

Learn the fACTS

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, excessive alcohol consumption is responsible for more than 4,700 annual deaths among underage youth. ^[1]

More than one fifth of youth begin drinking before the age of 13. ^[2]

According to the Monitoring the Future Survey, the majority of students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades said that it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get alcohol. ^[3]

Adults aged 21 or older who first used alcohol at age 14 or younger were over seven times as likely to become addicted to alcohol as adults who had their first drink at 21 or older. ^[4]

One in five teens say they have taken a prescription drug without having a prescription for it themselves. ^[5]

The most commonly abused prescription drugs are pain medications, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications and stimulants. ^[6]

To locate a drug and alcohol treatment program nearest to you call

h^{ELP}

1-800-662-HELP *

Help is available within most communities, many of which offer payment assistance for eligible recipients.

More information can be found on the following websites:

www.cdc.gov; *www.samhsa.gov; www.madd.org; niaaa.nih.gov;
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov.

^[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

^[2] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

^[3] Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan

^[4] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

^[5] The Partnership at Drugfree.org

^[6] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Learn, Evaluate & Take Action

A Parent's Guide on
Teenage Abuse of Alcohol and Drugs



**THE MIDDLESEX
PARTNERSHIPS
FOR YOUTH INC.**



Dear Parents/Guardians,

As a mother of two young adults, I know how difficult it is to talk to your teens about alcohol and drug abuse. But communication is so important.

I urge you to maintain close contact with your child. Studies show that having meals together is one effective preventative measure. It will help you spot the warning signals and take action.

This brochure is intended to help you recognize the signs and symptoms of alcohol and drug use in your child. Included are suggestions for what you can do to intervene. We all want to help our teens lead healthy and productive lives.

Sincerely,

Marian P. Ryan

evaluate your teen

Knowing the signs and symptoms of alcohol or drug dependency will allow you promptly to help your teen. Some signs that might indicate a chemical dependency problem are:

- Your child is withdrawn, depressed, tired, and careless about personal grooming
- Your child is hostile, uncooperative, and frequently breaking curfew
- Relationships with family members are deteriorating
- Significant and sudden weight loss
- Your child's grades have slipped and school attendance is irregular
- Your child has suddenly lost interest in hobbies, sports, and other once favorite activities
- Your child's eating or sleeping patterns have drastically changed
- Your child's eyes are red-rimmed and/or his or her nose is runny in the absence of a cold
- Household money has been disappearing

Addiction is a disease that can be treated, and people can recover from it.



take action

talk to your teen openly about your suspicions when you are calm and your child is not under the influence.

Do not delay talking with your teen or make excuses for their abnormal behavior.

Tell your child that you are concerned because you care. **Reaffirm** that you still love him or her.

Think ahead and keep medicine cabinets tidy. Remove any unused prescription medications and be aware of what you are keeping in your home.

Find out what your child has been dealing with that may lead him or her to drug use.

Work collectively as a family to solve the problem if your child admits to using drugs or alcohol.

Be firm and enforce the consequences that are part of your family rules and values.

Actively listen to your child and answer his/her questions.

**Middlesex District Attorney
Marian Ryan**

in partnership with MPY, Inc.

15 Commonwealth Avenue, Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 897-8300

middlesexda.com