

Introduction

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The Achieve and Learn Trust believes that nothing is more important than safeguarding the young people in our schools.

Our focus this half term is substance misuse, how to spot the signs and where to seek help for your young person or your family. We will also look at some of the parenting skills that are important in preventing the initiation and progression of drug use among young people

Substance Misuse—what to look for...

Adolescence can be a tough time for young people – and your child might behave differently as a result. Remember that just because your child is acting differently, doesn't mean they're on drugs or drinking alcohol. If you're worried your child is using drugs or drinking alcohol, the best thing to do is sit down and have a calm and honest conversation with them. The following signs don't necessarily mean your child is taking drugs or drinking alcohol, but could be worth looking out for.

- Falling out with old friends and mixing with new ones who may use drugs or drink alcohol
- experiencing mood swings, loss of appetite
- behaving badly or showing a bad attitude
- not sleeping properly, getting up very late and staying out very late
- being secretive or evasive about where they're going and what they're doing
- having problems in school, like poor performance or truancy
- poor hygiene or appearance
- headaches or vomiting in the morning (hangover from alcohol)
- drowsiness, red-rimmed eyes and/or a runny nose
- an uncharacteristic loss of interest in school, hobbies and friends
- money or alcohol going missing regularly for no apparent reason
- unusual equipment found in the house, such as burnt foil or torn cigarette packets



0161 723 3880

Early Brake are a free drug and alcohol support service based in Trafford who have a number of programs for families experiencing addiction or drug and alcohol use. Referrals for both their young person's service (ages up to 21yrs) or their Holding Families service, can be found by clicking the following link; [Referrals - Early Break - Early Break](https://earlybreak.co.uk) or on the website <https://earlybreak.co.uk>

Drugs in focus; Cannabis and Cocaine



Cannabis

Slang names include Hash, Blow, Shit, Dope, Grass, Weed.

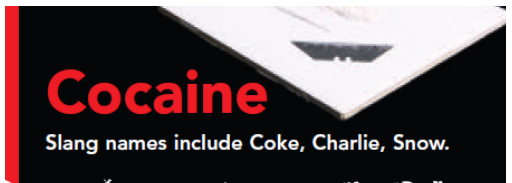
Cannabis is a natural plant and is used in three main forms. The most common type is called resin, which comes as solid dark-coloured lumps or blocks. Less common are the leaves and stalks of the plant, called grass or weed. Cannabis oil is increasingly used in refillable vapes

Cannabis is usually rolled with tobacco into a 'joint' or 'spliff' and smoked, but it can also be cooked and eaten.

Effects – Getting 'stoned' on cannabis makes you feel relaxed, talkative and happy. Some people feel time slows down and they also report a greater appreciation of colours, sounds and tastes. You can develop strong cravings for food, called 'the munchies'.

Side-effects – Cannabis can affect your memory and concentration and can leave you tired and lacking motivation. If you are not used to cannabis or you use a stronger type than you are used to you can feel anxiety, panic or confusion. You may have delusions or hallucinations.

Risks – Many people consider cannabis to be a relatively safe drug. But research shows that long-term users can find it hard to control their use of the drug and may become addicted. Smoking cannabis increases your risk of heart disease and cancers such as lung cancer and may also affect your fertility. In people who have underlying mental health problems, cannabis use may trigger schizophrenia. In Ireland it is the second most common drug found in the systems of drink drivers, after alcohol.



Cocaine

Slang names include Coke, Charlie, Snow.

Cocaine is a white powder made from the leaves of the coca plant, which grows mainly in South America. It is usually used by snorting the powder up the nose. 'Crack' is not a different drug but a more addictive form of cocaine. Crack, also called 'rock', 'stone' or 'free-base', is usually smoked. Cocaine is sometimes injected or eaten.

Effects – Cocaine is a powerful stimulant. It makes you feel more alert and energetic and also less hungry or thirsty. These effects can last for up to 20 minutes after each use. Smoking crack cocaine gives a shorter but more intense high.

Side-effects – Due to its powerful effects, cocaine users are often left craving more. Large doses can make you exhausted, anxious and depressed, and sometimes aggressive.

Risks – Snorting cocaine can cause permanent damage to the inside of your nose. Cocaine use can damage your heart and lungs, and high doses can cause death from heart attacks or blood clots. Taking cocaine with alcohol increases the risk of heart attack and death. Eating cocaine can damage bowel tissue. The depression that follows the high can be severe and can lead to suicide attempts. With long-term or binge use, the excitement caused by cocaine can turn to restlessness, sleep loss and weight loss. Some people develop a paranoid psychosis where they may be violent. The strong cravings for cocaine, especially crack, can make you want to take the drug all the time and you can lose control of your drug use.

Parenting Focus; Communication

Good communication between parents and children is the foundation of strong family relationships. Developing good communication skills helps parents catch problems early, support positive behavior, and stay aware of what is happening in their children's lives.



Before you begin:

Be sure it's a good time to talk and you can focus one hundred percent on communicating with your child.

Have a plan.

Gather your thoughts before you approach your child.

Be calm and patient.

Limit distractions.

Key communication skills include:

Questioning— The kind of information you receive depends a lot on how you ask the question.

Show interest/concern. Don't blame/accuse. For example, instead of, "How do you get yourself into these situations?" say, "That sounds like a difficult situation. Were you confused?"

Encourage problem-solving/ thinking. For example: Instead of, "What did you think was going to happen when you don't think?" say, "So, what do you think would have been a better way to handle that?"

EXTRA TIPS

- Be present and tuned in.
- Show understanding.
- Listen with respect.
- Be interested.
- Avoid negative emotions.
- Give encouragement.

C

Control

Control your thoughts and actions.

A

Assess

Assess and decide if you are too upset to continue.

L

Leave

Leave the situation if you are feeling too angry or upset.

M

Make a Plan

Make a plan to deal with the issue within 24 hours.

Listening and observing —Young people feel more comfortable bringing issues and situations to their parents when they know they will be listened to and not be accused.

Reducing Emotion

Sometimes talking with children brings up strong feelings that interfere with clear thinking. Following the CALM steps can help a parent keep the conversation moving in the right direction.

BEST Communication Method for Parents of Teenagers - Help Your Teenager make better choices

Top 10 Tips For Parent-teen Communication Skills

10 Tactics to Open Communication Pathways with Your Teen

- TALK, DON'T LECTURE**
Having many small conversations is the best road map to connect with your kids.
- DEDICATE TIME FOR DINNER**
Fuel up with family dinners to improve self-esteem, grades, and reduce risky behaviors.
- DON'T DISMISS THEIR FEELINGS**
If you react strongly, your teen may raise the red flag and stop communicating with you.
- LISTEN**
Give teens the green light to voice their opinions.
- PUT CELLPHONES ON SILENT**
Cellphones throw a wrench in family time.
- POSITIVE POWER OF TEXTING**
After dinner, communicating with kids on their terms puts you in the driver's seat.
- MAKE ADVICE A TWO-WAY STREET**
Build your teen's confidence by asking for their advice about things that interest them.
- TALK it OUT**
- HAVE THE RIGHT TOOLS**
Being prepared with the facts will make teens more likely to listen.
- BE A WINNING TEAM**
Work together to practice ways your teen can say no to underage drinking.
- TAKE THE PLEDGE**
The pledge is a promise between parents and teens to keep the lines of communication open and help teens safely cross the finish line.