

A bedroom scene with a bed, a nightstand, and string lights. The bed has a white and grey patterned blanket and a dark green blanket. A nightstand with a green water bottle and a phone is visible on the left. String lights hang from the ceiling.

Hidden

IN PLAIN SIGHT

An awareness program for parents and other adults.

This is an awareness program, it is not designed to diagnosis or confirm a youth's active involvement of substance abuse, mental health condition or health of relationship. If you are a parent/guardian and are concerned please refer to resources in your community.

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welcome

Hidden in plain sight is an awareness program for parents and adults designed to educate on signs and symptoms of risky behaviors. The program is to increase knowledge it is not designed to diagnosis or confirm a youth's involvement in illicit activities.

The objectives of the program is designed to increase knowledge of:

- Signs of risky behavior, unhealthy relationships
- Possible hiding places that youth may use
- Different types of drugs and how they are used
- Types of supplies and tools used when abusing drugs
- Behavioral warning signs of thoughts of suicide
- Local resources

data

Every two years students from Knox County participate in the Population Research in Identity and Disparities for Equality (PRIDE)¹ survey. The PRIDE survey is a widely used survey across the U.S. that adolescents complete. It has been used since 1982 and has been found to be a valid and reliable instrument.

The PRIDE survey is used to identify strengths and concerns among the youth in our community. It monitors the health and wellbeing of our youth and the impact of prevention efforts. The OH!Yes² is a similar survey is conducted in Ohio. Monitoring the Future³ survey and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)⁴ released on the CDC website provides data from across the U.S.

1.pridesurveys.com

2.ohyes.ohio.gov

3.monitoringthefuture.org

4.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs

top 8 reasons why teens try alcohol and drugs

There is no single reason for teenage drug use and alcohol use. In *How to Keep Your Teenager Out of Trouble and What to Do if You Can't*, Dr. Neil I. Bernstein details some of the core issues and influences behind teenage drug and alcohol use. It's important that you, as a parent, understand these reasons and talk to your kids about the dangers of drinking and using drugs.

- 1. Other People** — Teenagers see lots of people using various substances. They see their parents and other adults drinking alcohol, smoking, and, sometimes, abusing other substances. Also, the teen social scene often revolves around drinking and smoking pot. Sometimes friends urge one another to try a drink or smoke something, but it's just as common for teens to start using a substance because it's readily available and they see all their friends enjoying it. In their minds, they see drug use as a part of the normal teenage experience.
- 2. Popular Media** — Forty-seven percent of teens agreed that movies and TV shows make drugs seem like an OK thing to do, according to a 2011 study. Not surprisingly, 12 to 17-year olds who viewed three or more "R" rated movies per month were seven times more likely to smoke cigarettes, six times more likely to use marijuana, and five times more likely to drink alcohol, compared to those who hadn't watched "R" rated films (Amy Khan 2005).
- 3. Escape and Self-Medication** — When teens are unhappy and can't find a healthy outlet for their frustration or a trusted confidant, they may turn to chemicals for solace. Depending on what substance they're using, they may feel blissfully oblivious, wonderfully happy, or energized and confident. The often rough teenage years can take an emotional toll on children, sometimes even causing depression, so when teens are given a chance to take something to make them feel better, many can't resist.
- 4. Boredom** — Teens who can't tolerate being alone, have trouble keeping themselves occupied, or crave excitement are prime candidates for substance abuse. Not only do alcohol and marijuana give them something to do, but those substances help fill the internal void they feel. Further, they provide a common ground for interacting with likeminded teens, a way to instantly bond with a group of kids.
- 5. Rebellion** — Different rebellious teens choose different substances to use based on their personalities. Alcohol is the drug of choice for the angry teenager because it frees him to behave aggressively. Methamphetamine, or meth, also encourage aggressive, violent behavior, and can be far more dangerous and potent than alcohol. Marijuana, on the other hand, often seems to reduce aggression and is more of an avoidance drug. LSD and hallucinogens are also escape drugs, often used by young people who feel misunderstood and may long to escape to a more idealistic, kind world. Smoking cigarettes can be a form of rebellion to flaunt their independence and make their parents angry. The reasons for teenage drug use are as complex as teenagers themselves.
- 6. Instant Gratification** — Drugs and alcohol work quickly. The initial effects feel really good. Teenagers turn to drug use because they see it as a temporary shortcut to happiness.
- 7. Lack of Confidence** — Many shy teenagers who lack confidence report that they'll do things under the influence of alcohol or drugs that they might not otherwise. This is part of the appeal of drugs and alcohol even for relatively selfconfident teens; you have the courage to dance if you're a bad dancer, or sing at the top of your lungs even if you have a terrible voice, or kiss the girl you're attracted to. Alcohol and other drugs will loosen inhibitions and also alleviate social anxiety. Not only do you have something in common with the other people around you, but there's the mentality that if you do anything or say anything stupid, everyone will just think you had too many drinks or smoked too much weed.
- 8. Misinformation** — Perhaps the most avoidable cause of substance abuse is inaccurate information about drugs and alcohol. Nearly every teenager has friends who claim to be experts on various recreational substances, and they're happy to assure that the risks are minimal. Educate your teenager about drug use, so they get the real facts about the dangers of drug use.

alcohol

Alcohol is classified as a depressant. It slows vital functions of the body resulting in inability to react quickly, slurred speech and unsteady movement. Data from the Knox County PRIDE Survey conducted among students in grades 6-12 indicated 17.2% of students have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days. The highest rate is among seniors with 32.6% of students reporting consumption of alcohol within the last 30 days.



The combination of energy drinks with alcohol can be dangerous. Energy drinks mask the effects of alcohol resulting in more consumption of alcohol.



Flasks are disguised as everyday items such as sunscreen, tampons, hairbrush and umbrella. These items can be purchased online and in your local retail store to easily conceal alcohol products.



Alcohol packaging can be difficult to distinguish. Hard seltzer packaging often resembles fruit infused water, pay close attention to the small print to find the alcohol content.



Alcohol can also be placed in unsuspecting containers such as a colored water bottle or coffee mug.



Small containers of alcohol can be hidden in shoes, drawers and closets. These items are small enough to unsuspectingly shoplift from stores.



Tampons can be soaked in alcohol then inserted. The smell of alcohol is masked and the alcohol enters the bloodstream faster.

marijuana

Marijuana can act as a depressant, stimulant or a hallucinogen depending on the strain and the chemical reaction within the body of the user. It can cause loss of focus, increased appetite, lack of motivation/energy and paranoia. Data from the Knox County PRIDE Survey conducted among students in grades 6-12 indicated 10.4% of students have used marijuana in the past 30 days. The highest rate is among sophomores with 18.4% of students reporting use.



CBD products are finding their way to shelves across America. However, there is no regulation on these products; therefore, some may contain THC the chemical in marijuana that creates the "high".



Mechanisms used to smoke marijuana come in all shapes and sizes. This water bong is disguised as a "vase" hidden in plain sight.



Empty cans that have been crushed and have holes poked in them are used for smoking marijuana. Ones that have the bottom cut out are used to cook drugs for intravenous use.



Bracelets, belts, lipstick, sparkplugs are all items that can be used to smoke marijuana. These bowls or "one-hitters" are hidden in plain sight.



Marijuana can be rolled into flavored tobacco tubes. These are called blunts, philly or phatty.



Often times drugs are purchased in larger quantities and weighed out into smaller portions. These digital scales are hidden in plain sight disguised as a phone, cd player and deck of cards.



Grinders are used to break down marijuana buds that can then be used to place in joints, bowls or blunts. The grinders come in all types of designs. Kief (resin, what is in the bottom chamber) can be used in baking edibles.

other drug use and red flags



Household items such as spray paint, a washcloth and a sandwich bag provide the tools to abuse inhalants (also known as huffing). Users experience hallucinations and a feeling of euphoria; however, huffing is dangerous and can lead to death.



E-cigarette, vaping or Juuling has become a popular way to ingest nicotine among youth. The fruity flavors are attractive to teens. These devices are difficult to detect as they come in all designs and sizes. The devices can also be used to inhale synthetic drugs and for dabbing (a process of consuming high concentrated levels of THC).



Shoe laces missing from shoes, phone charging cords, or other string materials can be used as a tourniquet for intravenous drug use. A spoon with a sooty bottom has been used to heat up a substance into liquid form. Q-tips or cotton balls are used to filter the substance into a syringe. Batteries are used in the manufacturing of methamphetamines along with other household chemicals.



Modified versions of household items and cans are available for purchase online or at local retailers. These provide a hiding place for substances.



Over-the-counter medicines are abused at alarming rates. Cough medicine that contains Dextromethorphan can be mixed with soft drinks and skittles (known as Triple C/Drank). Anti-diarrhea medicine can mimic an opioid high when taken in high quantities and Ex-lax could indicate an eating disorder.



Be familiar with symbolic drug culture, 420 is symbolic of marijuana use. Dab is a form of concentrated doses of cannabis made by extracting THC using butane or carbon dioxide, resulting in sticky oils referred to as wax (dab is 97% THC).



A book that is hollowed out is a good hiding place for substances.



Baggies are used to distribute drugs. They can be small in shape and marked with stars, spiders or hearts. Large quantities of these baggies along with digital scales could indicate sales of drugs.



Check battery compartments of devices as they can be hiding places for small baggies of substances.



Drugs can be hidden in the brim of a hat, in a hood of a sweatshirt or in the zipper of a pair of jeans.



Along with the symbolic drug culture, be familiar with drug lingo. The term "chasing the dragon" refers to heroin use. If your teen shows an interest in drug culture and depiction in movies/music, have a conversation with them.



Contact lenses cases easily hide pills along with jewelry designed for use of essential oils. Foil, tweezers or scissors with residue indicate burnt substances.



Stuffed animals, pillows and mattresses can be cut along seams to hide drug paraphernalia.



Hollow pens are used to snort pills or inject other drugs. Pills can be hidden among small white erasers. Markers can be hollowed to hide cigarettes or other substances.

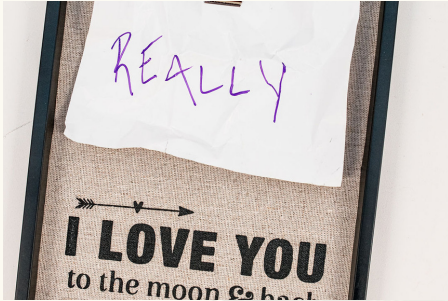


Deodorant containers can be used to stash items such as cigarettes or other substances. Used toilet paper rolls when stuffed with dryer sheets are used to mask the smell of smoke or other drug use.

unhealthy relationship

Data from the Knox County PRIDE Survey conducted among students in grades 6-12 indicated nearly 10% (177) of students have experienced physical dating violence.

Violent relationships in adolescence can have serious ramifications by putting the victims at higher risk for substance abuse, eating disorders, risky sexual behavior, and further domestic violence.



A crumpled up picture questioning if their partner really loves them is a sign that trust is broken in a relationship. Trust is foundational for a healthy relationship. A person can show they are trustworthy by matching their words and behavior. For example, if someone says they love you, but then they act abusively toward you, their words and actions do not align. When you love someone, you do not abuse them.



Digital dating abuse is the use of technology to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate a partner. A sign of digital dating abuse is when a partner constantly texts the other, making them feel like they cannot be separated from their phone for fear that they will be punished. Another sign is if a partner sends negative, insulting, or threatening messages. In a healthy relationship, all communication is respectful whether in person, online, or by phone.



Condoms, lubricant, male enhancers, and pregnancy tests are signs of sexual activity. Sexual abuse is any type of unwanted sexual contact. Forcing or pressuring someone to do something they do not want or consent to do is sexual assault. In a healthy relationship, both partners express their feelings and respect each other's boundaries about sex. A partner should not threaten to end the relationship if the other does not consent to sex. Partners should decide if and when it feels right to have sex together and talk about safe sex practices.



Concealer, foundation, and other make up products can be used to cover up bruises and cuts. Physical abuse is any intentional and unwanted contact with someone or something close to the body. Abusive behavior does not always cause pain or leave bruises, but it is still unhealthy. Some examples of physical abuse include scratching, punching, biting, strangling, kicking, pushing, grabbing clothes, and threatening with a weapon. In a healthy relationship you trust that your partner will not do anything to hurt you. You openly and respectfully discuss issues and confront disagreements non-judgmentally.



Signs of apologies can be used to excuse unwanted behaviors or actions. Abusive partners are skilled at coercion and manipulation. Partners apologize and make justifications for their unhealthy actions, knowing that this makes them seem remorseful. Apologies can be a form of manipulation; they can make you think an abusive partner believes that what they did was truly wrong.



Giving and receiving gifts can be signs of emotional abuse or stalking. Emotional abuse includes non-physical behaviors such as using guilt and control. Giving material items as a form of control and a way to guilt someone into being in a relationship is unhealthy. This may look like a partner saying the other owes them because of the gifts. Stalking is when a person repeatedly watches, follows, or harasses you, making you feel afraid or unsafe. When unwanted items, gifts, or flowers are left this is an example of an action of a stalker. In a healthy relationship you take responsibility for your actions and words while respecting boundaries.



Blood on clothing or other items can be a sign of injuries that have occurred. Physical abuse means any form of violence, such as hitting, punching, pulling hair, and kicking. Open, honest, and safe communication is a fundamental part of a healthy relationship. You build each other up, making sure you understand each other's needs and expectations while treating each other equally with respect.



An "I Miss You" card can be a sign of an unhealthy relationship. This can be an early sign of a partner exhibiting possessive control over who their partner spend time with and what they do. While jealousy is a normal human emotion, it becomes unhealthy when it causes someone to control or lash out at you. This means getting upset when you text or hang out with people they feel threatened by, wrongly accusing you of flirting or cheating, or even going so far as to stalk you. In a healthy relationship you have space to be yourself. Your partner supports your hobbies and your relationship with other friends, family, and coworkers.



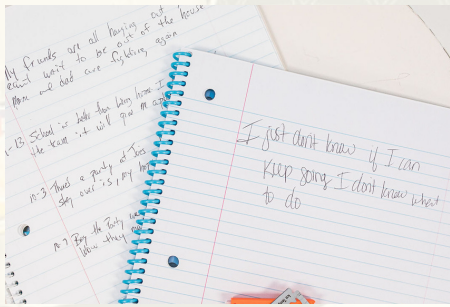
Reading magazines that focus media's unrealistic expectations of a male or female's body can signal lost self-esteem due verbal abuse. Verbal abuse includes being subjected to name-calling, constantly feeling belittled, and being subjected to the silent treatment by a partner. Verbal abuse causes someone to question themselves, wondering if they are good enough for their partner. In a healthy relationship a partner who cares for you and respects you will not use something that is an inherent part of you to put you down.

suicide/mental health

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for those between the ages of 10-34. Many suicide attempts and completions involve alcohol or other drugs. Intoxication impairs critical thinking skills. 9.5% (189 students) reported thinking about suicide often or alot.

behavioral warning signs of suicide

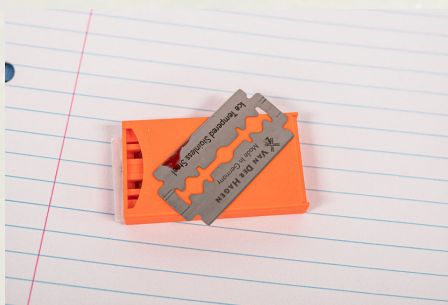
- Isolation
- Neglected grooming
- Giving away possessions
- Increase recklessness/impulsive behavior
- Declining interest in previously fun activities
- Mood swings



Suicidal thoughts aren't sudden. You may find a note in a journal, always take it seriously. Even if your teen expresses "it's nothing" or "I was just venting" dig deeper. Take time to listen and seek professional help if needed.



A sudden interest in guns or knives may indicate thoughts of self-harm or harm to others. Safe storage of family firearms reduces the risk of at home suicide.



Cutting is a way to cope with pain and stress. Some people cut to express strong feelings of rage, sorrow, rejection, desperation, longing, or emptiness. If you suspect a youth is practicing self-harm encourage them to get treatment, a doctor or therapists can help.

thank you

Thank you for your interest in Hidden in Plain Sight. Remember this is not a scare tactic, but an opportunity to provide parents and caregivers with knowledge, skills and confidence. According to data from Ohio rehab facilities 19% of clients began experimenting or using some form of drug at the age of 12-14.

Addressing problem or risky behaviors early is crucial. The most important piece to prevention is an open discussion with your youth. Parents and caregivers are the number one role-model in the life of adolescents.

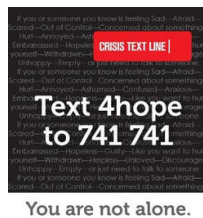
tips for adults

- Be an active listener.
- Be empathetic, validate the individual's feelings.
- Honor their search for identity, their experiences are not your experiences.
- Encourage involvement in community and school activities.
- Avoid ultimatums.
- Show love and concern, provide guidance, if asked.
- Express, don't vent your feelings.
- Ask specific questions, to generate discussions.
- Be involved in their activities.

resources

2.1.1

Get Connected. Get Help.™





ksaat.org

newdirectionsshelter.org

tacofknox.org