

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY PARENTS

DO ADOLESCENTS HAVE A SPECIAL VULNERABILITY TO DRUGS?

Yes. The adolescent brain is developing and doesn't mature until about the age of 24. Use of drugs can affect brain development negatively.

WHY SHOULD PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND OTHER ADULTS TALK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT DRUGS?

Studies show children start drinking and experimenting with drugs earlier than previous generations. Research shows that the younger someone starts using alcohol and drugs, the greater the likelihood to become addicted. However, parents play a key role. Research shows that kids who learn about the risks of alcohol and drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use drugs. Let your kids know how you feel about drugs before they hit their teenage years.

WHY IS UNDERAGE DRINKING EVERYONE'S PROBLEM?

People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol-dependent than those who wait until they are 21. In 2013, underage drinking cost the citizens of South Carolina nearly a billion dollars. These costs include medical care, work loss, and pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth.

WHY IS YOUTH MARIJUANA USE EVERYONE'S PROBLEM?

Heavy marijuana use during the teen years can permanently lower intelligence (IQ) in adult life by as much as 8 points, potentially lowering intelligence from average to low average. The levels of THC, marijuana's psychoactive chemical, have increased in smoked marijuana from 3% in 1970 to 14.5% in 2012.

WHY DO DRUGS MAKE PEOPLE DO STRANGE THINGS?

Drugs alter your perception and judgment. Some drugs make you overconfident while others decrease your ability to pay attention to the things going on around you.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BECOME ADDICTED TO DRUGS?

Risk factors for becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs, like other conditions and diseases, vary from person to person. However, the common risk factors include:

1. Genetics - your family history; 2. Age when you first started using alcohol or drugs; 3. Family life (including abuse, neglect and traumatic experiences in childhood) and social environment (including access to alcohol and drugs); and 4. Types of drugs used.

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY REASON TEENS ARE IN DRUG TREATMENT?

More teens are in treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than all other illegal drugs combined.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE DRUG PREVENTION INFORMATION?

Resources about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs that might be helpful to parents, educators, community members, and youth are www.richlandonecc.org, www.theantidrug.com, www.drugabuse.gov, and www.cdc.gov.



FACTS AND FIGURES

- Alcohol is the most prevalent drug among youth, followed shortly by marijuana.
- Middle and high school youth drink alcohol regularly.
- Marijuana and e-cigarettes use is increasing to epidemic levels. The higher rates of use and softening of attitudes regarding marijuana have resulted in a decreased perception of harm and an increase in approval to use marijuana.
- E-cigarettes use is increasing.
- Tobacco use continues to decline.
- Youth report they often get drugs from friends or relatives.



How can parents and community members prevent youth drug use?

Keep lines of communication open.

Listen to your child's thoughts and opinions about alcohol and drugs.

Set clear guidelines and enforce the rules.

Help your child handle peer pressure.

Help your child deal with emotions.

Monitor your own behavior.

Be a positive role model. Teach by setting a good example.

Monitor your child's activities.

Ask questions and be involved.

Use teachable moments.

Remember:

Youth who receive consistent rules and consequences are less likely to engage in alcohol and drug use.

ROCC began through the joint efforts of four organizations: Richland County School District One, the Lexington/Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council (LRADAC), Lexington/Richland School District Five, and the Community Roundtable of Irmo, Dutch Fork and Chapin (CRT). In 2004, a Drug Free Communities Coalition Mentoring Grant was awarded to allow the CRT to mentor ROCC and help it build its own coalition. We are an action group comprised of individuals and organizations.

Vision

Safe and drug free families in the Richland One Community.

Mission

To mobilize the Richland One Community to reduce substance abuse and other high risk behaviors among youth and families.



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