

Upcoming Events

- National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- 1 / World AIDS Day
- 2 / Special Education Day
- 2 / Pollution Control Day
- 10 / Human Rights Day
- 13 / National Cocoa Day
- 21 / Winter Solstice
- 21 / Look on the Bright Side Day

Center for Humanistic Change

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Why do teens drink and use substances, and is it “normal”?



Many types of challenging behavior are normal during teen years but experimenting with substance use isn't one of them. We need to rethink our perception of norms. It's not true that “everyone vapes” or “everyone drinks.” Understanding why is a valuable step toward keeping teens healthy and safe.

Fitting in Feelings of being an outsider by others are quite pronounced during the teen years. If the kids your teen wants to be friends with are drinking or using substances, they may feel that they need to participate to be accepted into the “right” crowd.

What parents can do:

- Get to know your child's friends and parents, and talk with them about their approach to supervision and their stance on substance use.
- Encourage your teen to use your home for socializing. Give them a private space if possible but keep an eye on them.
- Assure your child that they can call you to be picked up whenever needed, no questions.
- Explain that real friends will give them space to be themselves and won't make them do anything they don't want to do.

Socializing Some use substances to overcome insecurities, and feel socially confident. Substance use may make them feel like they can open up and connect with others. This can lead to feeling like substance use is necessary to achieve a certain level of interaction.

What parents can do:

- Find activities for your teen to socialize in a healthy, safe and supervised environment.
- If your child is socializing at someone's home, call the parents to verify the location and that there will be supervision.
- Communicate your expectations and rules for when your teen goes out with friends and include regular check-ins.
- Model healthy behaviors. Find opportunities to socialize that don't include alcohol.

Life transitions Periods of transition in teens' lives like moving, divorce, changing schools, or death in the family, lead some to attempt to find solace in alcohol or drugs.

What parents can do:

- Ramp up the monitoring and communication during and after transitions.
- Set aside regular one-on-one time with your teen to bond and have fun together.

Emotional and psychological pain Some teens use substances to dull the very real pain in their lives. Loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorder, and other mental health issues are associated with substance use. Many of these issues occur in combination, compounding the intensity of the others.

What parents can do:

- Offer empathy and compassion. Acknowledge that everyone struggles sometimes.
- Remind your child that you are there for support and guidance and it's important that they are healthy and happy.
- Model healthy coping skills like exercise, meditation or mindfulness. Show them how to learn from mistakes and disappointments.
- Brainstorm together to identify healthy ways to manage the stress in their life (e.g., more sleep, getting outdoors, one-on-one times, etc.). Let your child offer suggestions and help them think through their ideas.



Online Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)

A program for parents and caregivers with children in elementary school (6-12 years old).

**Classes start on:
Jan. 17 - Feb. 21, 2023**

6:00 - 7:00 PM

Participants must register and attend session one, pick and choose sessions of interest after that.

The program will help the participants to:

- Increase ability to identify goals of misbehavior
- Increase encouragement skills
- Increase skill in communication
- Increase skill in discipline
- ... and more!

For more information and registration, contact:
Maria Alonso-Tomlinson
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All because of you

You are the reason for our continued success. We look forward to serving your school's needs in the new year.

Center for Humanistic Change



Happy New Year

Stress-Free Holiday Tips



- **Ho, Ho... No!** Do you tend to take on way more than you can handle? The more you take on, the more stress will mount. Give yourself the gift of a break. Recognize that it's OK to say no sometimes... whether it's allowing another family member to host Christmas Eve or waiting until next weekend to bake that extra batch of Christmas cookies (or just buy them this year!).
- **Get in the Spirit... of You!** Make an effort to take a break from shopping and prepping to set aside time to nourish yourself. Take a bath. Go to that yoga class. Put your feet up and read a good book. The gift wrapping will eventually get done... but don't let yourself come "undone" by not taking time out for yourself in the days and weeks leading up to the holidays.
- **Rise and Shine...** with a good workout to start your day! Make it a priority to exercise early in the day so that you don't get distracted later (with shopping or other festivities) and forgo your much-needed workout. Regular exercise during this season will also ward off unwanted holiday pounds and help keep mounting stress at bay.
- **Let it Go!** Let go of perfection. You may not have captured the perfect family photo for your annual holiday card. Your lights display may not be the talk of the neighborhood. But, creating the perfect holiday perception is not what the holidays are truly about, right? Keep the true meaning of the holidays at the forefront by making meaningful memories with family and friends.
- **Go outside!** Fresh air and Vitamin D from the sun can reinvigorate the spirit. The National Wildlife Federation says, "nature is a great antidote for all the craziness of this time of year. It can lower stress level, revive the spirits, and add to the enchantment of the season."

recipe for self love

crazyheadcomics



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