



When Mental Health and Substance Use Collide: Know the warning signs and actions you can take

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Aussem Counseling & Wellness

March 16, 2023



Let's talk

- ▶ Teen mental health
- ▶ Risks of self-medication
- ▶ Influence of social media
- ▶ Resources to help





Teen development

Job #1: Developmental tasks

- ▶ Physical – growth spurt, hormones
- ▶ Cognitive – better thinking and language skills
- ▶ Social and emotional – peers matter, more privacy



The Phone in the Room

We examine the raging debate about smartphones and teenage mental health.

[Give this article](#)

Teens turning to TikTok for mental health advice are self-diagnosing

Young people are increasingly turning to social media platforms like TikTok to diagnose their mental health struggles and often getting misinformation. A California psychology professor has gained a million followers on TikTok by debunking wellness advice that could do more harm than good. [Read more](#)

Children languish in emergency rooms awaiting mental health care

Fearing Daniel might harm himself, his parents took him to the only place they could: the emergency room. After seven days in the ER, Daniel was discharged; hospital staff felt he was no longer in danger. His parents disagreed. [Read more](#)

PRB

WHAT WE DO + PROJECTS DATA CENTER + RESOURCE LIBRARY

Resource Library

More Sleep Could Improve Many U.S. Teenagers' Mental Health

California now requires most high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. to support students' well-being and safety.

Share

The Kids Are Not Alright

Books Are Not Alright - The Decline in Mental Health Among Youth

Watch on YouTube

Frank C. Worrell, PhD

Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA

Geoff Cohen, PhD

DeLeon Gray, PhD

Mitch Prinstein, PhD

Maysa Akbar, PhD

Soledad O'Brien

What do teens think about?



NAMI Poll of Teens 12-17 in 2022

Teens are facing mental health struggles

64%

64% feel the world is more
stressful now than when
parents were their age

1 in 6

About 1 in 6 report experiencing
specific negative emotions all
the time or often

1 in 4

1 in 4 have been diagnosed
with a mental health condition

NAMI Poll of Teens 12-17 in 2022

Teens want schools to play a big role in their mental health,
and they trust the information they get there,
and are open to receiving information at school

2 in 3

More than 2 in 3 agree schools
should teach about what mental
health is, including where and how
to seek treatment

56%

56% say their school thinks
that mental health matters

67%

67% think schools should offer
days off for mental health

And what about parents and other caregivers?

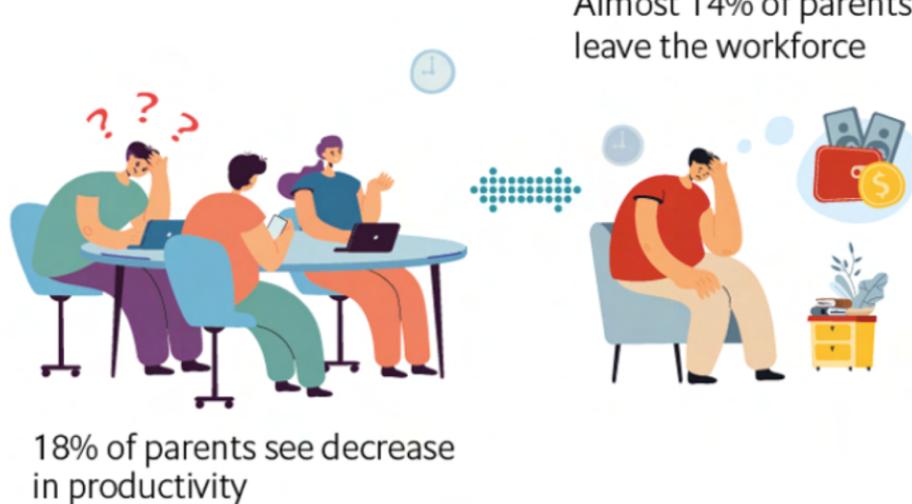


Cigna

<https://newsroom.cigna.com/teen-mental-health-take...>

Teen Mental Health Takes Toll on Parents at Work

May 11, 2022 — The number of teenagers facing mental health issues has been rising every year, and the recent upheavals in their lives due to COVID-19 had ...

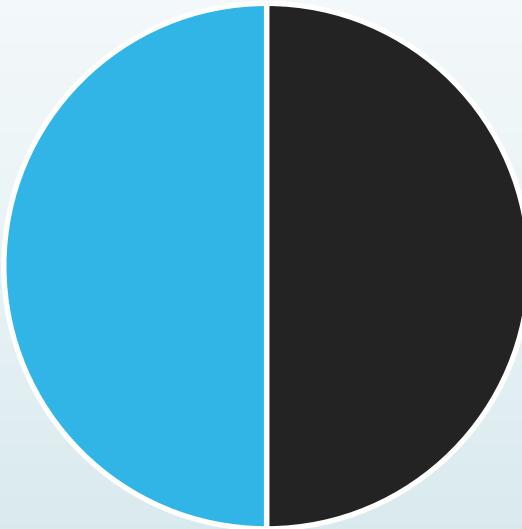


Source: Economic Impact commissioned by Cigna 2022
https://impact.economist.com/perspectives/sites/default/files/sounding_the_alarm_parent_perceptions_of_teen_mental_health_in_the_us_final3.pdf

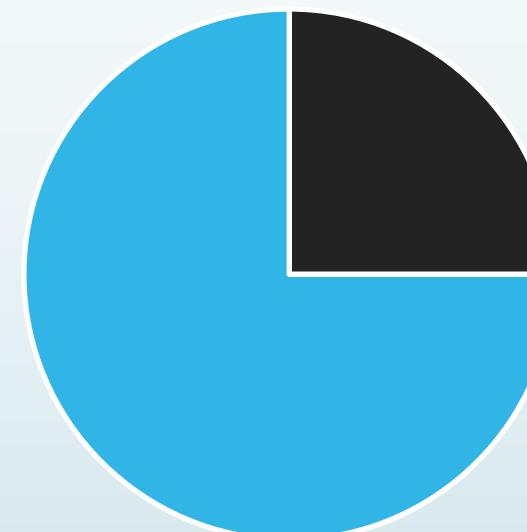
When do mental health problems surface?

50% of mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% begins by age 24.

Age 14

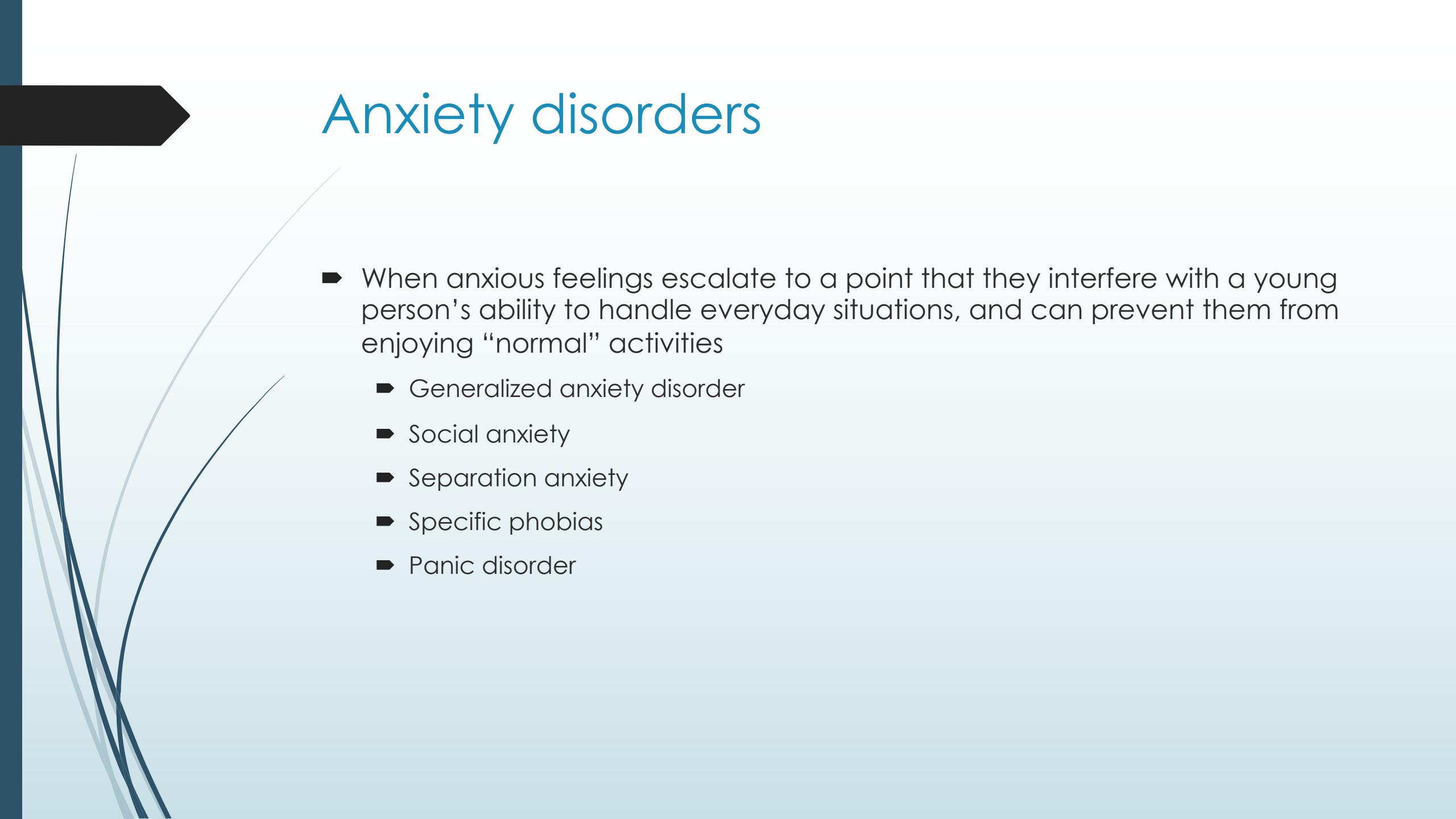


Age 24



Mental health disorders





Anxiety disorders

- ▶ When anxious feelings escalate to a point that they interfere with a young person's ability to handle everyday situations, and can prevent them from enjoying "normal" activities
 - ▶ Generalized anxiety disorder
 - ▶ Social anxiety
 - ▶ Separation anxiety
 - ▶ Specific phobias
 - ▶ Panic disorder

How does anxiety show up in teens?

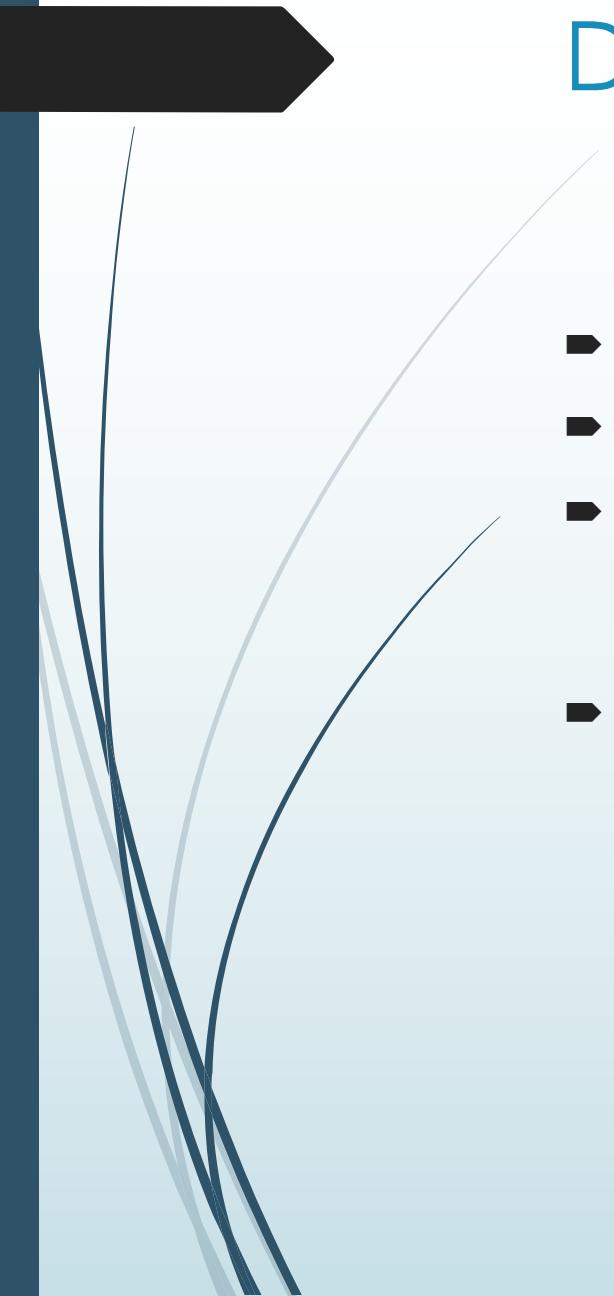
- ▶ Recurring fears and worries about routine parts of everyday life
- ▶ Repeated reassurance-seeking
- ▶ Extreme self-consciousness or sensitivity to criticism
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Withdrawal from social activity
- ▶ Avoidance of difficult or new situations
- ▶ Trouble concentrating
- ▶ Chronic complaints about stomachaches/ headaches
- ▶ Drop in grades or school refusal
- ▶ Sleep problems





Anxiety and substance use

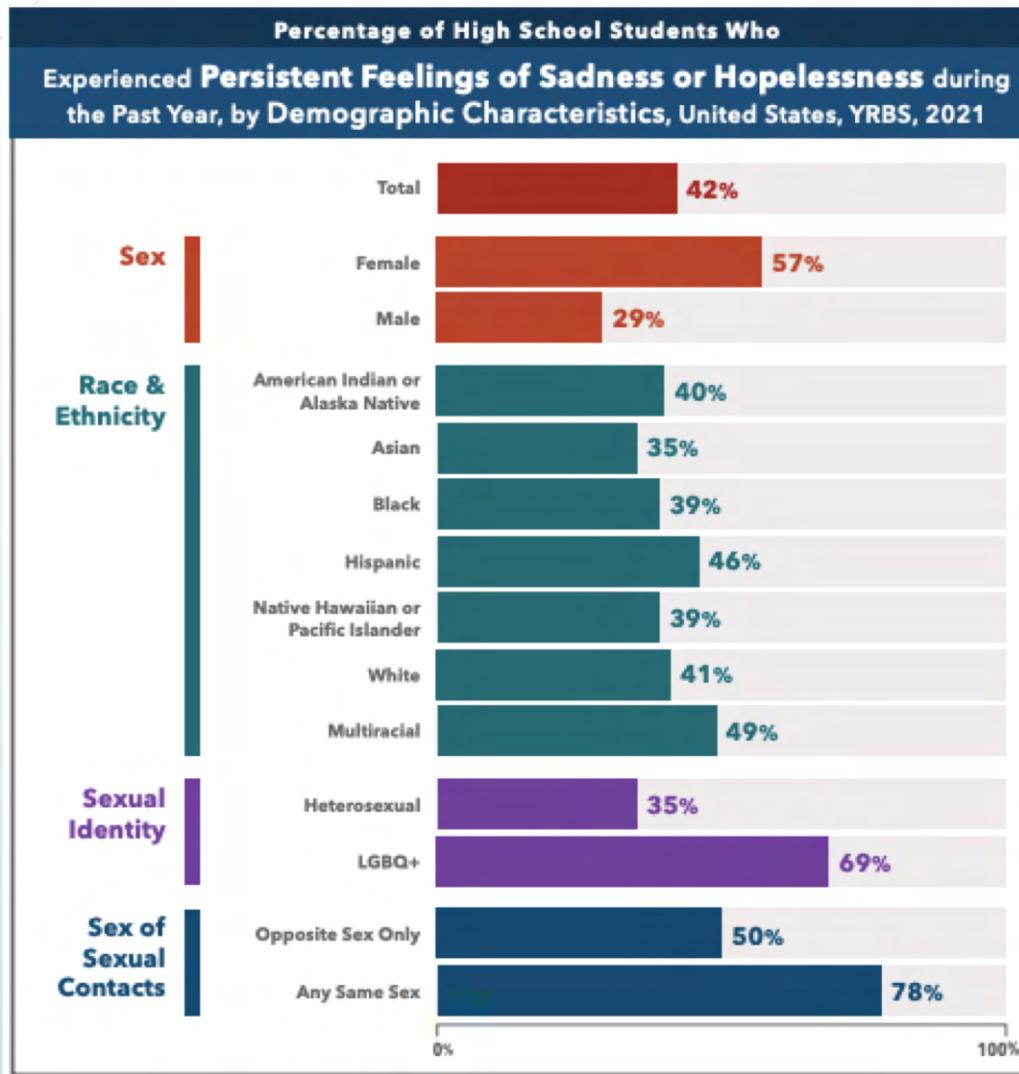
- ▶ May use alcohol and other drugs to temporarily alleviate anxious feelings
- ▶ The effects of the substance cover up or mask the anxiety symptoms, it becomes that much more difficult to assess the disorder.
- ▶ May feel their anxiety is more intense when they aren't using substances.



Depression

- ▶ Major Depressive Disorder
- ▶ Persistent Depressive Disorder
- ▶ Depressed teens are more irritable than adults with depression, and they are more likely to report a loss of interest in things once enjoyed than sadness.
- ▶ In addition to irritability and loss of interest, the hallmark of depression involves shifts in mood, eating, sleep habits or interests.

Feeling sad and hopeless



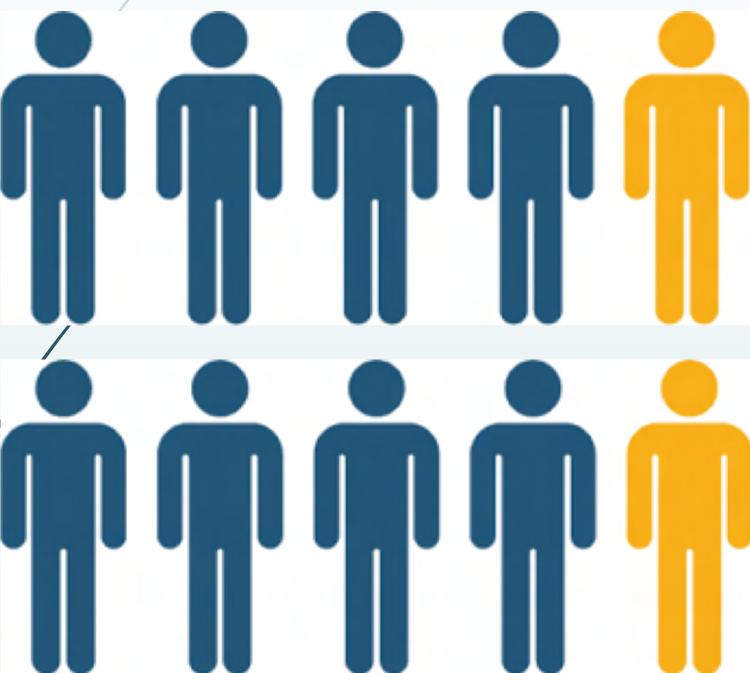
Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2021



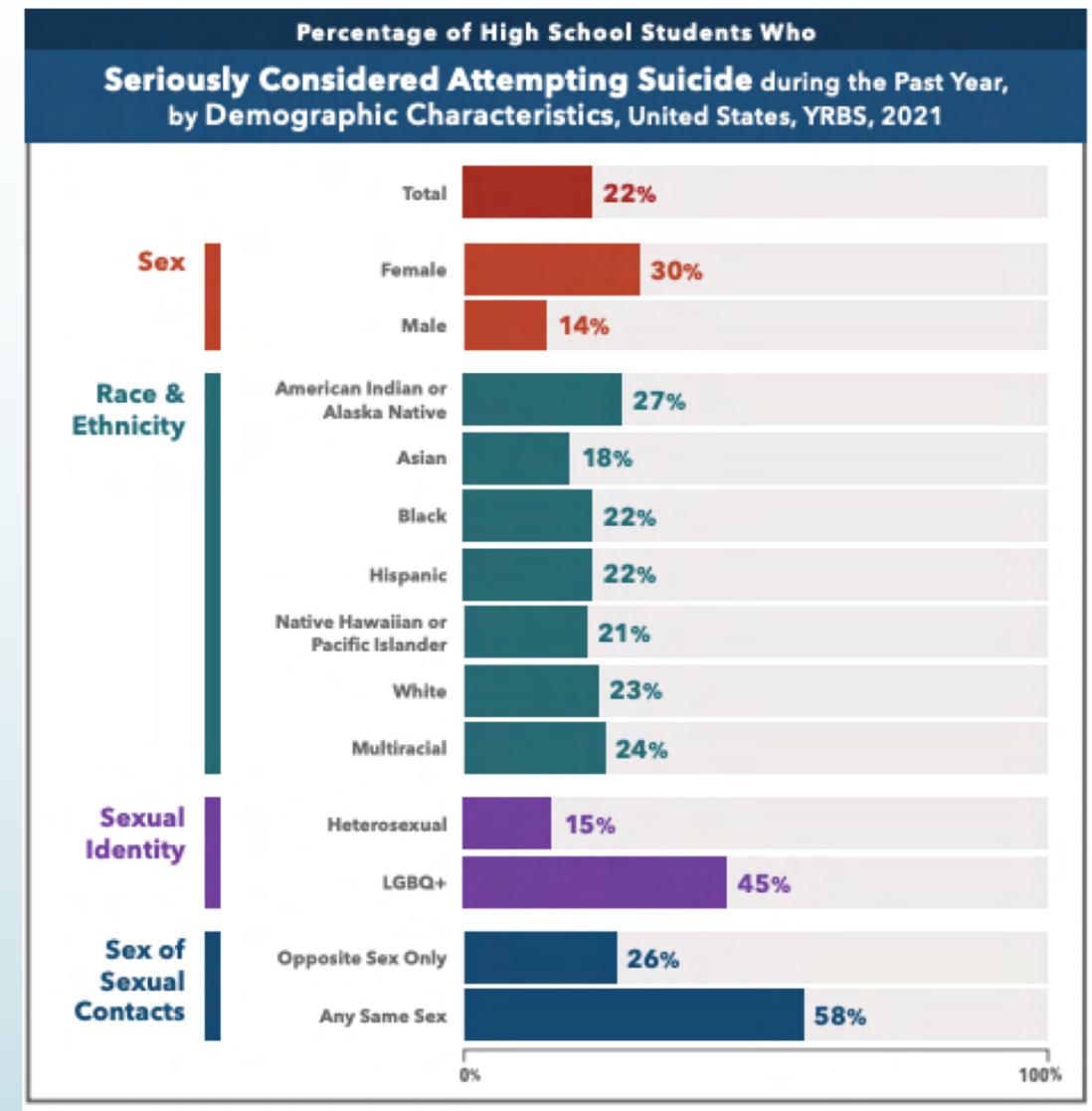
Signs of depression

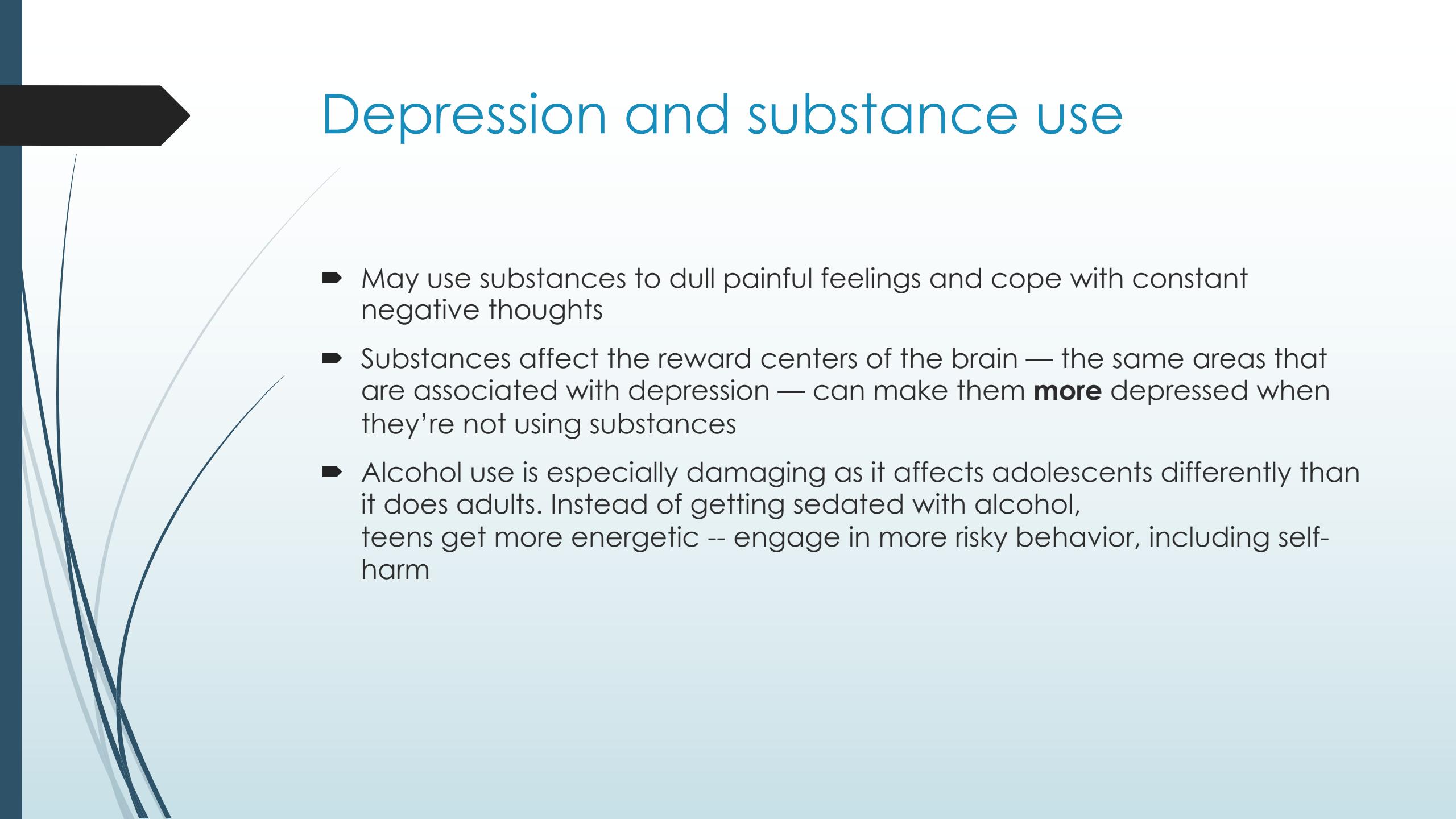
- ▶ Marked weight loss or gain
- ▶ Sleeping too much or too little
- ▶ Restlessness, lethargy or fatigue
- ▶ Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
- ▶ Cloudy or indecisive thinking
- ▶ A preoccupation with death, plans of suicide or an actual suicide attempt

When the pain gets so bad...



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2021





Depression and substance use

- ▶ May use substances to dull painful feelings and cope with constant negative thoughts
- ▶ Substances affect the reward centers of the brain — the same areas that are associated with depression — can make them **more** depressed when they're not using substances
- ▶ Alcohol use is especially damaging as it affects adolescents differently than it does adults. Instead of getting sedated with alcohol, teens get more energetic -- engage in more risky behavior, including self-harm

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- ▶ Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is diagnosed when a person has difficulty concentrating, paying attention, sitting still, following directions and controlling impulsive behavior.
- ▶ Signs and symptoms
 - ▶ Making careless mistakes
 - ▶ Being easily distracted and appearing to not listen when spoken to directly
 - ▶ Having trouble with organization and frequently losing things
 - ▶ Fidgeting
 - ▶ Excessive talking or interrupting, blurting out answer

ADHD and substance use



Structural and chemical brain differences associated with ADHD also make young people more responsive to a drug's effects and more likely to take drugs again.

- ▶ Drawn to nicotine and marijuana
- ▶ May misuse medications
- ▶ Those with ODD may seek out pain medications or Xanax



Bipolar disorder

- Teens and young adults with bipolar disorder will show signs of both depression and mania



Signs of bipolar disorder

Mania

- ▶ Drastic personality changes
- ▶ Excitability and irritability
- ▶ Inflated self-confidence
- ▶ Grandiose/delusional thinking
- ▶ Recklessness
- ▶ Decreased need for sleep
- ▶ Increased talkativeness, racing thoughts and scattered attention
- ▶ Psychotic episodes, or breaks from reality

Depression

- ▶ Loss of interest or pleasure in things once enjoyed
- ▶ Marked weight loss or gain
- ▶ Decreased or increased need for sleep
- ▶ Lethargy or fatigue
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness
- ▶ Excessive or inappropriate guilt
- ▶ Preoccupation with death, plans of suicide or an actual suicide attempt

Bipolar and substance use

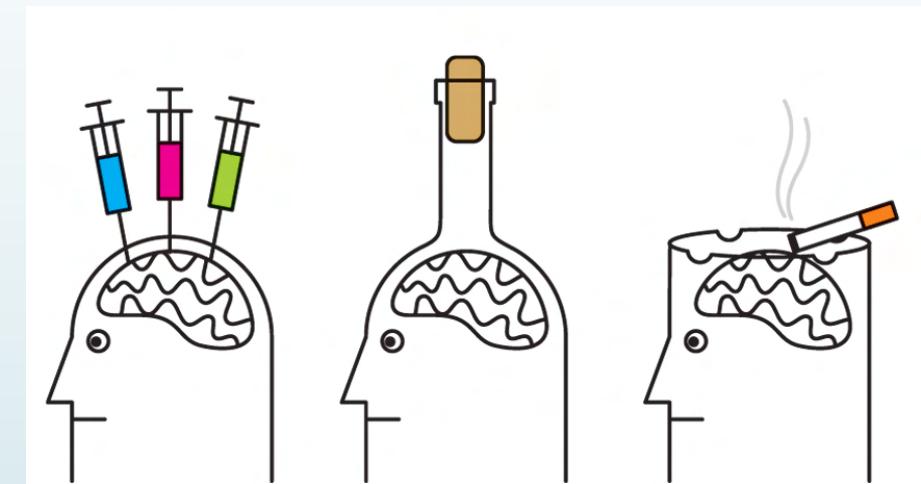
Nearly
60%

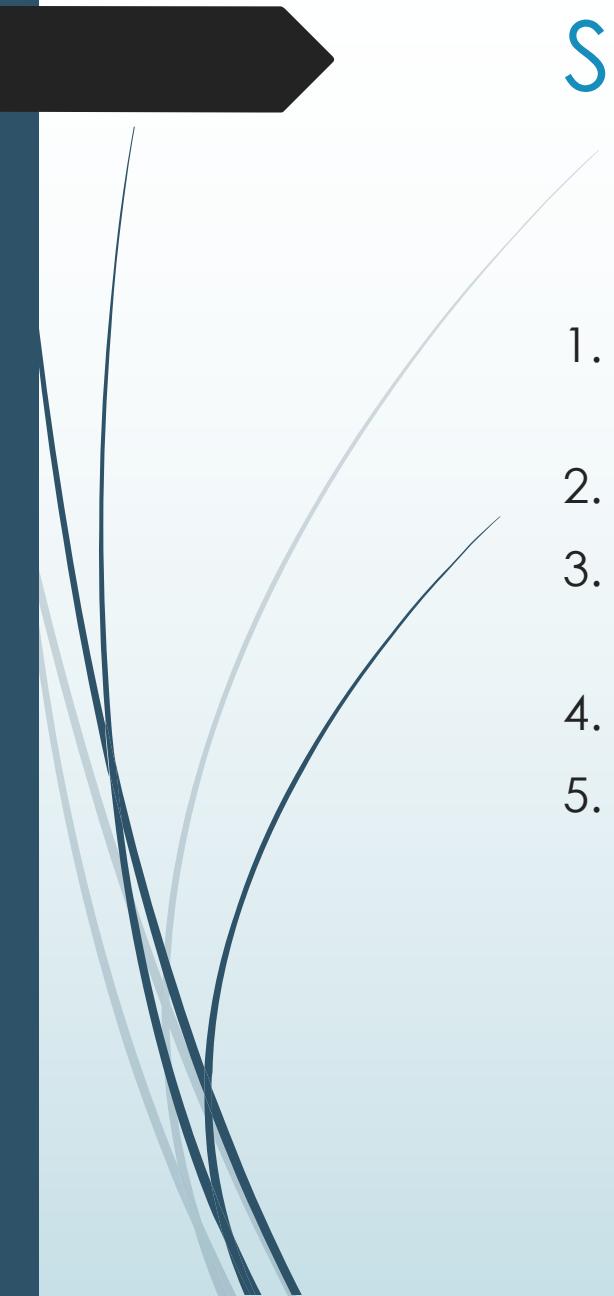
individuals with **bipolar disorder** have a **co-occurring substance use disorder**



- ▶ Nicotine and alcohol
- ▶ Substance use can trigger a first manic episode
- ▶ Interfere with medication

Substance use





Substance Use Disorder

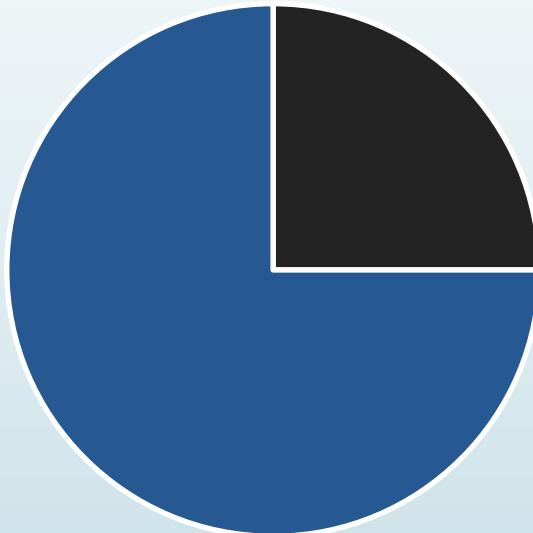
1. Using more for a longer period of time
2. Difficulty cutting back
3. Time spent getting, using and recovering
4. Intense cravings
5. Not handling responsibilities
6. Giving up interests
7. Relationship problems
8. Physically dangerous situations
9. Worsening physical and mental problems
10. Tolerance
11. Withdrawal

2-3 symptoms = Mild
4-5 symptoms = Moderate
6+ symptoms = Severe

Adolescence is **the** critical period for addiction risk

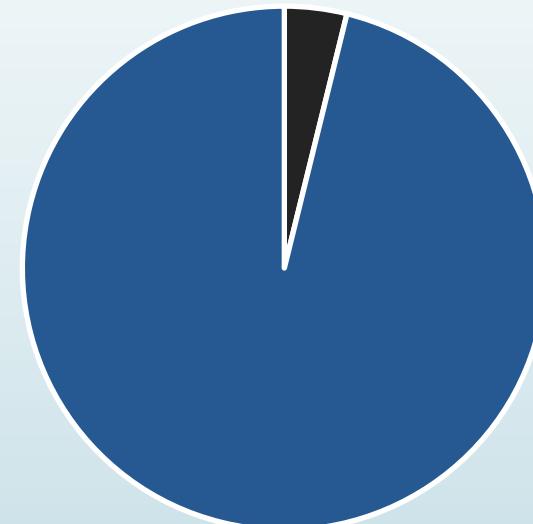
Use before age 18

1 in 4 chance of developing addiction



Use after age 21

1 in 25 chance of developing addiction



12th graders substance use in 2022



31%

52%

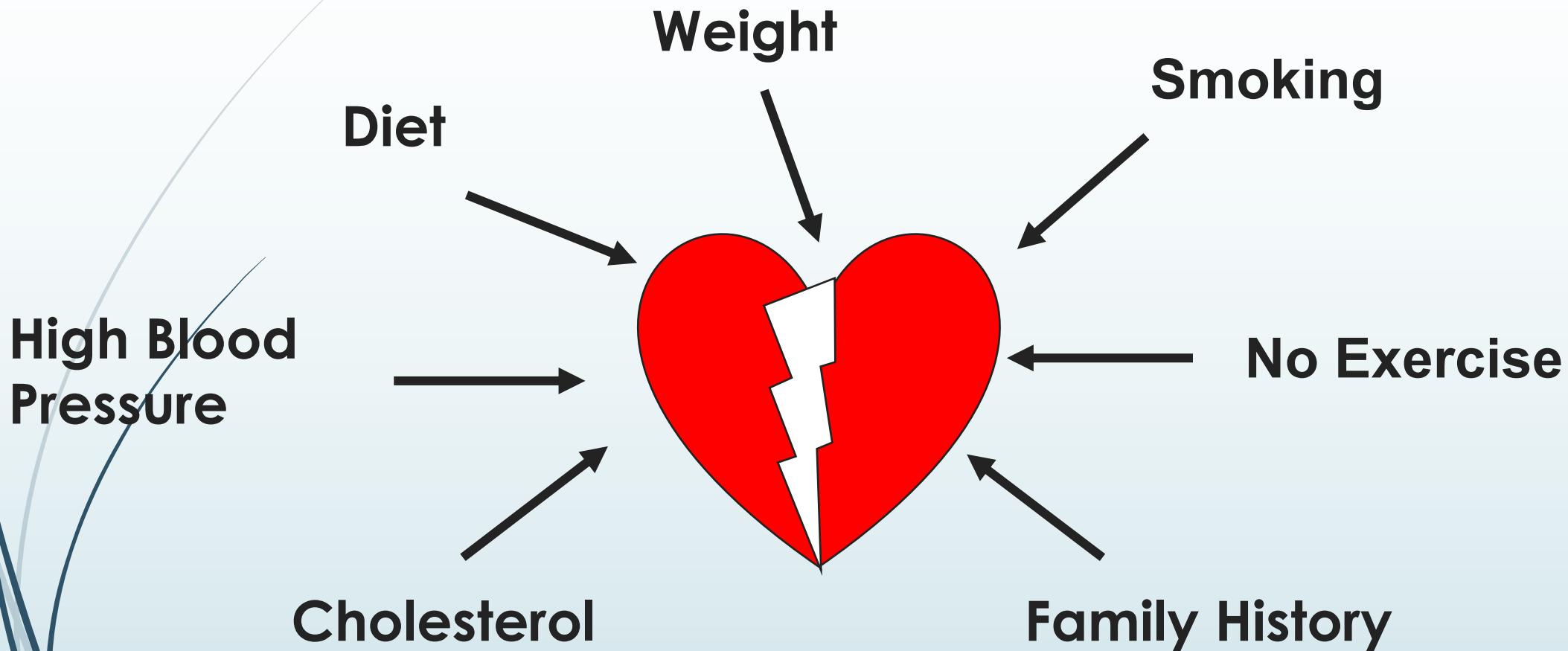
27%

Source: Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975-2022: Secondary School Students



Assessing Substance Use Risk

Risk factors for heart disease



Kaiser Permanente research



- ▶ 41,000+ teen health records
- ▶ Born between 1997 and 2000 with a link to mother's health record

- ▶ Factors that increase the risk of developing a substance use problem between ages 12 and 18





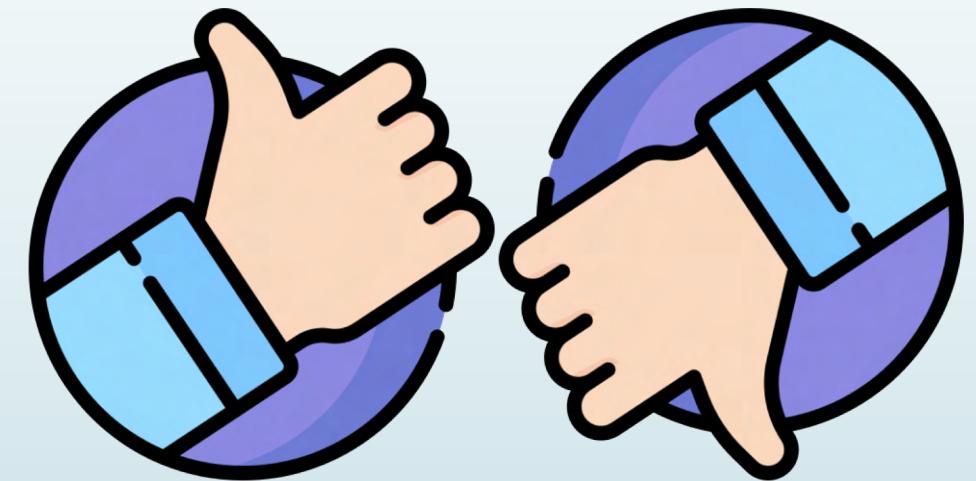
IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK? A SUBSTANCE USE RISK ASSESSMENT

Survey: 5-6 minutes to complete

This risk assessment is designed to help you better understand the risks your child may face related to mental health, well-being, personality, family history, and their environment.

Social media:

Impact on mental health and substance use



The mall vs social media

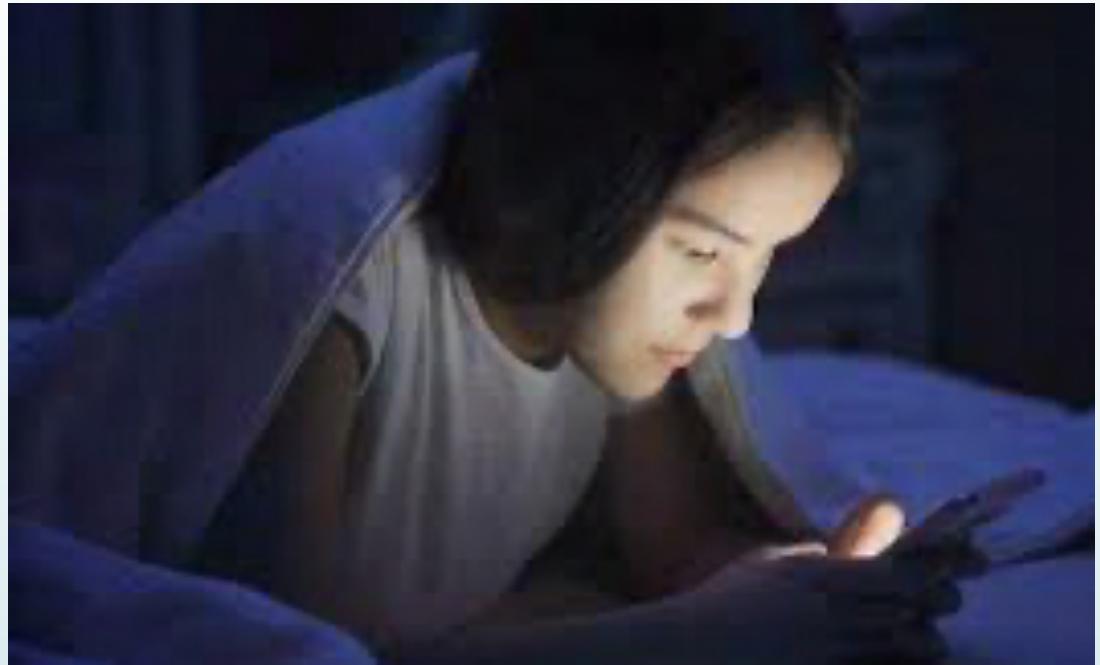


Photo credit: John Deprisco for the WSJ

Use of screen media is up 17% for tweens and teens since the start of the pandemic.



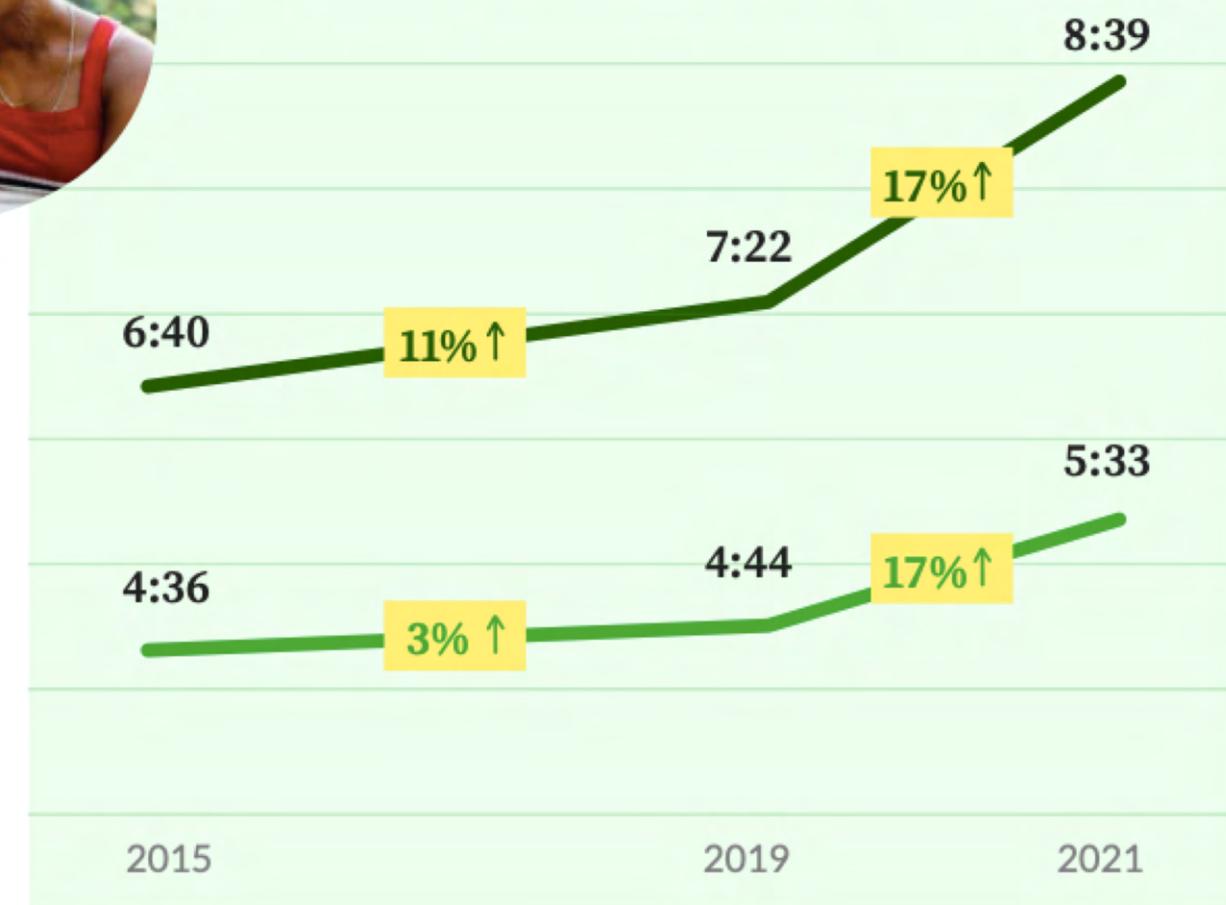
Media use grew faster in the last two years than it did in the four years prior to the pandemic.

Overall, boys use more screen media than girls.

Black and Hispanic/Latino children use screens more than White children.

And children in higher-income households use screens for entertainment less than children in middle- and lower-income households.

Total entertainment screen use per day (average)



Source: Common Sense Census, 2021

Tweens Teens

% of US teens that say social media makes them feel...

- More connected
- Showcase creativity
- Emotional support
- More accepted

Teens who see social media as a positive for all teens more likely to report positive personal experiences

% of U.S. teens who say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot (of) ...

Positive experiences

More connected to what's going on in their friends' lives

Like they have a place where they can show their creative side

Like they have people who can support them through tough times

More accepted

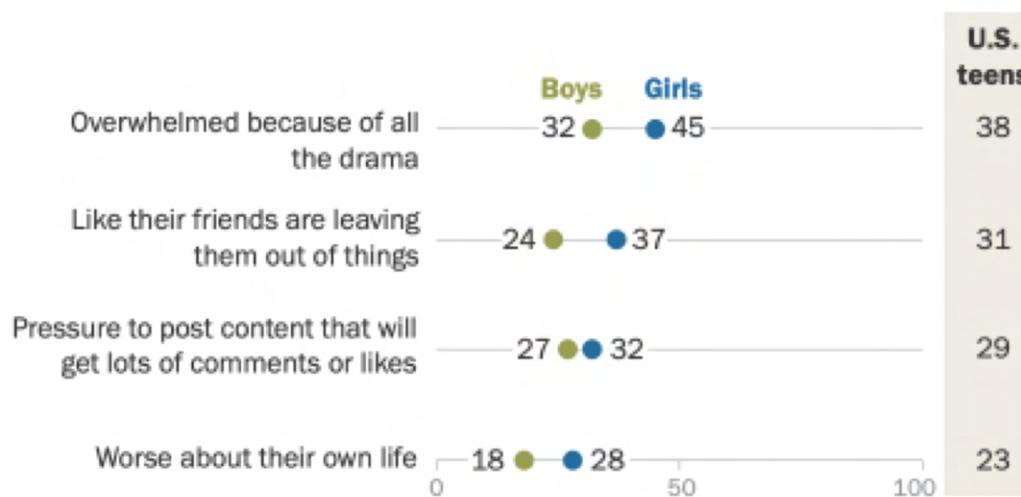
Among those who say social media has had a ___ effect on people their age



Social media is more challenging for girls...

Teen girls more likely than teen boys to say social media has made them feel overwhelmed by drama, excluded by friends or worse about their life

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel a lot or little ...



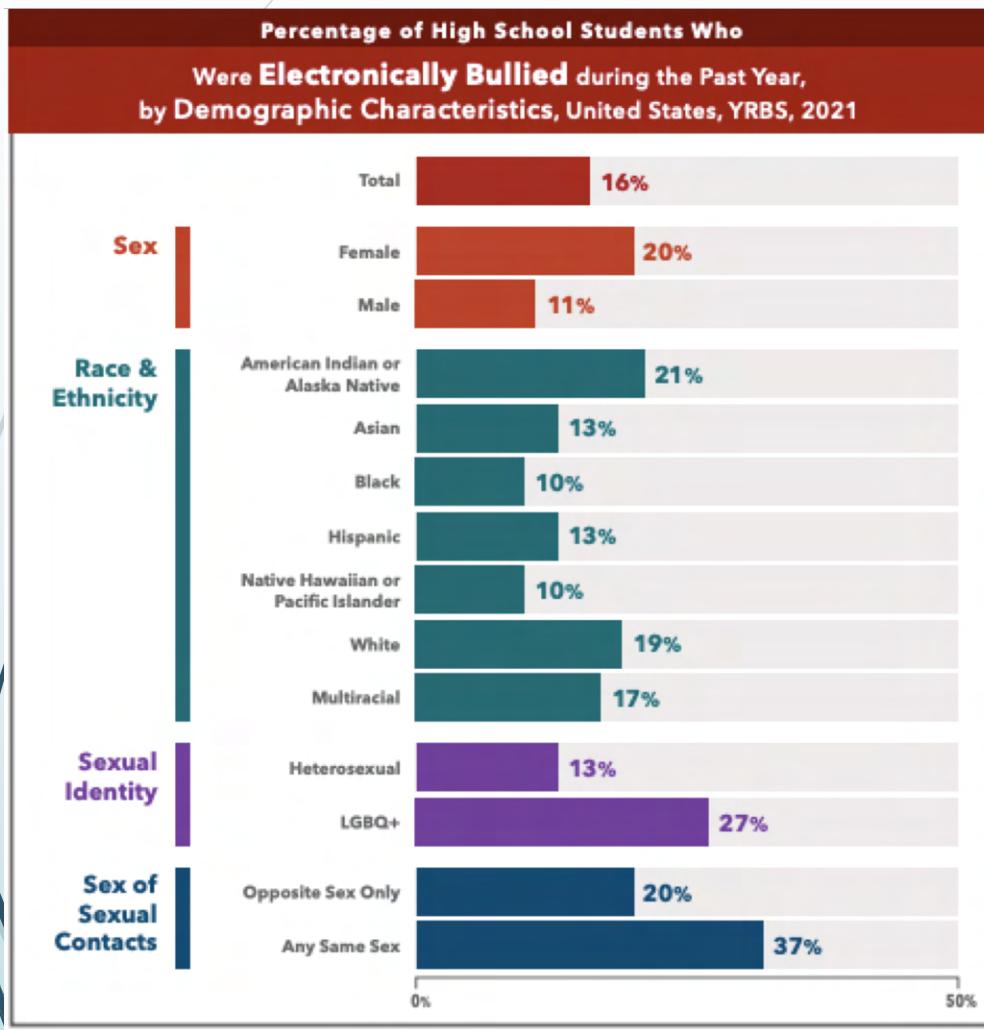
Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

And online bullying continues...

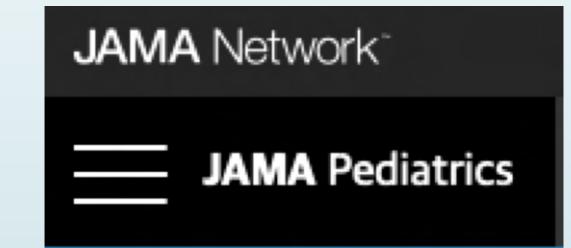


► Hannah, shares her story:

I can feel their eyes on me as I walk to class. Everyone will have seen the pictures by now, and since they look real, no one believes that they are digital creations. I can hear people whispering and snickering whenever I walk into a room. Text messages taunt me every day, and I think I know who is sending them, but without proof I feel helpless. The latest text says that I should expect more of the same if I don't do whatever they tell me to do. I'm scared to tell my parents because they might think the pictures are real, and I'm ashamed for them to find out what the other kids think of me.

Research about social media...

- ▶ Among teens who checked >3/day = poorer mental health
- ▶ Negative effects due to disrupted sleep, cyber bullying and lack of exercise
- ▶ Of teens who spent >3 hours on social media – heightened risk of mental health problems
- ▶ Particularly for internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety, depression) as opposed to externalizing problems (e.g., being bullied, feeling distracted)



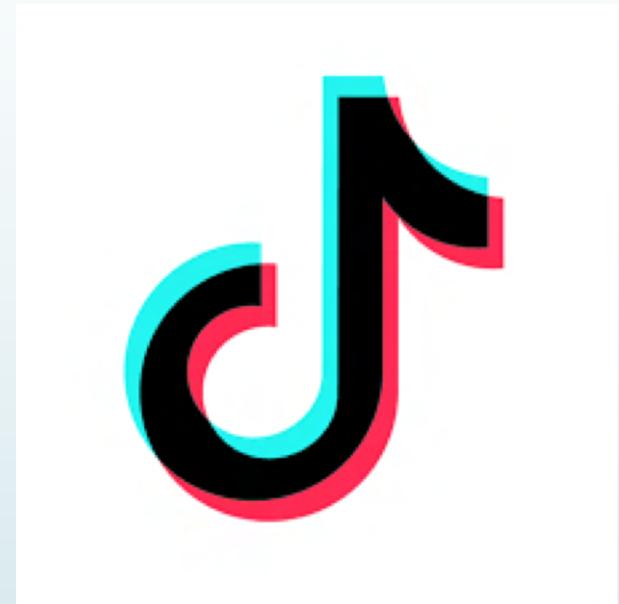
Fact Check: Social media and substance use



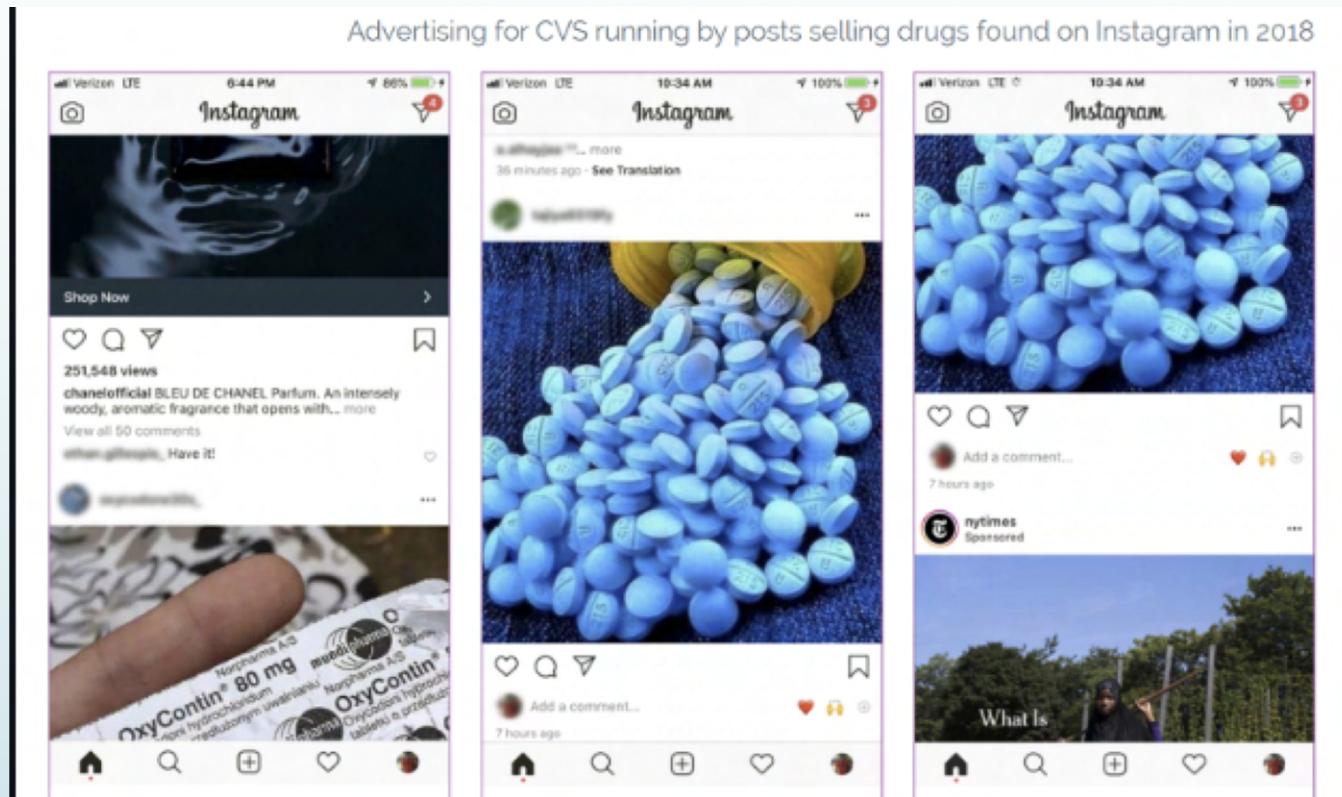
 **Partnership
to End Addiction**



Marketplace for substances



Social media ads for prescription and illicit substances ... a game of Whack-a-mole



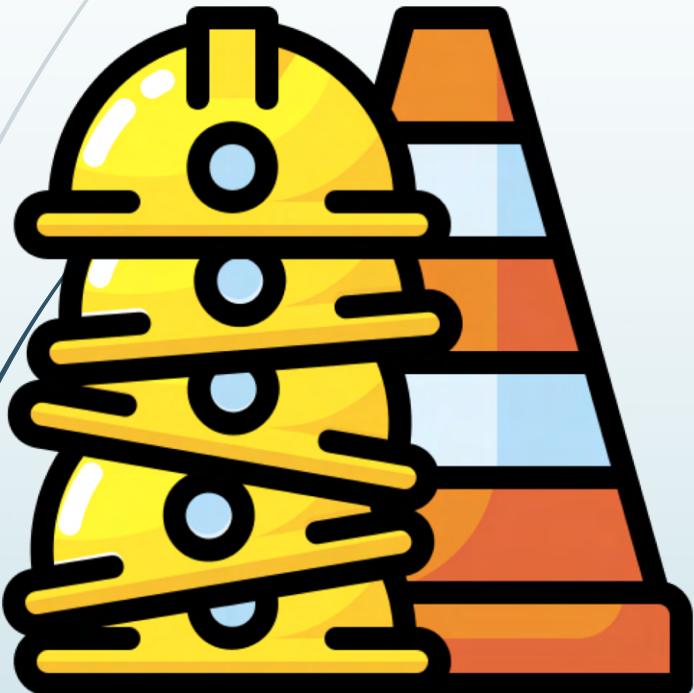
Blackout Rage Gallon (BORG) TikTok Challenge





What You Can Do

Protective factors to promote mental well-being

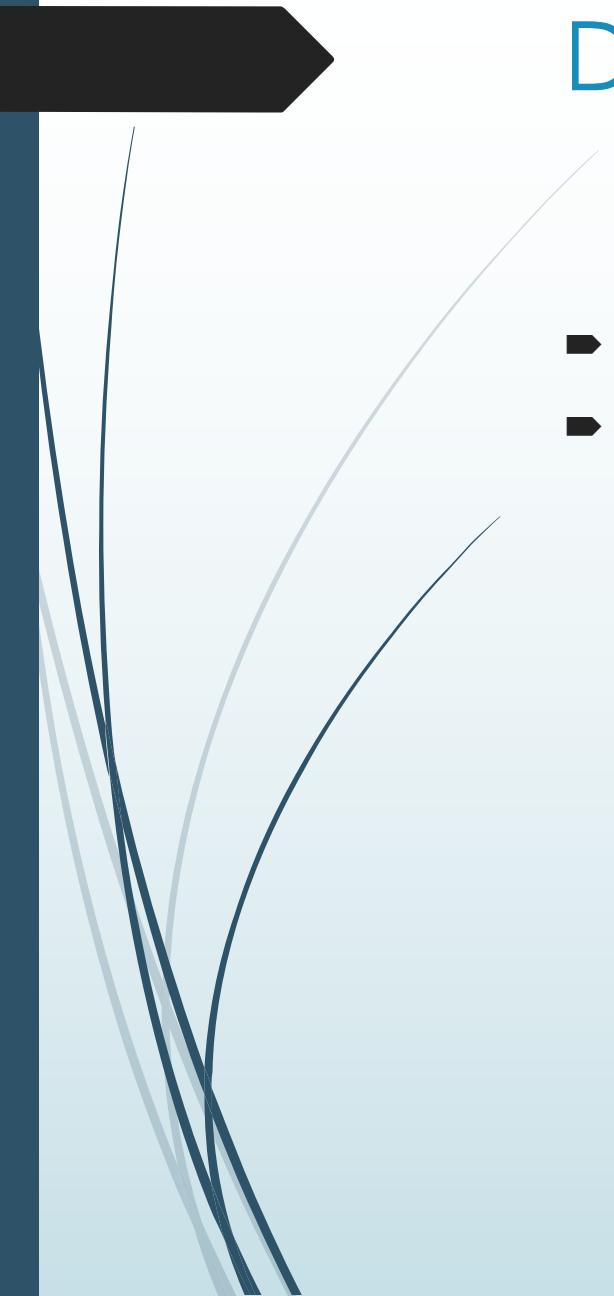


- ▶ Positive physical development including diet, exercise and sleep
- ▶ Academic achievement/intellectual development
- ▶ High self-esteem
- ▶ Emotional self-regulation
- ▶ Good coping skills and problem-solving skills
- ▶ Connected in school, with peers, in athletics, employment, religion, and culture
- ▶ Positive role models and relationships with family members
- ▶ Clear expectations for values, behavior, and rules/limits

If your child needs help

- ▶ Make an effort to see the matter from your child's point of view
- ▶ Determine what's important to your child and frame the conversation
- ▶ Do your homework and be ready with treatment options
- ▶ Use motivational "hooks"
- ▶ Practice what you want to say
- ▶ Consider alternatives if you get a flat refusal





Differential diagnosis

- ▶ Mental health problems can mimic substance use problems and vice-versa
- ▶ Typical evaluation questions:
 - ▶ Is sadness related to a loss, or just out of the blue?
 - ▶ Is the adolescent using substances as a way of coping?
 - ▶ Is substance use a response to stressful life events?
 - ▶ Is impulsivity part of a child's personality, or tied to hyperactivity, or is it more manic and self-destructive?
 - ▶ Is the goal of substance use to seek excitement or to escape reality?



Treatment Options

- ▶ Therapist
- ▶ Psychiatrist
- ▶ Medications
- ▶ Intensive Outpatient Programs
- ▶ Partial Hospitalization Programs
- ▶ Residential Treatment

What to look for in treatment

- ▶ Integrated care
- ▶ Family involvement
- ▶ Programs that promote mentors, healthy activities and recovery community
- ▶ Continuing care/relapse prevention plan



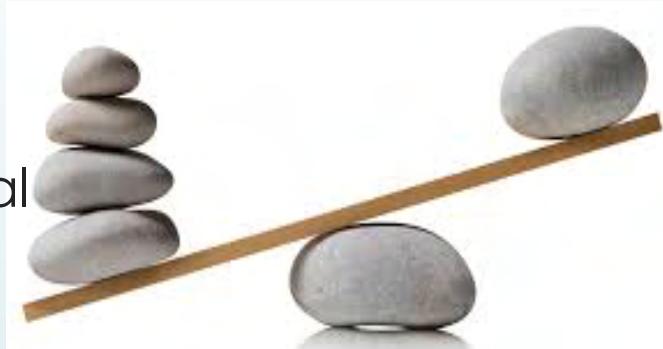
The family role

- ▶ Encourage treatment participation
- ▶ Provide emotional support and encouragement
- ▶ Attend individual and family counseling/programming
- ▶ Help with medication adherence
- ▶ Encourage abstinence
- ▶ Help establish structure and meaning
- ▶ Join family support groups (e.g., CHADD, NAMI, DBSA)
- ▶ Know the signs of relapse
- ▶ Engage in self-care



What can parents/caregivers do?

- ▶ Have conversations...often
- ▶ Set clear expectations
- ▶ Role play resistance skills
- ▶ Monitor your child's activities
- ▶ Encourage pro-social activities
- ▶ Address mental health/trauma issues
- ▶ Help develop assertiveness skills



- ▶ Foster academic competence
- ▶ Pay attention to your child's behavior/mood changes
- ▶ Model healthy behaviors
- ▶ Collaborate on parenting
- ▶ Compare notes with other adults in your child's life
- ▶ Have naloxone/Narcan on hand
- ▶ Keep substances and medications secure

Helpful messages for teens

- ▶ Don't fall for it. Don't let big businesses take advantage of you, ruin your health, make you dependent
- ▶ It's not cool to be addicted to and dependent on a drug
- ▶ Don't be fooled by celebrity and social media promotions. There's money behind them, not your best interests
- ▶ Make smart and healthy choices. Substance use is really dangerous for some people, and it's nearly impossible to know biologically how any individual will respond.
- ▶ You only have one brain and body and they're in pretty great condition right now – why risk your (name their goals, e.g., college, job, relationships, etc.)?



Resources

Child Mind Institute - NYC



Child Mind
Institute

Care Education Science

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Family Resource Center

Find information to help you support children who are struggling with mental health, behavior or learning challenges.

Search for resources



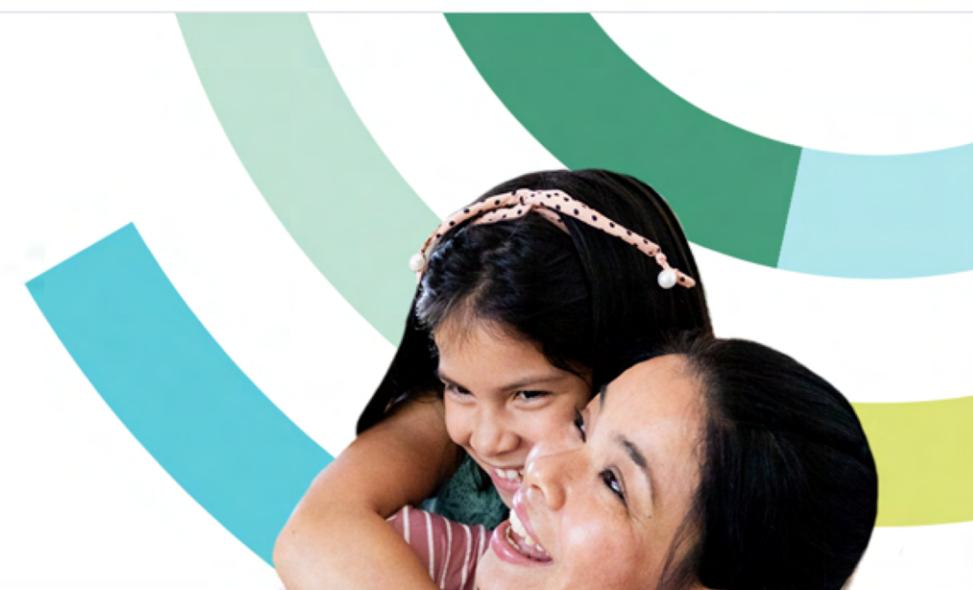
Not sure where to start? Try our [Resource Finder](#)



Concerned about a child?
[Try our Symptom Checker](#)



Wondering how to find help?
We answer common questions in Connect to Care



Crisis Text Line

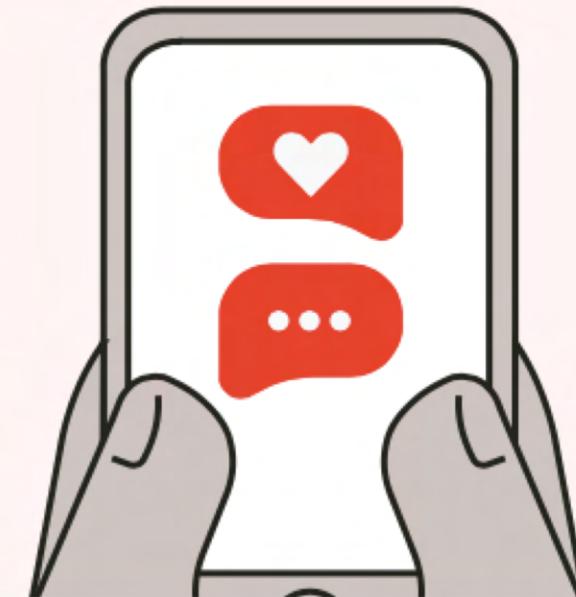
IN A CRISIS?

**Text HOME to 741741 to
connect with a Crisis
Counselor**

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips.

Text Us

Or, message us on Facebook.



Common Sense Media



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Parents Need to Know

Latino

Research

About Us

Parenting, Media, and Everything In Between

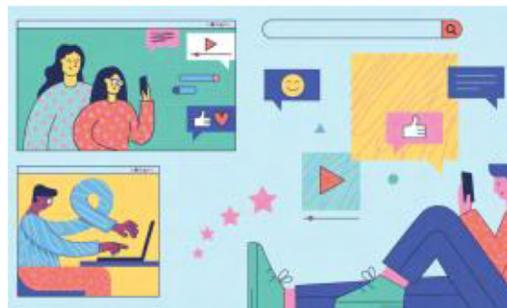
Teens

Screen Time in the Age of the Coronavirus

Michael Robb • January 12, 2022

Senior Director of Research | Dad of two

- Categories: Cellphone Parenting, Coronavirus Support, Healthy Media Habits, Screen Time



Parents and caregivers tend to think of guidelines for screen use as a daily maximum amount of time that's OK. But if you look closely at popular recommendations, such as the ones from the American... [read more](#)

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IS YOUR CHILD AT RISK? A SUBSTANCE USE RISK ASSESSMENT

Survey: 5-6 minutes to complete

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Partnership to End Addiction's helpline



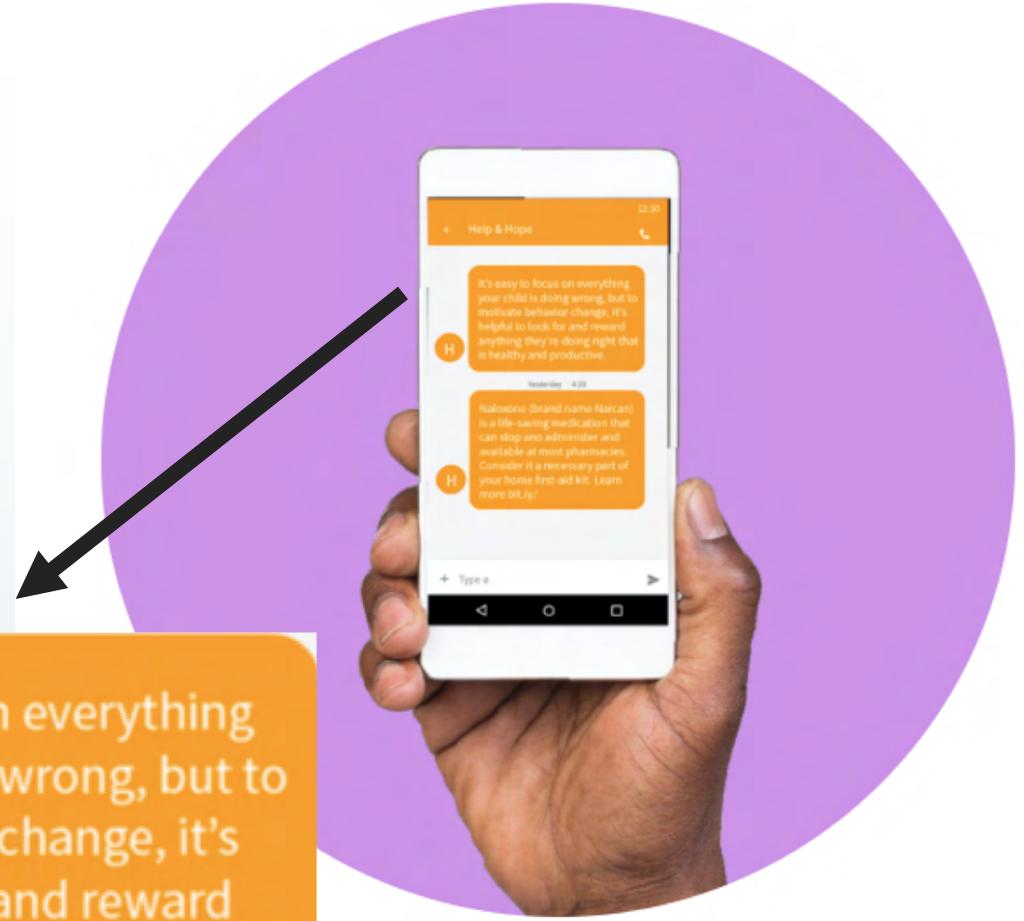
- Bilingual specialists provide support, guidance and resources
- Personalized plan for your family
- Schedule a call via email, text, Facebook Messenger

“You were a safety net when I felt like I was drowning. You had resources to suggest and knew just what to say. Thank you for being there.”

Help & Hope

- ▶ **Text “join” to 55753**
- ▶ Answer a few questions
- ▶ Get messages of support, encouragement and resources
- ▶ Chat to reach helpline

It's easy to focus on everything your child is doing wrong, but to motivate behavior change, it's helpful to look for and reward anything they're doing right that is healthy and productive.

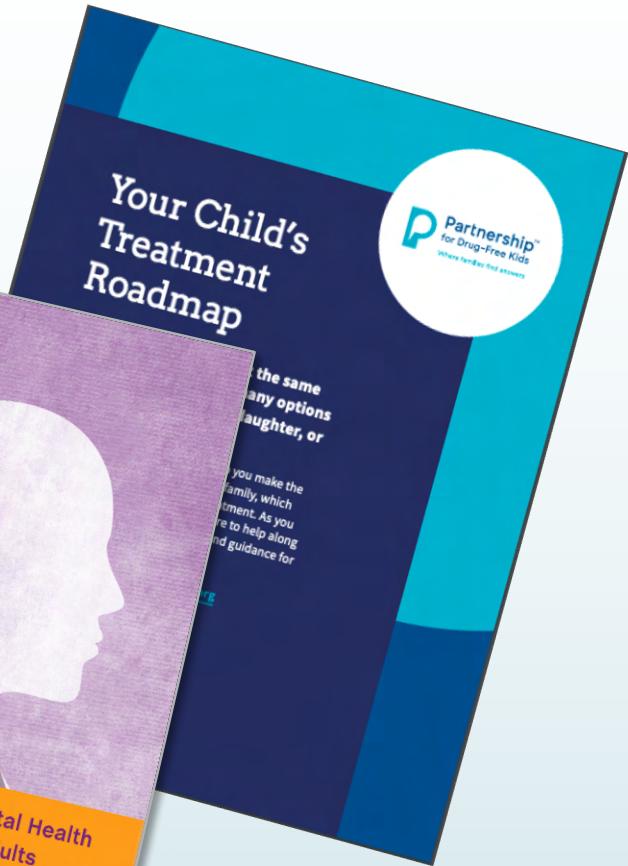
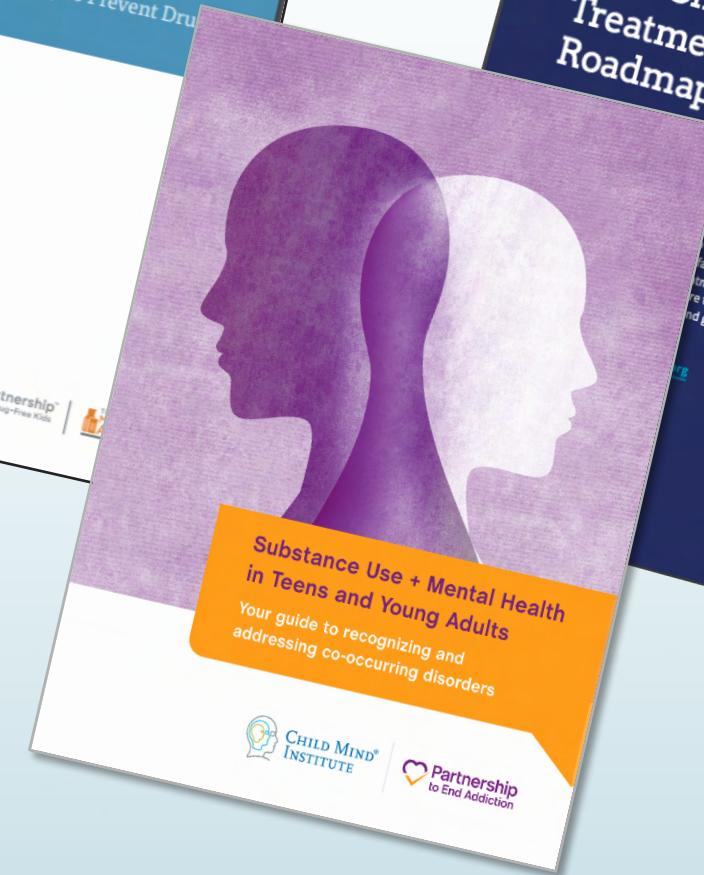
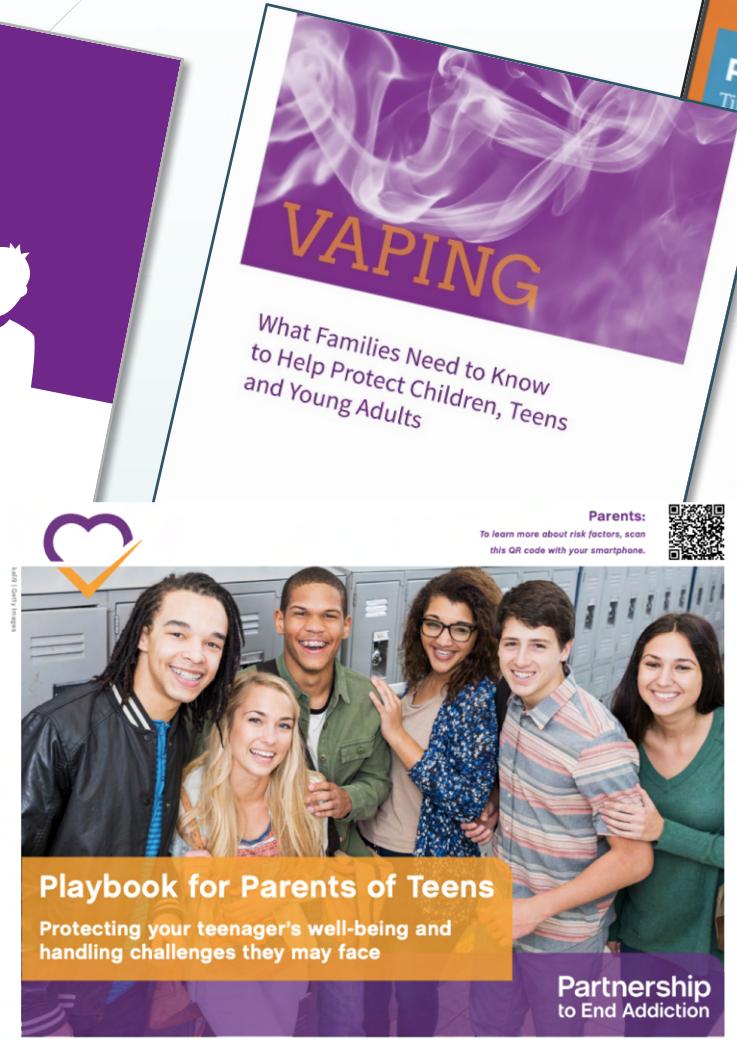


Parenting Skills Program



- ▶ Ten 15-minute online lessons:
 - ▶ “Why”
 - ▶ Responding rather than reacting
 - ▶ Having good conversations
 - ▶ Encouraging healthy behaviors
 - ▶ Setting limits
 - ▶ Using consequences

drugfree.org



Peer parent coaching

- ▶ Trained peer parent coach
- ▶ Five one-hour sessions
- ▶ Work on problems
- ▶ Develop skills
- ▶ Share resources



Online Support Community



- ▶ Hour-long zoom meetings
- ▶ Led by peer parent coach
- ▶ Specific topics:
 - ▶ Understanding substance use
 - ▶ Communication skills
 - ▶ Self-care
 - ▶ Using rewards and consequences
 - ▶ Finding quality care



Recursos en Español

Get Support

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Treatment & Recovery

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Our Expertise

About Us

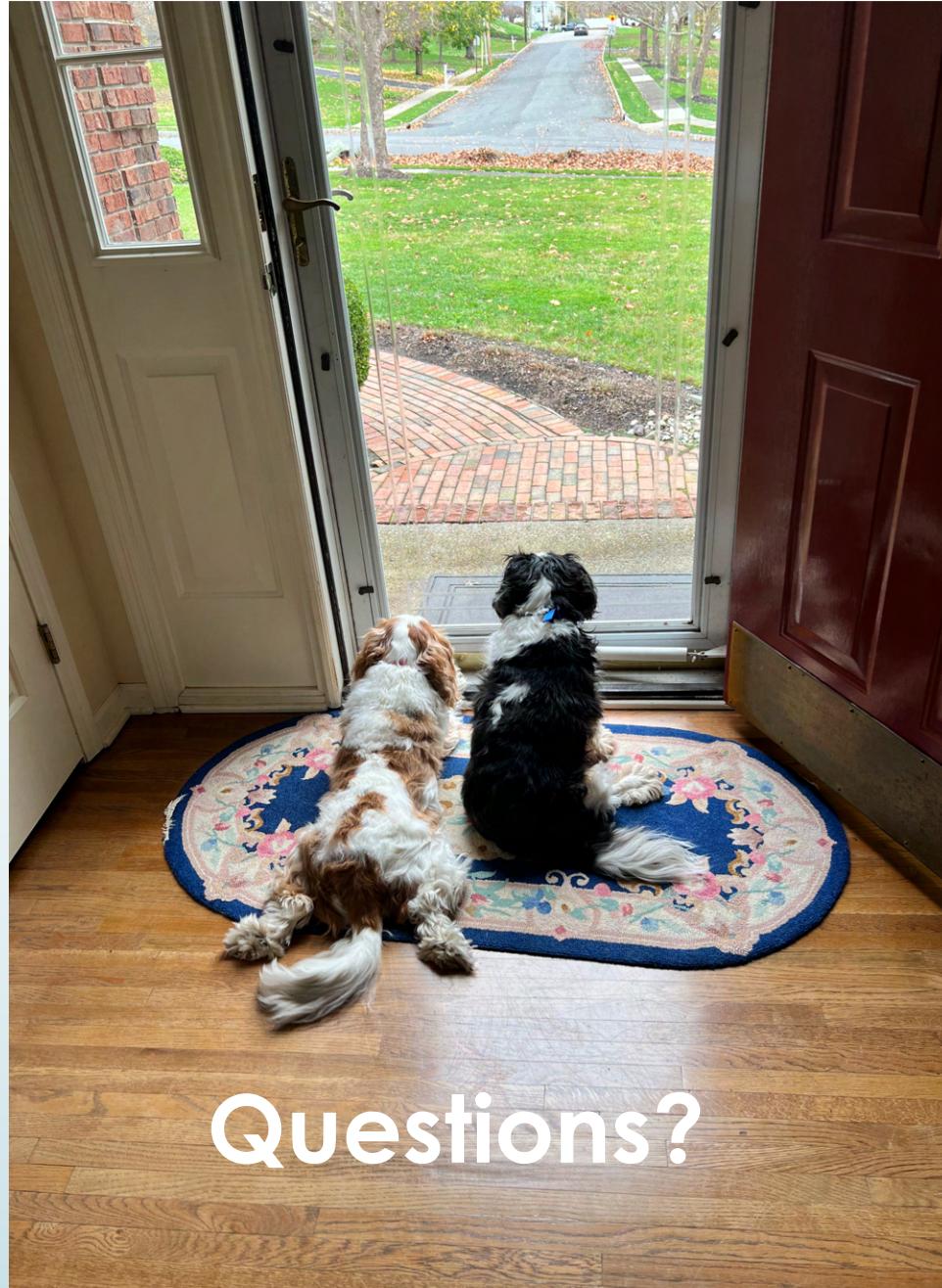
Search



WELCOME. YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

So many other parents and families have gone through the same challenges you're facing now. We're here to help.

Ver página en español



Questions?



Contact information

pataussem@gmail.com