

You can't PREVENT what you don't know!

**EMPOWERING FAMILIES:**  
 NAVIGATING CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS  
 FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

**Co-Occurring Disorders (COD)** happen when **mental health challenges and substance use issues occur together**. The connection is often misunderstood, leaving young people and families without the knowledge or tools to recognize risks, take action, and access support.

**“TIP” JAR**

TAKE-AWAYS - INFORMATION - PROMPTS

Know The Signs

Parent/  
 Guardian  
 Action  
 Plan

Connect  
 with  
 Encompass

Inclure  
 Support

**COD Resources**

The  
 Partnership  
 to End  
 Addiction

the harris  
 project

**Three Pathways to COD**

- **Mental health challenges first** – Conditions like anxiety, depression, ADHD, or PTSD can lead young people to use substances in an attempt to cope. But substance use can **worsen symptoms, increase risks, and interfere with development**.
- **Substance use first** – Some young people occasionally try (or regularly use) substances, which can alter brain chemistry and trigger the onset of mental health challenges. The brain isn't fully developed until the late 20s, making youth substance use especially risky.
- **Both, influenced by multiple factors** – Genetics, family history, biology, and environmental factors (stress, trauma, peer influences) can all contribute to the development of COD.

**CODA Prevention**

- **Empowering Teens & Families:** Knowledge is power—understanding COD can help young people make informed choices, and the adults in their life provide support.
- **Breaking Stigma:** Open conversations create a culture where seeking help is seen as a strength, not a weakness.
- **Building Resilience:** Strengthening protective factors through positive school, peer, and community connections.

Families play a critical role in prevention, intervention, and recovery:

- Supporting Families**
- ✓ **Workshops** to help families navigate mental health and substance use challenges.
  - ✓ **Tools** to foster open, supportive conversations at home.
  - ✓ **Access to resources** for intervention, treatment, and ongoing care.

**Encompass: Integrated Treatment for COD**

- **An Evidence-Based Approach:** Encompass is a nationally recognized, research-supported intervention specifically designed for youth and young adults with COD.
- **Personalized Care:** Treatment integrates **cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational enhancement, and contingency management** to address both mental health and substance use.
- **A Path to Recovery:** Addressing mental health and substance use together leads to **better outcomes, long-term success, and improved quality of life**.

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