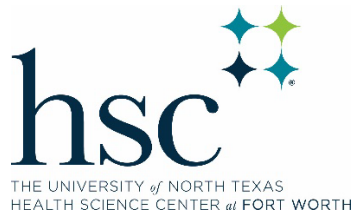




Challenge

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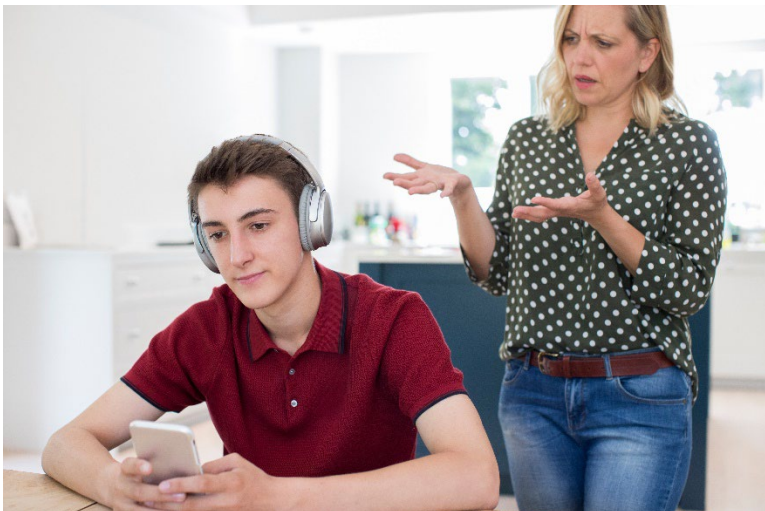
Change is created by ChallengeSM



Purposeful, Preventative Parenting

Hey parents! Your teens do hear you! “Right”, you say, as your daughter or son rolls their eyes after you ask how their day went. They then return laser focused on their cell phone or game system. We know it may not always seem like they are listening, but research shows that parents play a major role in their teen’s decisions regarding drug and alcohol use. You are the most important influence on your teen’s decision to use or not use drugs. Teens are 50% less likely to use drugs when their parents talk to them. Get this.... two-thirds, yes two-thirds, of teens say that losing their parents’ respect is one of the main reasons they choose to not drink or use drugs. That is more important than any new Tik Tok challenge or social media influencer. Never has there been a more crucial time for parents to remain important influences on their teens.

Ongoing conversations with your teens about alcohol and drug use and technology may save their life.





Your Teen and Social Media

Did you know that 66% of parents report that parenting is harder today than it was 20 years ago in part because of social media?

Social media plays a huge role in the lives of our teens today!

- 98% of teens report using social media
- Nearly half report being on social media “almost constantly”

Given the large role that social media plays in our teens’ lives, it is a good idea to have regular conversations about social media from a young age.

We understand that keeping up with your kids’ social media use can feel challenging or that it can be easy to feel that you don’t understand the latest technology, apps, or social

media that your child is using--but don't use this as an excuse not to get involved.

Research shows that the best way to learn about what your kids are doing online is *simply to ask them*.

Technology, Substance Use, and Your Teen

Social Media and Alcohol Use	
Myth	Fact
My teen isn't influenced by alcohol content they see on social media.	While only 13% of parents report that their teens are influenced by seeing alcohol on social media, 75% of teens say that seeing someone drinking on social media has motivated them to drink.
It doesn't matter what they view online, my teen knows better than to drink or to use drugs.	Studies show that posting and viewing alcohol-related content on social media is associated with higher rates of alcohol consumption and negative consequences. Research shows that teens who are regular users of social media are 5x more likely to drink alcohol, 5x more likely to buy cigarettes, and 2x as likely to use marijuana than teens who do not spend time on social media.

My teen doesn't drink or use other drugs so they don't see these activities on social media.

Teens do not actively have to search for alcohol or drug use content to be exposed to it on social media. Through friends, celebrity influencers, or advertisers posting about it on social media, your child is likely to see significantly more alcohol and drug use than you may be aware of. Here are some stats!

- Research indicates that 1 in 5, 13–14-year-olds have seen drug sales online. One in four young people have been advertised drugs on social media.
- Specifically, 56% saw drugs being advertised on Snapchat, 55% on Instagram, and 47% on Facebook.
- Of teens who reported seeing drug sales on social media: 63% saw marijuana being advertised – making it the most commonly seen drug advertised for sale. Cocaine was the second most commonly seen drug advertised at 26%, followed by MDMA/Ecstasy (24%), Xanax

(20%), Nitrous Oxide (17%), and Codeine (16%).

- 72% said that they see illegal drugs advertised for sale on social media sites or apps once a month or more.
- 48% were not concerned by seeing drugs advertised for sale on social media.

My teen doesn't talk to their friends about alcohol or other drugs.

Recent work indicates that 89% of teens are willing to talk about alcohol via text messaging with their friends.

Where Do Teens Get Their Drugs Online?



You might be thinking, where would my teen find these drugs? The internet and social media platforms (Apps) are a vast virtual mega-shopping mall for anything your teen might be interested in or curious about.

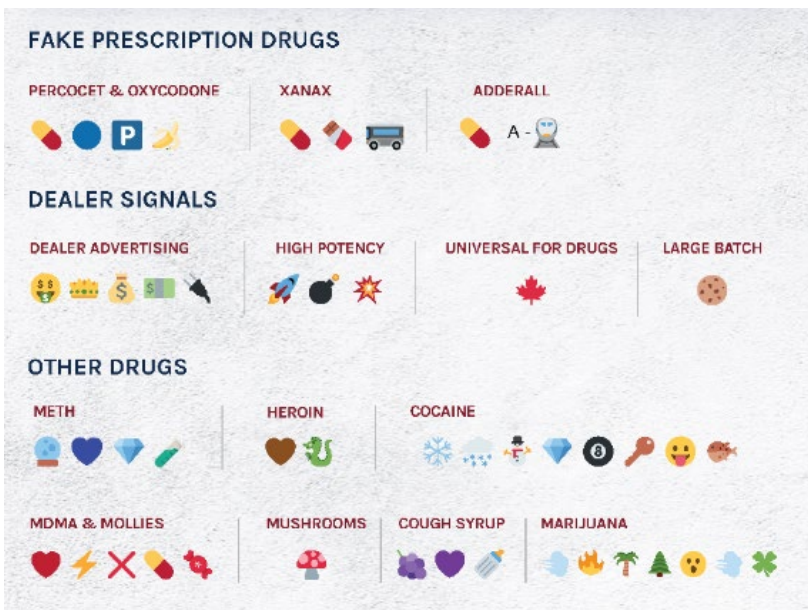
Drug Traffickers



Drugs are being marketed in coded language and animated emojis through social platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. These posts and stories are often accompanied by known code words and emojis that are used to market and sell illicit substances on social media. These code words and emojis are designed to evade detection by law enforcement and by the preset algorithms used by social media platforms.

Technology and search algorithms can bring the dealers to your teen simply based on interests and collected information. Unfortunately, this means that dealers can be just a click away.

Drug traffickers advertise on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube. These advertisements are in disappearing, 24-hour stories and in posts, which are promptly posted and removed. Posts and stories are often accompanied by known code words and emojis that are used to market and sell illicit and deadly drugs on social media. These code words and emojis are designed to evade detection by law

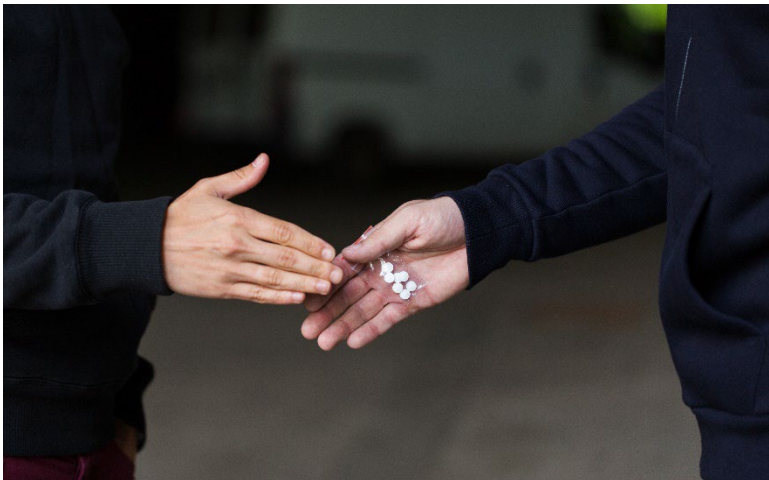


enforcement and by the preset algorithms used by social media platforms.

Although drug trafficking on social media is a concern for all ages, it is a particular risk for teens given the large amount of time they spend online. This is particularly important since social media drug sales have been directly connected to overdose deaths among teens.

Research shows that Snapchat is the leading platform where teens see drugs being sold online followed by Instagram and TikTok. Cannabis and cannabis edibles were among the drugs most frequently seen sold online but cocaine and party drug MDMA/ecstasy is also regularly spotted for sale by young people. The sale of fentanyl and other opioids online is on the rise, which is particularly concerning given how deadly these substances can be.

Peer to Peer Sales



Despite the risk of online drug traffickers, your teen may also have access to drugs online through their friends or acquaintances. Research shows that many drug sales happen directly through peers. In fact, research shows that 22% of all high school students say they have been sold or given drugs by friends. Teens can often find drugs right in their own homes. The medicine and liquor cabinets at home are frequently the source for teens who either use drugs or alcohol themselves or sell them to other students at school. Similar to online drug traffickers, peers often sell, trade, or give away drugs using coded social media and text messaging communication.

So Now What?

We have just provided you a lot of heavy information. You are the #1 influence in your teen's decisions regarding



drugs and alcohol and that influence is strengthened through having positive conversations with your teens. Whether you are the teen whisperer or have no idea how to say good morning without receiving attitude, it is never too late to start having great conversations with your teens.

Get Ready

Conversations are like relationships. It takes time, effort, and a genuine desire to connect with one another. It's not a one and done thing. It is a continually evolving process that gets stronger over time. It has been proven that 60 1-minute conversations are better received than a single lengthy conversation.



Get Set:

A few things that can set the stage for a good conversation:
1) timing and 2) setting. The mood of teens right after

school can be like ours after a full day of adulting. Being hungry, stressed from work/school, and in need of downtime are a few factors to consider. Conversation starters you may want to try could be “tell me about your day” or “what was the best part of your day?” instead of “Did you have a good day?” Research (and probably your own experience) show us that questions that can be answered with a yes or no tend to be conversation stoppers. Try to think about how you can ask questions in a way that will allow you to learn the most about your teen’s



world. Remember they are the expert in their world and report the desire to share more about their world with you and for you to value their unique experiences.

Go:

So how do we start a more difficult conversations about topics such as social media use, alcohol, and other substances? Timing, setting, respect for teen's expertise in his/her world, and a genuine concern for your teen's health and safety are the best bets for getting started off on the right foot. Some examples of conversation starters would include: 1) "I am curious what you have seen or read on social media about alcohol and other substances?" or 2)" If you were offered a chance to buy a pill online, what would you do?" Once you start a conversation, be mindful of allowing for the conversation to be natural instead of preplanned with expectations. and to actively listen with your full attention, no distractions, and no interruptions. Remember, the goal is to prepare your teen to make wise choices. This may be done by sharing information and encouraging your teen to keep talking to you, and preparing for ongoing conversations. Some topics you may



want to cover are sharing stories about drug sales that led to overdose deaths in the community and practicing refusal skills together so that if offered a pill, they are prepared, and practiced in saying no.

For additional information on these crucial conversations, download the *Talk, They Hear You* APP available on the App Store, Google Play, and the Microsoft Store.



Remember...you are the #1 influence on your teen. Mistakes provide opportunities for growth.



Contemplate/Evaluate



So, the conversation went south. Take heart, this will happen. Parenting is not for the weak of heart. All of the next steps start with a realistic evaluation of the conversation. What went well and what didn't? We have lived experiences and knowledge our teens do not have, but the same can be said for them.

Because we now live in a world where a one-time use of a substance can result in death, our fear of losing our teen to substance use can fuel the urgency for them to hear us. Fear, disappointment, or anger will stop your teen from hearing your words. If you feel the conversation has turned down a road that will not be productive, feel free to stop and self-check. If you don't think you can stay calm, it may

not be the best time to start a conversation or to try to force one to continue. It's completely ok to call a time out to reconvene at a specific time.

Be real...apologize if you handled the situation poorly.



Remember that you are modeling to your teen that you make mistakes and hold yourself accountable for your actions. You are teaching them they can trust you and that you respect them by asking for their forgiveness.

Once you are ready to have a conversation again, you may consider beginning by saying "this is hard to talk about, but we need to discuss it" "I would rather us be uncomfortable for a few seconds rather than endure the loss of you for the rest of my life."

One of the most important things you can do during these conversations is to value their position of expert of their world. We cannot filter their experiences through ours and it's important that you meet your teen where they are.



If there is a time-out taken, make specific plans to continue the conversation. Remember, this is not a one and done. You should try to continue to build rapport with your teen by connecting every day. The connection will develop communication skills and relationship building skills that transcend into all areas of life.

Remember, you are the #1 influence on your teen's decision to use or not use alcohol and other substances. Research shows that teens are 50% less likely to use alcohol and other substances when their parents talk to them.



If you suspect your teen is using

Are there warning signs that my child is using alcohol and other drugs? Some behavioral signs that might suggest drug use include:



- 1) changes in friends,
- 2) withdrawal from family,
- 3) falling behind in school,
- 4) getting caught in lies, and
- 5) changes in moods.

If you need help, your child's school can be a great place to go. They frequently have interventionists, counselors, or social workers who can assist you and your teen in getting connected to much needed resources.

Remember, you are incredibly important in your child's life. We suggest talking to your child and talking often (60-1-minute conversations) and trying to do things together that promote opportunities for connection and relationship building.

If your child is put in the situation to make the choice to take a pill, let it be your voice they hear saying "I want you to live; I love you!"

Additional resources:

Recovery Resource Council- for drug and alcohol assessments and treatment referral: 817-332-6329

Tarrant Cares: <https://www.tarrantcares.org/>

DEA One Pill Can Kill: <https://www.dea.gov/onepill>

MADD: Power of Parents: <https://madd.org/power-of-parents/>

SAMHSA Treatment Locator: 1-800-662-HELP

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 or text POISON to 797979 to add Poison Control as a contact in your mobile phone.

Texas Targeted Opioid Response:

<https://txopioidresponse.org/>

The “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign mobile app:
Available on the App Store, Google Play, and the Microsoft
Store.

<https://realdealonfentanyl.com/get-the-facts> Ad Council
website on Fentanyl overdose information.