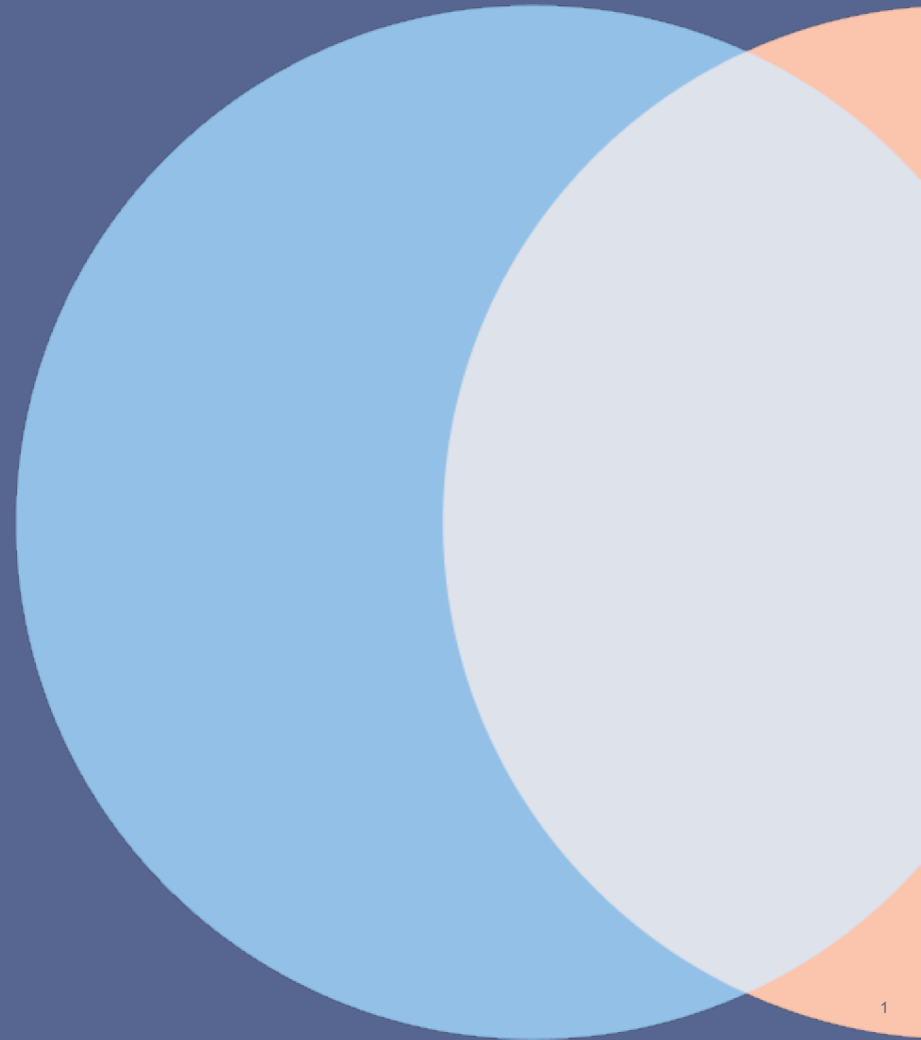
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Introduction and Background

- **Brightside Health:**
 - Associate Director, Therapy
 - Program Director, Crisis Care
- **Previously:**
 - Assistant Professor at Duke School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
 - Duke Center for Adolescent and Young Adult Substance Use Treatment (CAST)
 - UCLA-Duke Center for Trauma-Informed Suicide, Self-harm, and Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention (ASAP Center)
 - Nationally Certified School Psychologist

Comprehensive virtual mental health care— powered by technology, driven by data, delivered by experts

EFFECTIVE TREATMENT ACROSS SEVERITY, COMPLEXITY, & ACUITY FOR ADULTS 18+



PERSONALIZED PSYCHIATRY

- Precision-prescribing engine
- Over 1,000 medication/dose combinations
- Proactive medication management



CLINICALLY-PROVEN THERAPY

- Structured 10-lesson program built on the Unified Protocol
- Weekly telehealth sessions with therapists
- Monitored independent skill practice



CRISIS CARE

- Timely, intermediate care for suicidal intent
- Built on the evidence-based CAMS Framework
- High-touch, collaborative treatment

CLOSED-LOOP, MEASUREMENT-BASED CARE



1:1 RELATIONSHIP WITH LICENSED SPECIALIST

24/7 CLINICAL SUPPORT



Agenda: Teenage Substance Use

- Terms, trends and warning signs
- Impacts and risks
- Parents role in prevention
- Evidence -based treatments
- Resources

Objectives

Learning Objectives:

- Learn current trends of substance use among teens
- Develop an understanding of contributing factors and risks of teen substance use
- Learn how parents can help
- Introduce evidence-based treatment approaches



Defining the terms

Substance:

- Something that impacts how the brain works through changes in thoughts, feeling or behavior
- Can be ingested with the potential to cause health and social problems
- May be legal or illegal

Substance Use:

- Use of such substances that has the potential to cause harm or dependency

Substance Use Disorder (SUD):

- A medical term to describe a pattern of substance use that causes problems or distress
- Are Treatable
- Can be long lasting and worsen through adulthood
- Relapses can be common and part of the disorder



Experimenting or Problem?

- Substance use is “progressive”, meaning it worsens over time
 - Quickly or slowly
- Experimenting is common AND can be a serious concern
 - Some try and stop
 - Some continue to use on occasion without major problems
 - Some progress to developing a SUD, use dangerous substances, and experience serious harm and problems
- Important to acknowledge and address warning signs quickly when noticed
- Never too early to intervene



Experimenting or Problem?

- We cannot predict who will go on to develop a SUD
- Key factors to consider:
 - Family history of SUDs
 - Family and friends who use substances
 - Limited adult supervision and monitoring
 - Attitudes and expectations about use
 - Availability of substances
 - Modeling by family, peers and media
 - Social rejection/problems
 - Mental health difficulties along with substance use
 - History of trauma
 - Early age of use
 - Frequency and severity of use



Warning Signs of Substance Use

- You know your child best
- Look for **CHANGES** in your teen: physical, social, emotional, behavioral
- Some signs of substance can include:
 - Loss of interest in enjoyable activities
 - Changes in friend groups
 - Irritable or angry
 - Changes in sleeping and eating
 - Changes in physical appearance
 - Rule breaking
 - Avoiding interactions with parents
 - Stealing and lying
 - Frequently asking for money
 - Declining grades
 - Acting irresponsibly
 - Social media activity (posts, hashtags, DMs, secret accounts)

Social Media and Substance Use

Social Media can impact teenage substance use by:

- Spreading information and misinformation about substances
- Romanticizing teenage substance use
- Minimizing potential problems from substance use
- Creating dangerous substance use trends (e.g., TikTok challenges)
- Increasing access to substances
- Advertising of substances by dealers
- Money apps for anonymous buying and selling



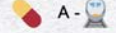
Social Media and Substance Use

Monitor social media and
texting





Emojis decoded

COMMON EMOJI CODES







FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

PERCOCET & OXYCODONE 	XANAX 	ADDERALL 
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DEALER SIGNALS


DEALER ADVERTISING 	HIGH POTENCY 	UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS 	LARGE BATCH 
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OTHER DRUGS

METH 	HEROIN 	COCAINE 	
MDMA & MOLLIES 	MUSHROOMS 	COUGH SYRUP 	MARIJUANA 

This reference guide is intended to give parents, caregivers, educators, and other influencers a better sense of how emojis are being used in conjunction with illegal drugs. Fake prescription pills, commonly laced with deadly fentanyl and methamphetamine, are often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms – making them available to anyone with a smartphone.

#ONEPILLKILL dea.gov/onepill *Disclaimer: These emojis reflect common examples found in DEA investigations. This list is not all-inclusive, and the images above are a representative sample.*





Impacts of SUDs on Teens

Age of onset

+

Frequency of use

+

Severity of use

Including, but are not limited to...

- Poor school achievement
- Impacts on the family
- Impacts on friendships
- Future mental health difficulties
- Increased suicide risk
- Increased risk of serious accidents, violence and sexual activity
- Serious substance use problems later in life



Related Outcomes in Adulthood

Including, but not limited to....

- Increased suicide risk
- Neurocognitive impairments
- Increased risk of infectious disease
- Social and family dysfunction
- Increased risk of legal involvement and incarceration
- Unemployment
- Poverty & homelessness
- Increased rates of hospitalization
- Reduced likelihood of receiving appropriate treatment



Current Trends

Disproportionate impacts

- The most commonly used substances by teens include: nicotine, alcohol, cannabis
- SUDs disproportionately impact individuals who report two or more races, American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and individuals of LGBTQ+ communities

Pandemic effects

- Substance use rates declined from 2020 to 2021
- Declines held steady from 2021 to 2022

Prevalence vs Danger

- Overall use rates stable or down, overdose deaths up

Current Trends

U.S. Students Reporting Any Past-Year Illicit Drug Use*



*Illicit drug use in this survey was defined as use of marijuana, LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin; or any use of narcotics other than heroin, amphetamines, sedatives (barbiturates), or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders.

Source: 2021 Monitoring the Future Survey

Current Trends

2022	8th grade	10th grade	12th grade
Alcohol			
Lifetime	23.1%	41.1%	61.6%
Past Year	15.2%	31.3%	51.9%
Past 30 days	6%	13.6%	28.4%
Cannabis			
Lifetime	11%	24.2%	38.3%
Past Year	8.3%	19.5%	30.7%
Past 30 days	5%	12.1%	20.2%

(Miech et al., 2023)



Current Trends

Dangerous substance use continues

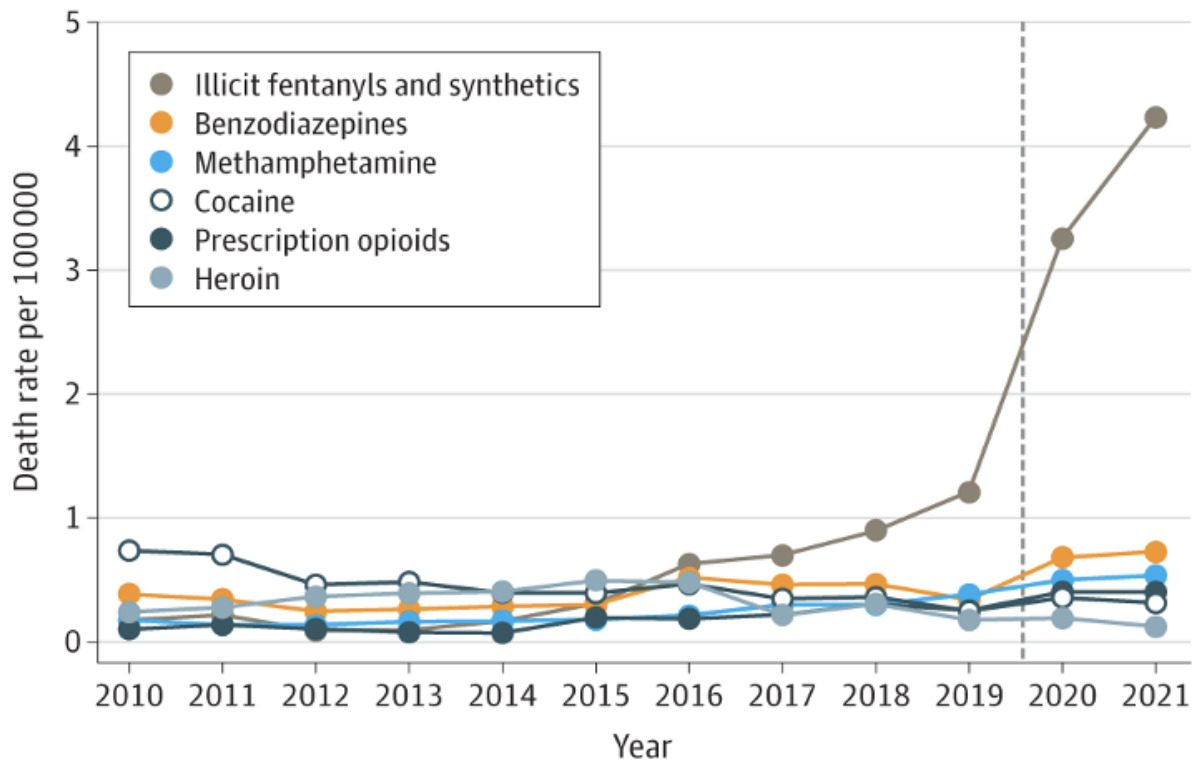
- 15% of teens report ever using select drugs: cocaine, inhalants, heroin, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, MDMA
- 14% of teens report misusing prescription opioids

Overdose deaths have increased dramatically

- 94% increase from 2019-2020
- Additional 20% increase from 2020-2021
- Increases due to Fentanyl and other synthetic substances

Current Trends

A Overdose mortality among adolescents by substance type



(Friedman et al., 2021)

Fentanyl

- Extremely dangerous (2 mg can be lethal), 50x more powerful than heroin
- Believed to be primary driver of increased overdose deaths across substance categories
- Drugs laced with fentanyl pose a serious threat
 - Hot spots
 - No or low tolerance to opioids
- Use is increasing dramatically



2mg of fentanyl compared with penny



Cannabis & Teens

- Our knowledge and understanding of cannabis use and teens is growing
- Potency of THC (psychoactive ingredient) in cannabis has skyrocketed
 - Prior to 1990s: less than 5%
 - Currently: Over 20%; Concentrates close to 90%
- Frequency and strength of cannabis matters for teen brain development
- Cannabis synthetics available where nicotine is sold
- Methods of use can be harder to detect
 - Edibles, vaping, cartridges, tinctures, drinks



Cannabis and the Brain

How it works with the brain:

- Cannabis use increases and decreases different brain chemicals
- These changes eventually lead to a release of dopamine, the pleasure chemical. The brain is rewarded for use
- Frequent use requires using more cannabis to get the same pleasure effect. This can lead to addiction



Cannabis and the Brain

Teen brains respond differently than adults

- Our brains have an endocannabinoid system (ECS) which is responsible for various brain functions such as eating, anxiety, learning and memory, reproduction, metabolism, growth and development
- Using cannabis directly impacts the ECS
- The ECS undergoes significant development during teen years
- Using cannabis during adolescence can disrupt the natural development of the ECS
- It's possible such changes related to the ECS could be permanent and we have more to learn about the potential consequences



Cannabis and Mental Health

Key Findings for Teens

- Strong evidence for mental health impairments related to cannabis use in youth
- Appears to be a dose - response relationship
 - The more frequent and potent use = more risk for negative outcomes
- Teens that use high concentrate cannabis frequently are at greater risk of developing psychosis
- More intense use (frequency and potency) and at younger ages increases suicide risk, including thoughts and attempts
- Short-term benefits may lead to long term problems (anxiety and depression)



Parent Roles in Prevention

Talk to your teens

- One of the most important factors to prevent substance use is a strong, open relationship between parents and teens
- Talking with your teen about substance use is important and can help
- Frequent small talks can be more effective than one big talk



Parent Roles in Prevention

How to talk to teens about substance use

- Approach conversations in a open, non-threatening manner
- Show your care for their health, wellness and future
- Show you are a good source of knowledge and information
- Ask about their attitudes and views on substance use
- Set clear expectations and rules related to substance use
- Show you are paying attention to their actions and choices
- Explore and discuss ways for your teen to respond to peers
- Be ready for questions about substances and your own use



Parent Roles in Prevention

Role Modeling (attitudes and actions)

- Convey responsible attitudes towards substances
- Be mindful of your own alcohol or substance use
- Avoid glamorizing substance use at any age
- Consider other models in your teens life
- Be an accessible resource at all times

Reducing Access

- Take inventory of your home
- Secure alcohol or remove alcohol
- Secure medications
- Dispose of unneeded medications



Parent Roles in Prevention

Monitoring is key

- Balance monitoring with respect of teen's natural want of independence and privacy
- Talk often to maintain expectations and learn about your teen's attitudes and experiences
- Get to know the friends
- Know their social activities and plans
- Build in check-ins and accountability measures
- Have consistent and stable rules (e.g., curfews)
- Learn from others what they observe related to your child's attitudes, actions and friendships
- Monitor social media and online presence/activities
- Watch for changes in actions and mood

How to Get Help

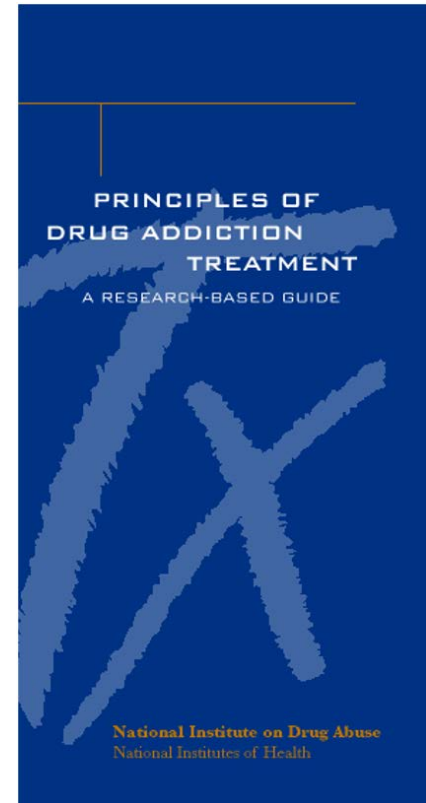
If you believe your teen may have a problem with using substances, get help as soon as possible:

1. Talk to your teen's pediatrician
2. Check with your health insurance company for in-network providers
3. Find treatment: <https://findtreatment.gov/>

Treatment for teens

Principles of treatment:

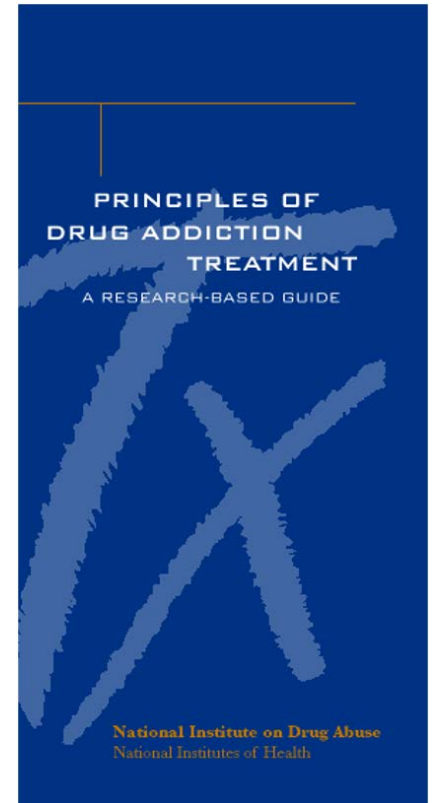
1. Substance use should be identified and addressed ASAP
2. Teens can benefit from treatment even if addiction is not present
3. Routine medical visits are good opportunities to screen for use
4. Legal and family interventions can help teens get and stay in care
5. Treatment should be tailored to the teen and focus on the whole person (not just the SUD)



Treatment for teens

Principles of treatment:

6. Behavioral approaches are effective (contingencies, teaching refusal skills, problem solving)
7. Families and community are important to treatment
8. Treating mental health conditions at the same is important
9. Screen for previous and ongoing trauma
10. Monitor/screen for substance use during treatment
11. Staying in treatment is key (relapses happen)
12. Test for sexual transmitted diseases



Treatment

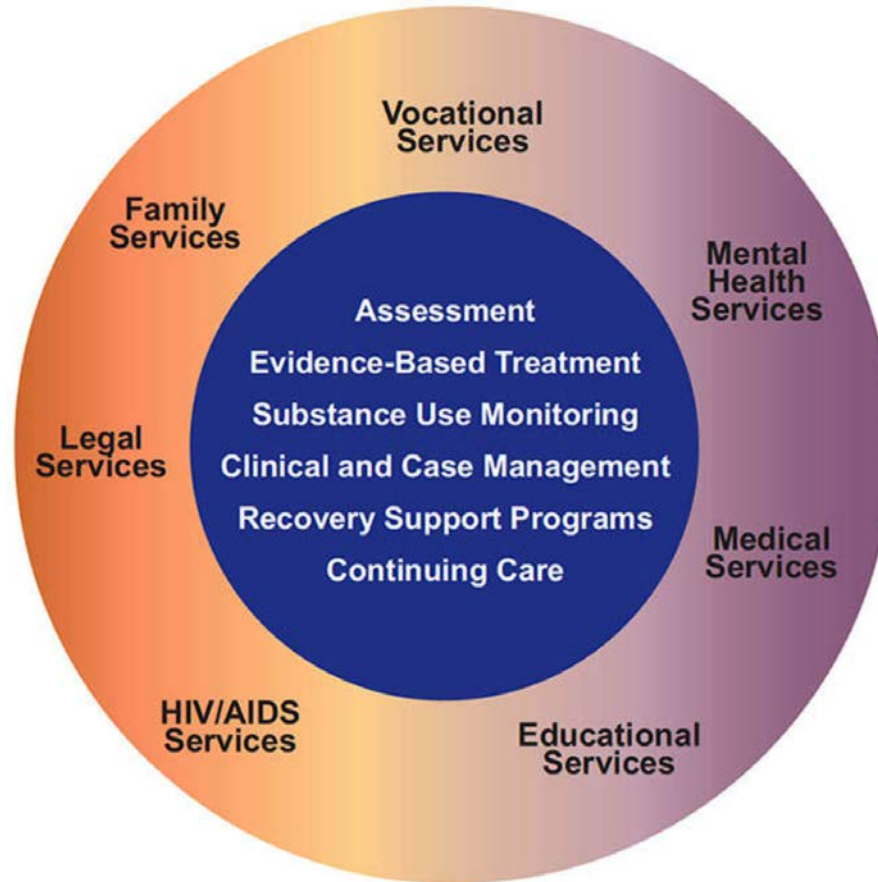
Evidence-based care approaches

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)
- Motivational interview/enhancement (MI)
- Contingency management

Levels of care:

- Outpatient Therapy (individual, group, family)
- Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)
- Wilderness Programs (ensure evidence-based approaches are used)
- Residential Treatment
- Hospitalization, stabilization and detoxification

Comprehensive Treatment



Resources

Talking to your teen about substance use

Finding Treatment

Peer-based Recovery Supports (nationwide)

- Alcoholics Anonymous / Narcotics Anonymous
- Smart Recovery

Support for loved ones affected by other's substance use

- Al-Anon / Al-teen

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Thank you.

