

Welcome to

Substance Use and Neurodiverse Kids

Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC)

The PRC is a space and a program that provides information and support to parents, primarily of children with disabilities, as they work with school staff to identify and meet their children's unique needs.



Syphax Education Center
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www.apsva.us/prc

 Individual
Consultations

School and
Community
Connections

Parent and Staff
Learning
Opportunities

Lending Library,
Resources & Tools



APS School Talk

**Parent
Resource Center**
Monday Message



"Families and Schools - Perfect Partners
for Student Success"

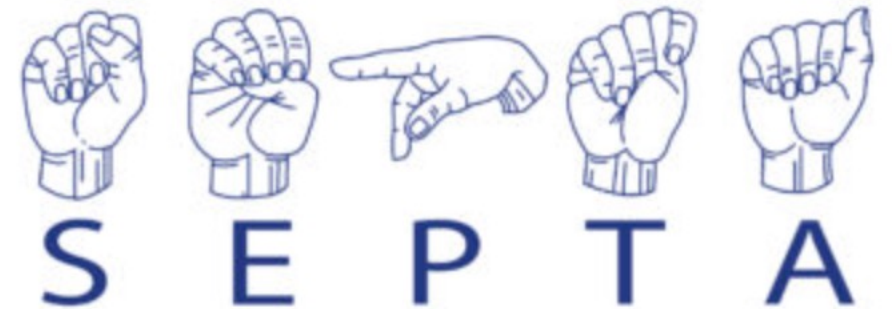
SUBSCRIBE HERE!

<https://bit.ly/PRCMessagesSignUp>



Greetings from Arlington SEPTA
Kathleen Clark, Past President

**Arlington Special
Education PTA**
everychild. onevoice.[®]





Substance Use Prevention for Neurodiverse Kids

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Interlude Therapist

Agenda

1. Neurodiversity
2. Substance use, what does it mean? Why do kids do it?
 - a. From experimentation to addiction
 - b. Warning Signs
3. Substance Use trends in the community
4. Substance Use, Brain Development and Effects on Neurodiverse Kids
5. Protective and Risks Factors
6. The importance of executive functions on SA prevention
7. What Parents can do:
 - a. Supervision
 - b. How, when, and what to tell your kids about substances
 - c. Social situations, friendships, and teaching coping skills

Neurodiversity

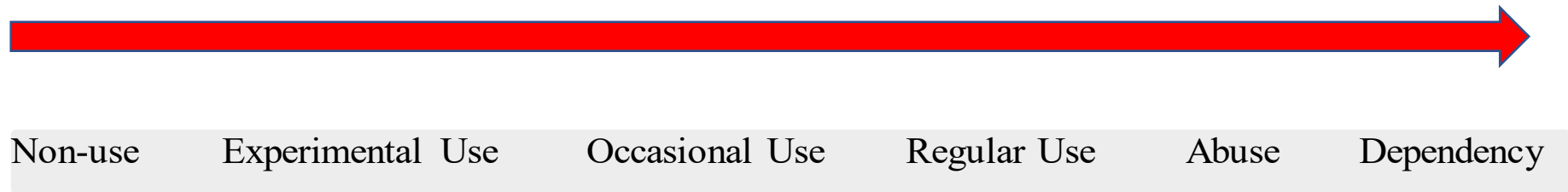
“Describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits (Harvard health publishing, 2021)”



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Substance Use Disorder

- Substance use disorder is defined as “ happening when the use of alcohol/drugs causes clinically significant impairment including health, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school or home (SAMHSA, 2022)
- All substance use in adolescence is risky due to brain development

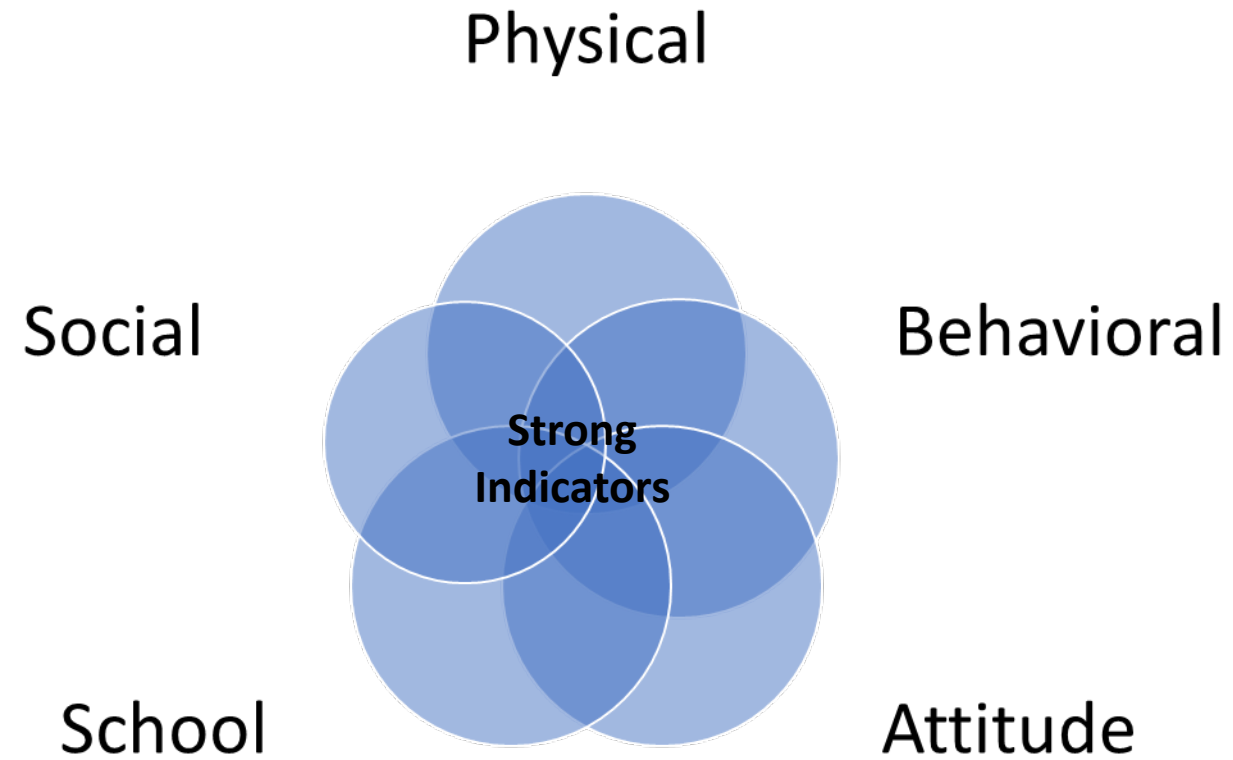


Why do they do it?

- **To fit in:** “others are doing it”
- **To feel good:** “make me relax”
- **To feel better:** to alleviate depression, social anxiety, stress-related disorders, and physical pain.
- **To do better:** To improve performance
- **To experiment:** To seek new experiences

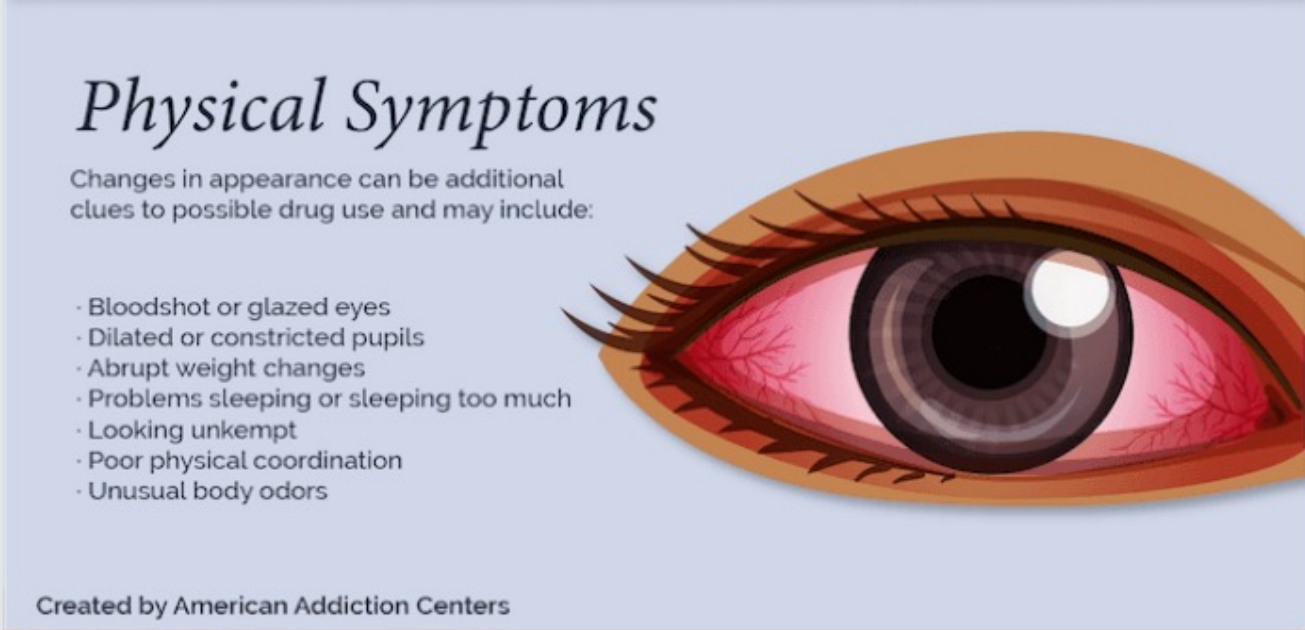


Warning Signs



Warning Signs: Physical & Social

- Neglected appearance
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Sleeping or exhaustion
- Red, watery or glassy eyes
- Smell of substance on breath, body, or clothes
- Runny nose
- Hacking cough
- Lack of energy and/or motivation
- Change of social group
- Loss of interest in previous hobbies, sports or friends



Physical Symptoms

Changes in appearance can be additional clues to possible drug use and may include:

- Bloodshot or glazed eyes
- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Abrupt weight changes
- Problems sleeping or sleeping too much
- Looking unkempt
- Poor physical coordination
- Unusual body odors

Created by American Addiction Centers

Warning Signs: Behavioral & Attitudinal

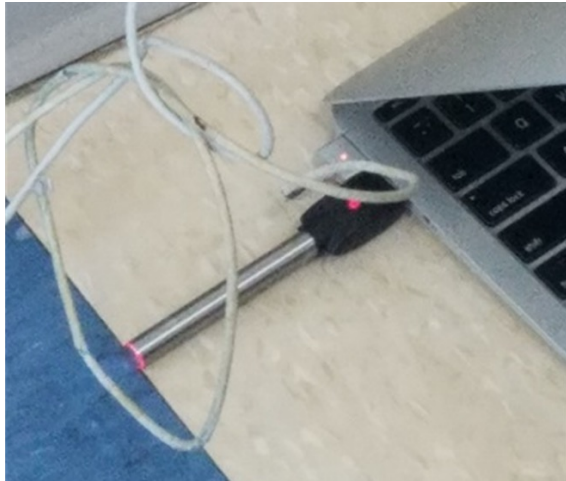
- Change in attitude/personality/behavior “out of character”
- Irritability, moodiness
- Drop in grades or poor academic performance
- Excessive tardiness, absence or skipping class, truancy
- Difficulty maintaining attention
- Paranoia, hallucinations
- Excessive need for privacy/secretcy
- Suspicious behavior
- Discipline problems at home/school
- Alcohol and/or medicines missing from house



Substance Use Trends

- Nicotine: Vapes
- Marijuana: plant form, THC oil, wax, and edibles
- Alcohol
- Pills*
 - Prescribed medications: Pain, ADHD, anti-anxiety, etc.
 - Over-the-Counter: Benadryl, cough syrups, Coricidin, etc.
 - Fake pills containing Fentanyl

*Pill identifier website: <https://www.drugs.com/imprints.php>



Vapes



Marijuana



Pills, Alcohol And Other Drugs



Fentanyl

- Synthetic opioid
- Analgesic and anesthetic
- 100 times more potent than morphine
- 50 Times more potent than Heroin
- Generally, comes in Pill or powder
- Sold alone or combination with other drugs
- Can be injected, snorted, smoked, as a pill or tablet or spiked onto blotter paper
- Causes sedation, relaxation, euphoria, confusion, drowsiness, nausea. Pupillary constriction and respiratory depression



A lethal dose of fentanyl

Rainbow Fentanyl



COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

OXYCODONE



REAL

FAKE

ADDERALL



REAL

FAKE

SOURCE: DEA

REAL



FAKE



Source: CE Public Health

**ONE
PILL CAN
KILL**

Department of Justice | Drug Enforcement Administration
FAKE PILLS FACT SHEET

FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS • WIDELY AVAILABLE • INCREASINGLY LETHAL

DEA LAB TESTING REVEALS THAT

6 OUT OF EVERY 10 PILLS

WITH FENTANYL CONTAIN A POTENTIALLY

LETHAL DOSE



Fake pills often contain fentanyl and are more lethal than ever before.

DEA officials report a dramatic rise in the number of fake pills containing at least 2 mg of fentanyl, which is considered a potentially lethal dose.

Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. In 2021, 107,622 people died by drug poisoning in the United States.

Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in fake pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in poisoning deaths.

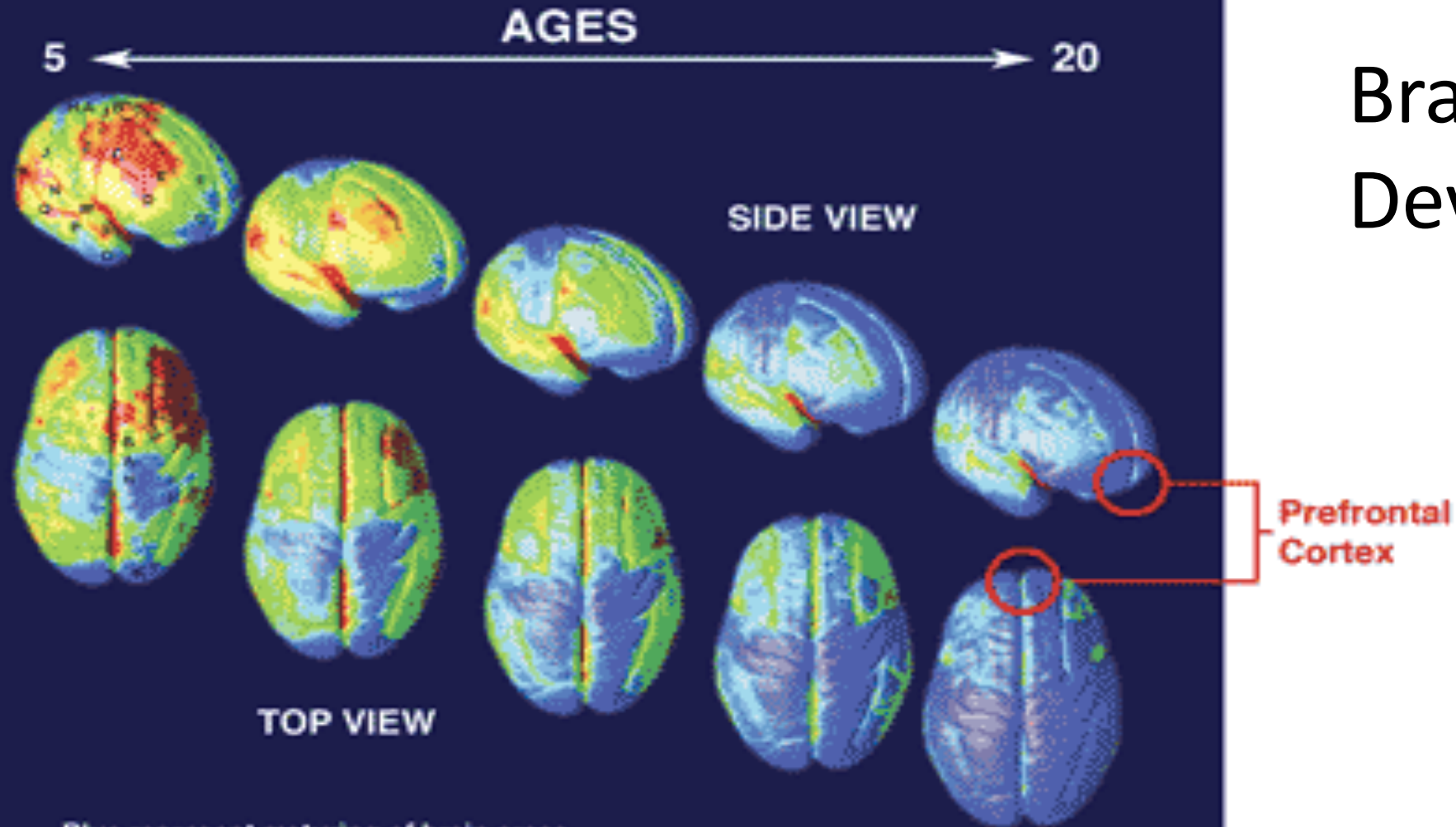
Adult Overdoses by ACPD

Calendar Year	Total Incidents Involving Opioids*	Total Opioid Overdoses**	Total Opioid Overdoses – Non-Fatal	Total Opioid Overdoses – Fatal
2014	No Record	10	6	4
2015	73	10	6	4
2016	122	45	33	12
2017	157	74	55	19
2018	154	53	42	11
2019	95	42	36	6
2020	138	74	54	20
2021	156	92	64	28
2022	152	87	70	17
2023	4	3	1	2

*All opioid incidents (Overdoses, Possession and Distribution Cases)

**Total Fatal and Non-Fatal Opioid Overdoses

IMAGES OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTHY CHILDREN AND TEENS (AGES 5-20)



Blue represent maturing of brain areas

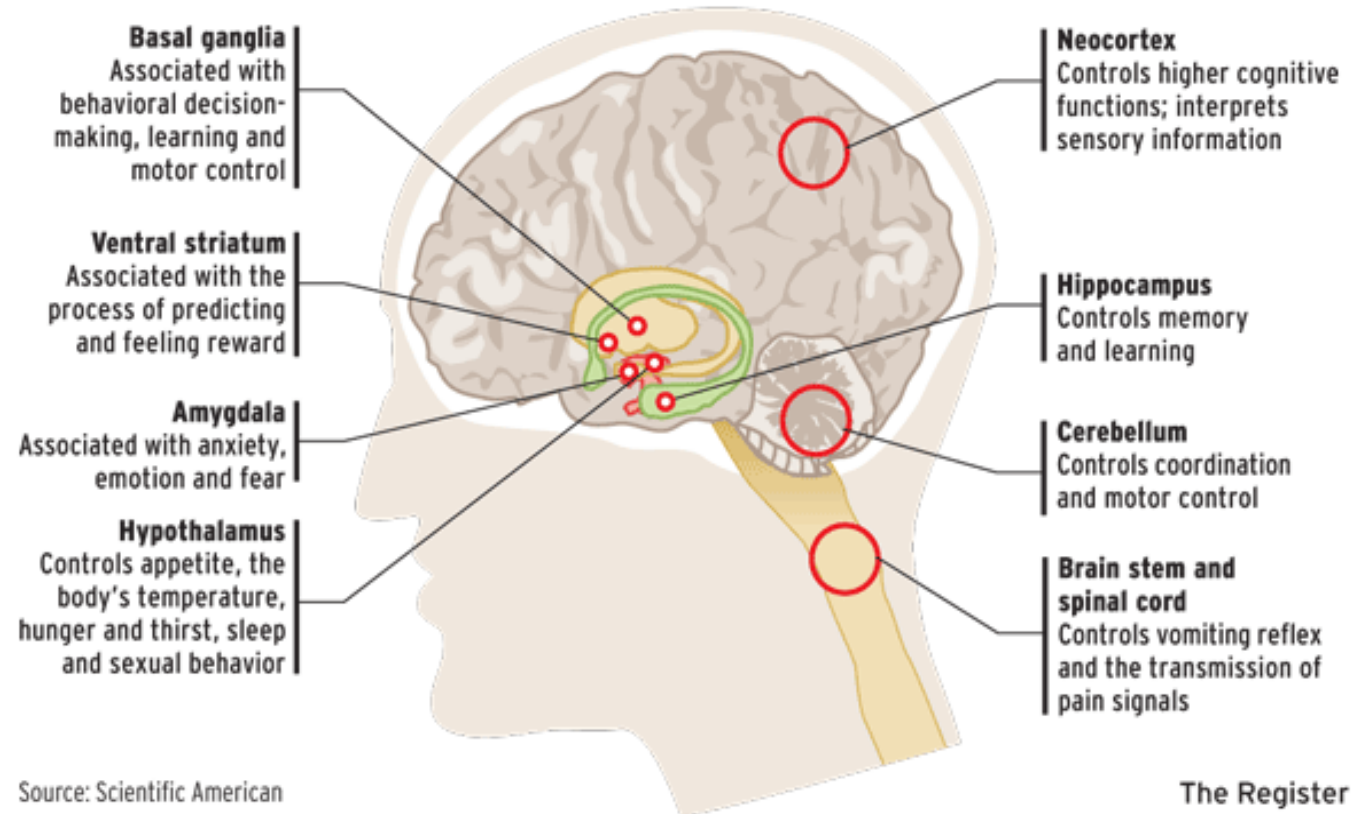
Brain Development

Substance Use & Brain Development

- Drugs are chemicals that cross the brain barrier and impair brain cells communication.
- Drugs target the reward center of the brain as well as other circuits.
- Chemicals trigger the release of large amounts of neurotransmitters or may also block the reabsorption of the transmitters.

THC and the brain

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive substance found in cannabis, produces its effects on the body when marijuana is smoked or otherwise ingested. Found throughout the body, cannabinoid receptors are found in greatest quantity in the brain, particularly in areas that govern coordination, judgment, learning and memory. Some of the areas THC affects:



The Register

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

TO FACE CHALLENGES

BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES



Behavioural problems



Physical activity



Conflicts with friends or family



Emotional support



Turning to drugs and alcohol



Social activities



RESILIENCE

LIFE CHALLENGES



Covid-19: uncertainty and adaptation



Skill development



Stress of studies



Proper nutrition



Adequate sleep



Anxiety and depression

Risk factors

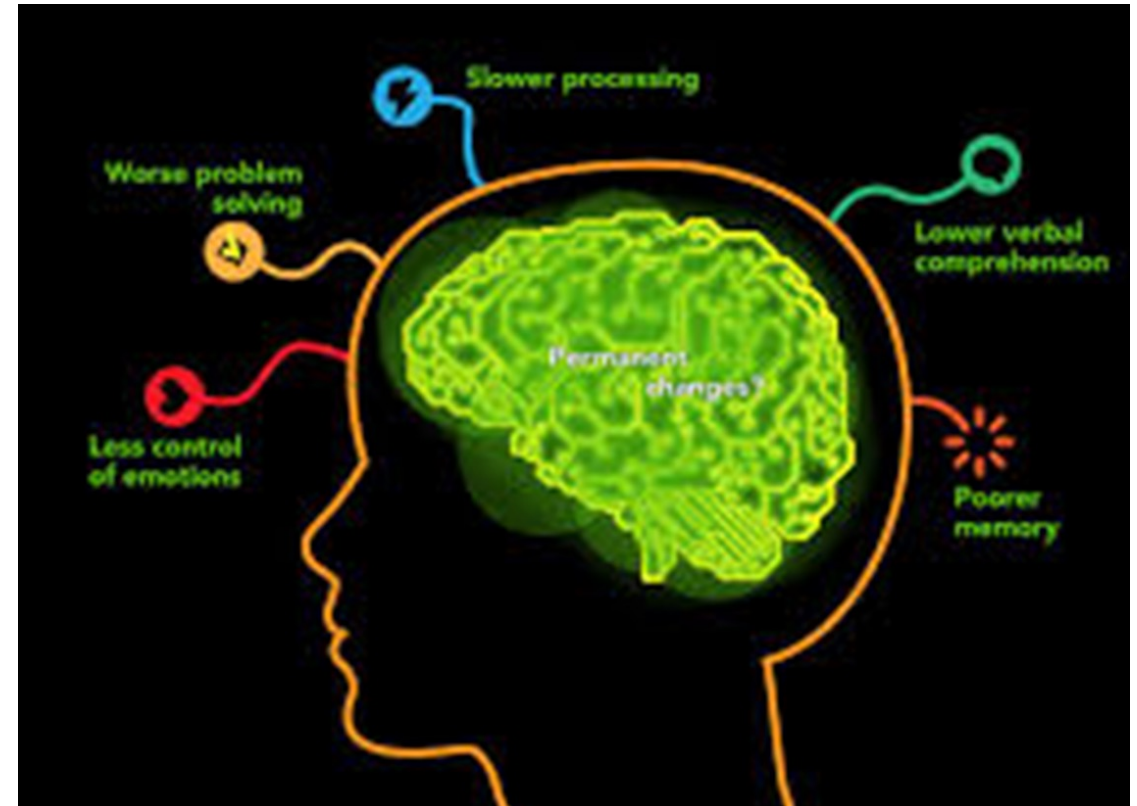
1. Family members with a drug/alcohol problem
2. Early use of drugs and/or alcohol.
3. Mental health problem (e.g., depression, anxiety).
4. Relationships with people who use drugs/alcohol.
5. Media influence.
6. Access to prescribed medications.
7. Deficit in cognitive functions and language skills.
8. Chronic medical problems.
9. Social Isolation.
10. Co-existing Behavioral problems.
11. Reduce speed & efficiency in executive functions:
 - Poor emotional self-regulation,
 - Low self-esteem,
 - Impulsiveness,
 - Sensation-seeking behaviors.



Executive Functions and Substance Use

Mental skills used to manage the day-to-day tasks:

- Working memory
- Emotional control
- Problem-solving
- Time management
- Flexibility
- Organization of activities and ideas
- Planning
- Understanding abstract concepts
- Consequential thinking



How do you Prepare for the Conversation with your Child?

- Be Calm
- Set the tone for a conversation not a lecture
- Express care and concern
- Ask them to share their opinion on the subject
- Use open-ended question
- Ask clarification questions
- Use concrete and factual statements
- Avoid blaming statements
- Be prepared to be surprised by their knowledge or lack of it



Parental Supervision/Monitoring

Virtual and In-person

- Know the social media sites they visit frequently
- Know their friends
- Establish expectations for each environment

Clear and concise rules

- I expect you not to drink at all
- I expect you not to smoke or vape anything
- No pills of any kind, unless given by parents or nurse
- Open your own containers
- Disapproval of any use must be clear

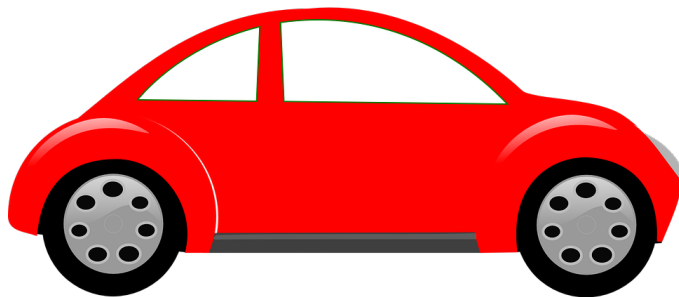
What would you do to ensure their safety?

- Get to know their friends and their parents
- Check your teens phone or room
- Check how they spend their money
- Make sure you are the ICE (In Case of Emergency) person on their phone

What will happen when rules are broken?

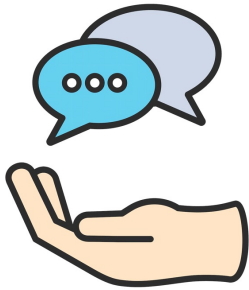
- Consequences should match the transgression
- If they are under the influence talk to them the next day but make them aware that a conversation is due
- Act as soon as possible

How, When & What



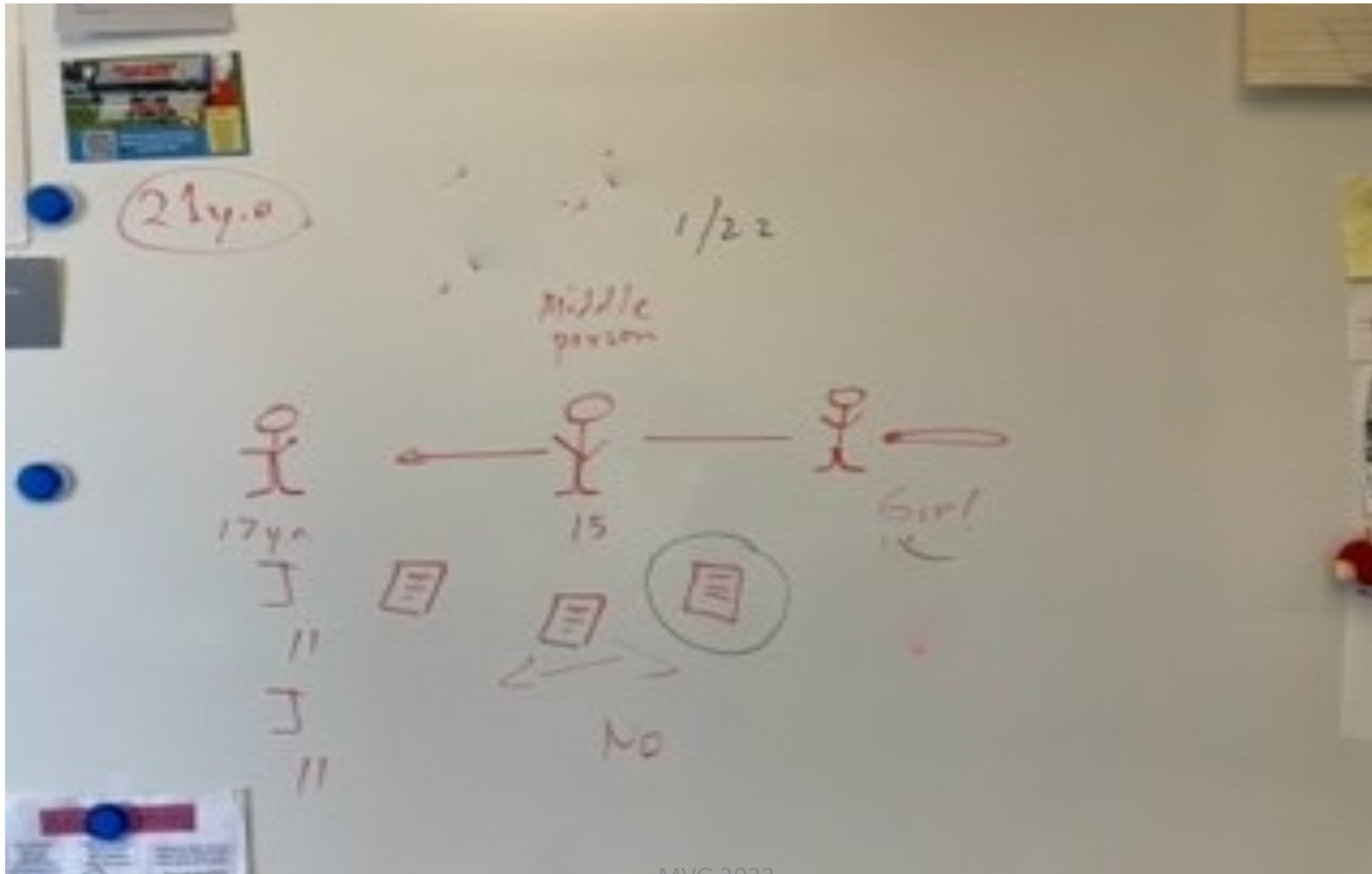
- Time and place where they can't walk away: car, restaurant, mealtime, etc.
- Honest and realistic facts are shared.
- Clear and concise information.
- Use visuals, manipulatives, stories online, etc.
- Start early and adjust the message to their developmental stage.
- Remind them of the expectation and consequences
- Ask questions about what is going on in their world
- Teach them how to read labels on cans, bottles, etc.
- Discuss use, as well as involvement, around substances: transporting, sharing, keeping them, etc.
- Do it frequently, repeat, repeat, repeat.
- If you suspect something, say something

Social Situations and Coping Skills

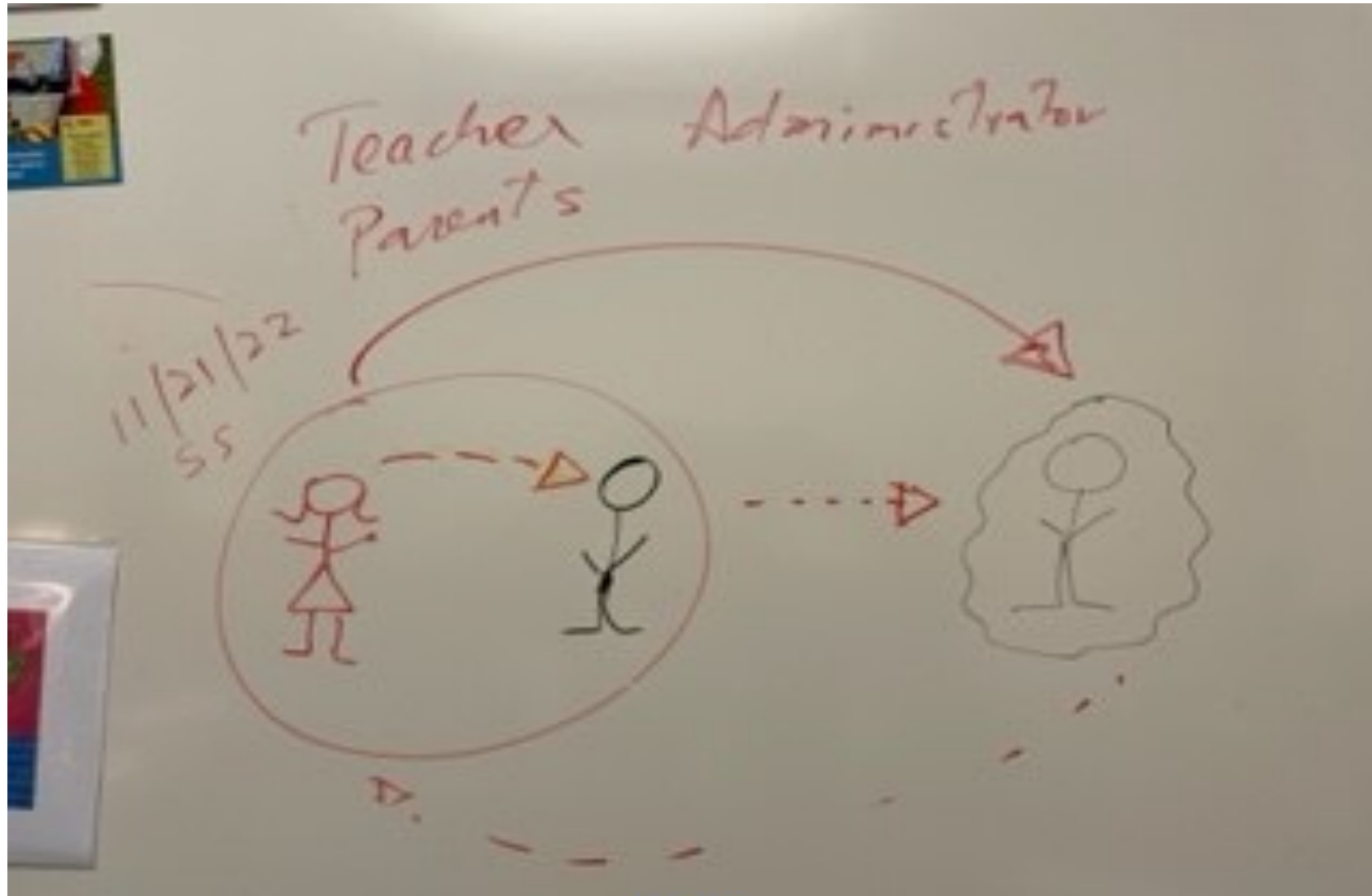


- Know where, when, and with whom
- Establish a communication tool: apps, texts, calls, etc.
- Role-play social situations where they can be exposed to alcohol, drugs, etc. and give them alternatives that:
 - Help them save face
 - Are doable
 - Multiple Specific scenarios
 - Use concrete examples
- Address concepts such as: middleman, mule, dealer, distributing, etc.
- Friends may ask you to do things (to keep things for them) that are not okay with the house rules
- Establish a safe way out

Example of Middleman Concept



Middleman Part 2



EMOJI DRUG CODE | DECODED

COMMON EMOJI CODES

FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

PERCOCET & OXYCODONE



XANAX



ADDERALL



DEALER SIGNALS

DEALER ADVERTISING



HIGH POTENCY



UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS



LARGE BATCH



OTHER DRUGS

METH



HEROIN



COCAINE



MDMA & MOLLIES



MUSHROOMS



COUGH SYRUP



MARIJUANA



COMMON HIDING SPOTS

Bras

Beltline

Pockets

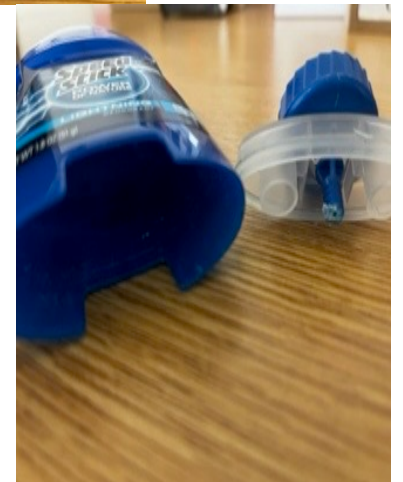
Shoes

Lockers

Bookbag

Slide courtesy of Jenny Sexton

Stash Cans



Photos courtesy of Jenny Sexton

Do Not Forget!

- Take care of yourself
- Take breaks from your child
- You are doing the best you know and can
- Ask for help
- Be open to alternatives
- Love them even when they are driving you crazy
- Don't give up, you are the best protection they have

me being super productive while
the kids are at school



Contact Information

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Resources

- Substance Abuse Counselors at your child's school: <https://www.apsva.us/student-services/substance-abuse-counselors/contact-us-2/>
- <https://www.apsva.us/student-services/substance-abuse-counselors/substance-abuse-resources/>
- <https://www.safeproject.us/resource/booksmart-spark-a-conversation-with-teens/>
- <https://www.safeproject.us/resource/listen-up-podcasts-on-addiction-treatment-and-recovery/?fbclid=IwAR1tztOoqftFirX8WjtRr2aydB13LDhdeSoErbXw8VNtZLhppxLEI7sUhCw>

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