Teens start using drugs or alcohol for many reasons. Whether it is happening at home, school, or elsewhere in the community, here are some important facts to know:

**Historically, substance misuse rates in Connecticut are higher than the national average.**
- 40% will try alcohol by 8th grade.
- Nearly 30% of 9th graders reported using alcohol in the past month.
- Over 50% of 12th graders reported using alcohol in the past month.
- First use of tobacco and/or marijuana typically occurs by age 14.
- 60-75% of 12-17 year olds do not perceive drinking or smoking to be dangerous.

**Youth are curious about alcohol.**

**Nationally, there are about a quarter million drug-related emergency department visits by adolescents (12-17) each year.**

**Over half of these visits involved the use of illicit drugs, alcohol, or the intentional misuse of pharmaceuticals (i.e., prescription drugs, over-the-counter remedies, or dietary supplements).**

**Connecticut statistics**

**National statistics**

**RISK FACTORS**

**Why do children use alcohol or drugs?** Because of...

- Easy access.
- Peer pressure, the need to fit in.
- Belief that drugs are cool and harmless.
- Curiosity... the desire to experiment and/or alleviate boredom.
- Feeling overwhelmed by the challenges of growing up.
- Identification with celebrity/sports idols who misuse alcohol or drugs.
- Untreated mental health issues such as depression or anxiety.
- Inability to cope constructively with anger or unpleasant feelings.
- Other family members' use of or permissive attitude toward drugs or alcohol.
- Exposure to traumatic events, including physical or sexual abuse.

**WARNING SIGNS**

**How can I tell if my child is using drugs or alcohol?** Because they might...

- Behave differently for no apparent reason.
- Change their peer group.
- Become careless with grooming.
- Experience a decline in academic performance.
- Miss class and/or skip school.
- Lose interest in favorite activities.
- Change eating and sleeping habits.
- Have deteriorating relationships.

Never assume it is just typical adolescent behavior changes. Check it out!
PREVENTION
How can I prevent my child from using drugs or alcohol?

1. *YOU* are the most important influence on your child’s behavior!
2. Educate yourself.
3. Talk openly with your child.
4. Stay involved in their lives.

SOLUTIONS
When teens who are using substances receive family-focused treatment, there are proven reductions in substance use, criminal activity, arrests, and family problems.

Consider assessing teens for substance use through the resources below.

Teens can benefit from an intervention even if they are not addicted to a drug.

On-going counseling / support.

HOW TO START
STATEWIDE RESOURCES

MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY (MST) Intensive family therapy in your home to identify and address problems driving the substance misuse. Meets several times per week.

BRIDGEPORT
Child & Family Guidance Center (203) 394-6298 www.cfguidance.org

Connecticut Renaissance (203) 367-7370 www.creassnace.com

DANBURY
Connecticut Junior Republic (203) 797-8577 www.cjryouth.org

HARTFORD/MANCHESTER
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

Wheeler Clinic (888) 793-3500 www.wheelerclinic.org

MIDDLETOWN
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

NEW BRITAIN/PLAINVILLE
Yale Child Study Center (203) 785-6851 www.yale.edu/childstudy

WATERBURY/DANBURY/STAMFORD
Community Health Resources (860) 522-8241 www.chrhealth.org

Yale Child Study Center (203) 785-6851 www.yale.edu/childstudy

WILLIMANTIC/ROCKVILLE
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (MDFT) Intensive family and individual therapy in your home. MDFT examines all components of a teen’s life to address substance misuse and promote positive, long-term change. Meets several times per week.

BRIDGEPORT/NORWALK
Boys & Girls Village (203) 320-6790 www.bgvl.org

Connecticut Renaissance (203) 367-7570 www.creassnace.com

DANBURY/TORRINGTON
Family & Children’s Aid (203) 748-5689 www.fcaweb.org

Connecticut Junior Republic (203) 558-9665 www.cjryouth.org

HARTFORD
Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Hartford (860) 522-4241 www.ccdh.org

Community Health Resources (877) 884-1271 www.chrhealth.org

Hartford Behavioral Health (860) 442-2797 www.chrhealth.org

The Village for Families & Children Hartford (860) 536-4511 www.villageforchildren.org

Wheeler Clinic (888) 793-3500 www.wheelerclinic.org

WATERBURY
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

WATERFORD
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

WILLIMANTIC
United Community & Family Services (860) 822-4292 www.ucfs.org

ADOLESCENT COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT APPROACH AND ASSERTIVE CONTINUING CARE (A-CRA/ACC) A less intensive weekly program to address substance misuse that can be delivered in your home or via outpatient services.

BRIDGEPORT/NORWALK/STAMFORD
Community Health Resources (860) 522-8241 www.chrhealth.org

Yale Child Study Center (203) 785-6851 www.yale.edu/childstudy

WILLIMANTIC
United Community & Family Services (860) 822-4292 www.ucfs.org

NEW BRITAIN/HILTON
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

WATERBURY
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

WATERFORD
NAFI Connecticut (800) 459-6298 www.nafict.org

WATERBURY
Family & Children’s Aid (203) 748-5689 www.fcaweb.org

NEW BRITAIN/HILTON
The Children’s Center of Hamden (203) 248-2116 www.tccoh.org

WATERBURY/DANBURY/TORRINGTON
Connecticut Junior Republic (203) 757-9939 www.cjryouth.org

If you are unsure which direction to go, CALL 2-1-1