

# Hidden in Plain Sight



A program to help caring adults identify signs of substance use in youth and opportunities for meaningful conversations.

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY: THE GREAT MEADOWS PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATIVE**

*Inspiration provided by Natick 180 and North Dakota State University Extension.*

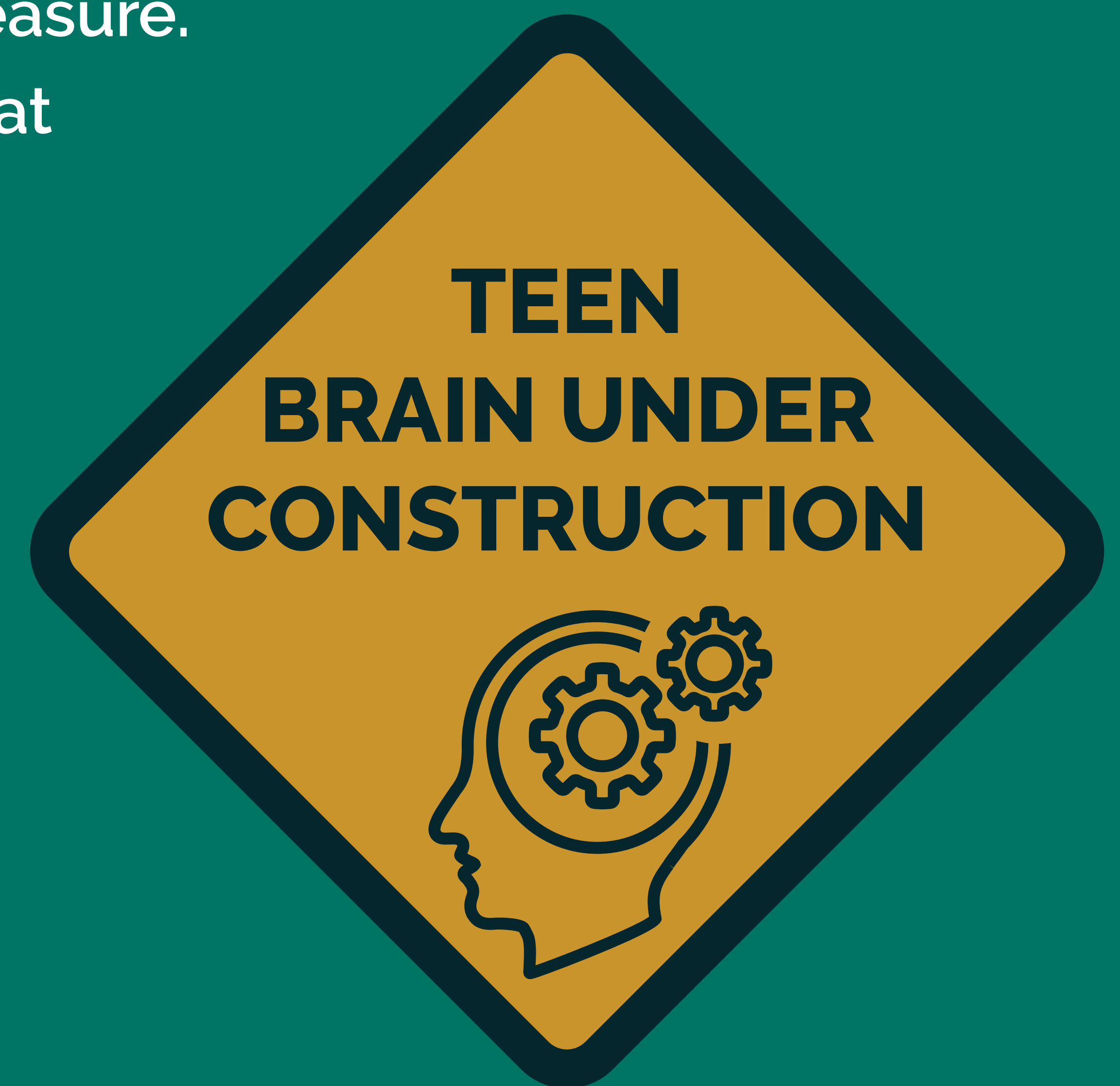
# The adolescent brain is still developing.

It continues changing until age 25!



Dopamine is a chemical in the brain that controls reward and pleasure. Substance use can flood the brain with more dopamine than what is released naturally. Because this feels good, the behavior may be repeated. Using substances frequently for a long time can change developing areas of the brain that are responsible for decision-making, self-control, memory, and learning.

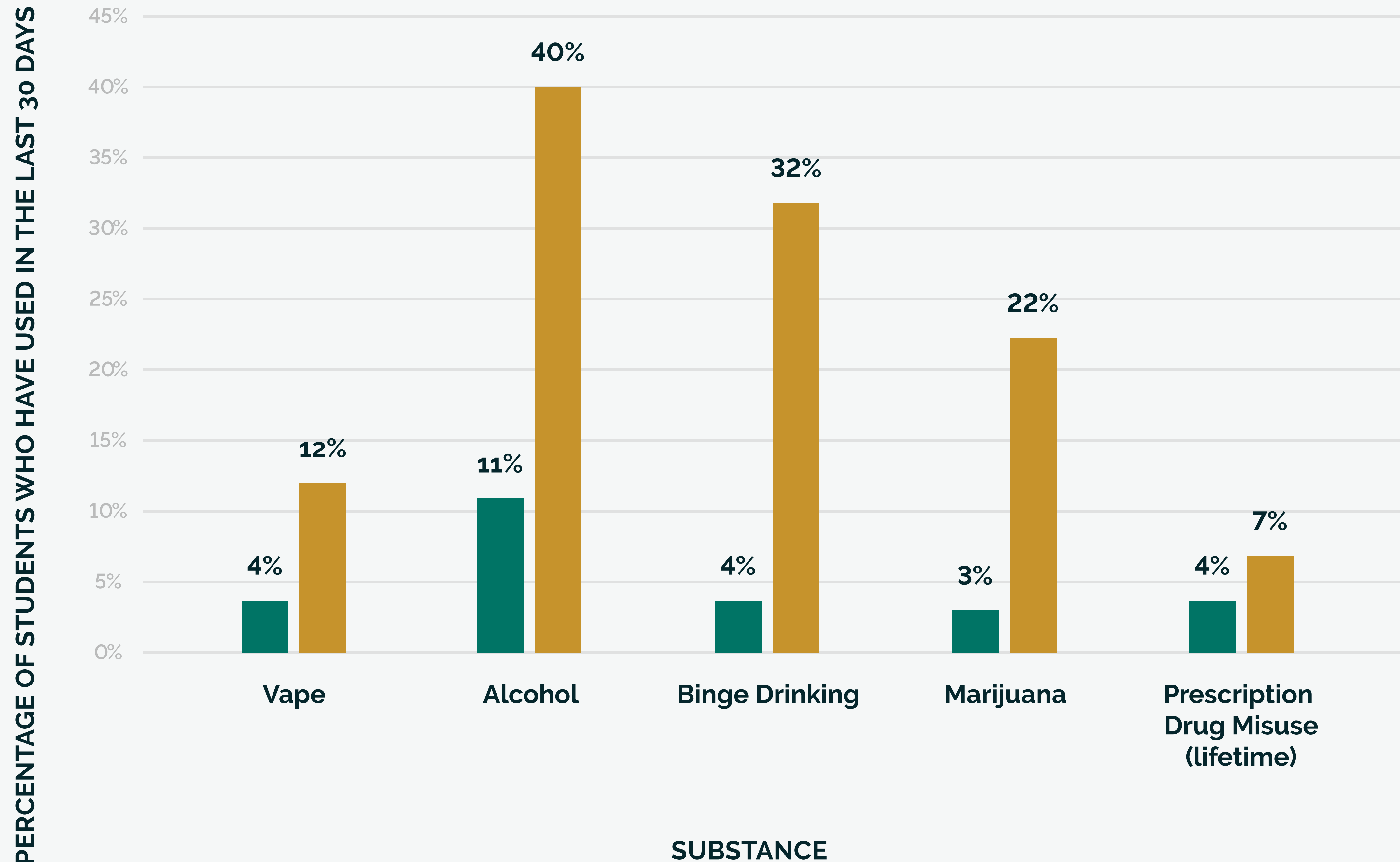
The younger a person is when they start using a substance, the higher their risk for developing a substance use disorder. Youth who begin using addictive substances before age 15 are nearly seven times more likely to develop a substance problem, compared with those who delay first use until age 21 or older.



*Substance = alcohol, tobacco, drugs, inhalants, etc. that can be taken into the body and have the possibility of dependence*

# High School Substance Use in Great Meadows

Bedford • Carlisle • Concord • Lincoln • Sudbury • Wayland • Weston



## TAKEAWAYS:

Vaping and marijuana use among 12th graders in Great Meadows is lower than the State average.

Alcohol consumption and binge drinking is higher in Great Meadows than the State average.

# Alcohol

SLANG: BOOZE / BREW / LIQUOR / SAUCE



## The Facts About Underage Drinking:

- Underage drinking is dangerous. It impairs decision-making, awareness of actions, and motor coordination which increases the risk of injuries and death from falls or vehicle crashes.
- Intoxication, especially in the developing brain, can lead to unsafe behavior such as drinking and driving, unprotected sex, and aggression or violence.
- Alcohol overdose can result in dangerously slow breathing and heart rate, confusion, vomiting, seizures, unconsciousness, and death.

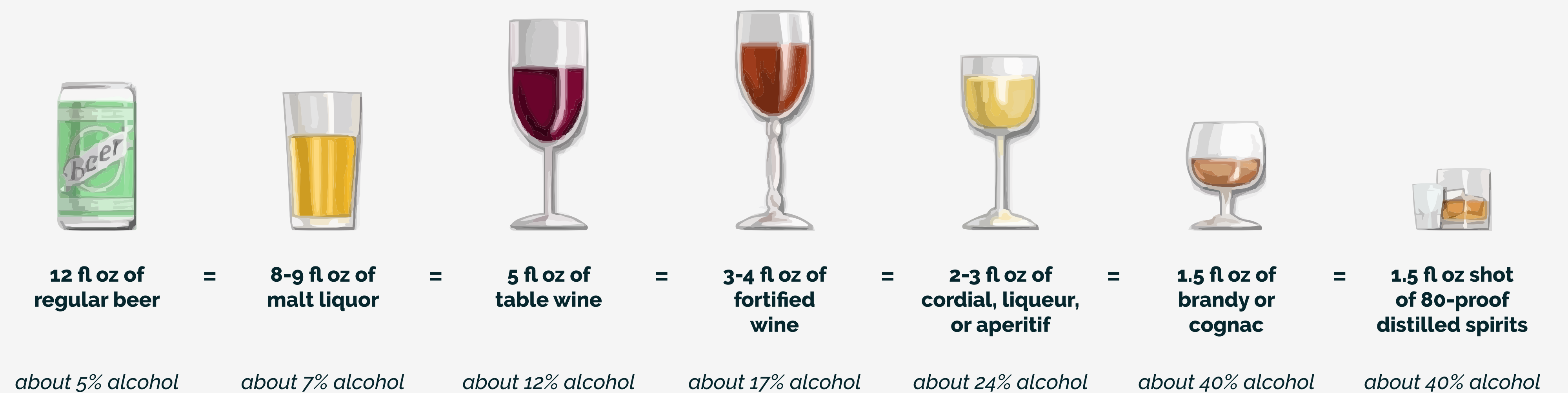
## Signs and Symptoms:

Slurred speech, impaired coordination, mood swings, nausea, poor hygiene, and changes in sleep patterns

## Behavioral Signs and Symptoms of Any Substance Use:

- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Losing interest in all activities and hobbies
- Unable to focus on tasks in general
- Missing school or work
- Deceitful or secretive behavior, especially with use of cell phone
- Hostile, angry, or uncooperative
- Hyperactive or unusually elated followed by long periods of sleep
- Making endless excuses or lying
- Ignoring or breaking curfew
- Frequently asking for money
- Using gum or mints to cover up breath

## Ways to Consume:



# Marijuana

SLANG: WEED / POT / GRASS / REEFER / GANJA / MARY JANE / BLUNT / JOINT / TREES



## The Facts About Marijuana:

- Marijuana affects areas of the brain related to learning, memory, coordination, and addiction.
- It impairs self-control, impacting time perception and coordination, which can be dangerous for activities like driving.
- Marijuana smoke is more harmful to the lungs than tobacco smoke because it deposits more cancer-causing tar.
- Chronic marijuana use has been associated with depression, anxiety, and, in some cases, an increased risk of schizophrenia.
- Marijuana can be laced with other substances without the user's knowledge, such as crack cocaine in "blunts" (hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana).

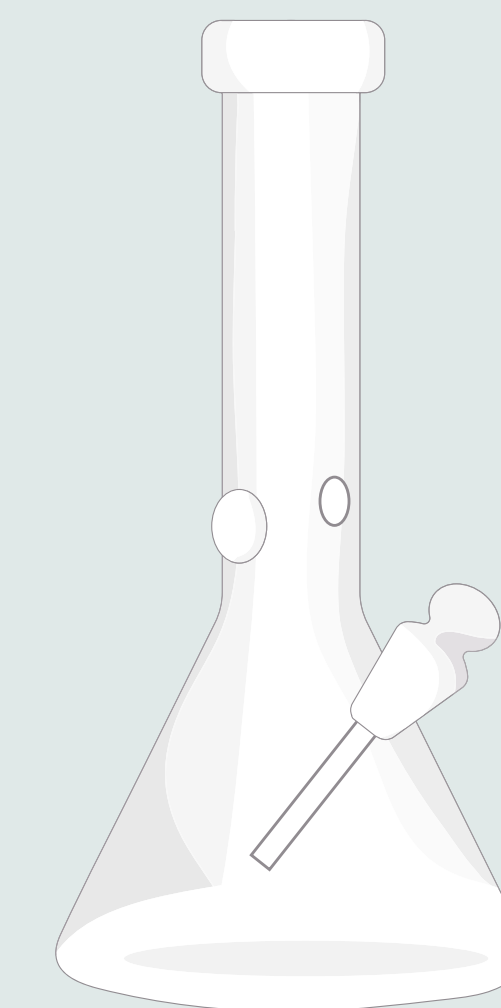
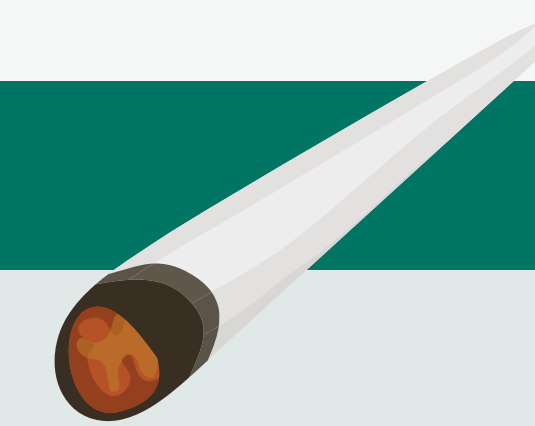
## Signs and Symptoms:

Red eyes, slowed reaction time, impaired memory, poor concentration, dry mouth, and an increased appetite

## Ways to Consume:

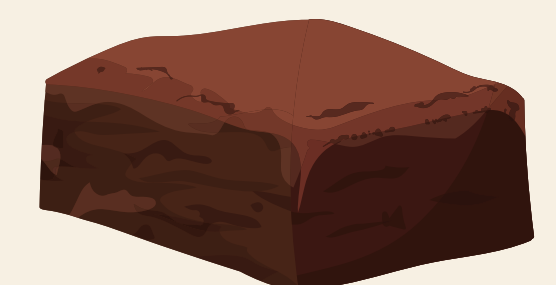
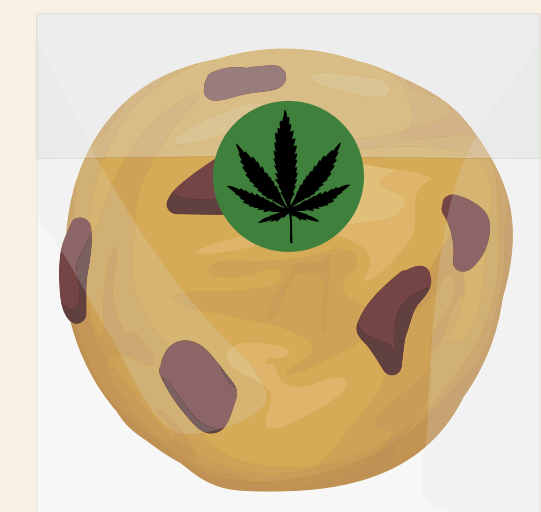
### INHALATION

- Joints
- Water Pipes
- Pens
- Vapes
- Hand Pipes
- Dabbing
- Blunts



### ORAL

- Tinctures
- Ingestible Oils
- Chewing Gum
- Edibles
- Pills or Capsules
- Cannabutter
- Drinks



# Vaping

SLANG: E-CIGS / E-HOOKAHS / VAPE PENS / VAPES / TANK SYSTEMS / MODS



## The Facts About Vaping:

- Vaping involves inhaling aerosol from an electronic cigarette.
- Vaping products contain nicotine and can lead to addiction.
- Health risks include lung damage and cardiovascular issues.
- Vaping may serve as a gateway to smoking traditional cigarettes.
- Chemical exposure and unknown long-term effects are concerns.

## Signs and Symptoms:

Frequent coughing, mood swings, nosebleeds, headaches, and a lack of energy

## The Evolution of E-Cigarette & Vaping Products

### 1ST GENERATION



**Disposable e-cigarettes**

### 2ND GENERATION



**E-cigarettes with pre-filled or refillable cartridge**

### 3RD GENERATION



**Tanks or Mods (refillable)**

### 4TH GENERATION



**Pod Mods (pre-filled or refillable)**

# Opioids

SLANG: O.C. / OXY / PERCS / VIKE / M / MONKEY / WHITE STUFF  
LEAN / SCHOOLBOY / SIZZURP / PURPLE DRANK / LOADS



## The Facts About Opioids:

- Opioids include prescription pain relievers, heroin, and fentanyl. They reduce pain signals and can cause euphoria or a “high.”
- Misusing prescription pain relievers can lead to addiction and the use of other substances such as heroin.
- About half of those who misused prescription pain relievers get pills from a friend or relative for free.
- Opioids slow down the user’s breathing and heart rate. An overdose can cause dangerously slow breathing and heart rate to the point of unconsciousness and death.
- Opioid overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States.

## The Facts About Fake Pills:

- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is being added to fake pills and other street drugs to drive addiction. It is 50 times more potent than heroin.
- In 2022, six out of every ten fake pills with fentanyl contained a potentially lethal dose.
- Social media is a primary platform for drug traffickers to advertise and conduct sales. No pill purchased on social media is safe.



Visit this website for more information.

## Signs and Symptoms:

Constricted pupils, slurred speech, confusion, fatigue, and constipation

# Start a Conversation



Kids who learn about the risk of alcohol and other drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who do not. Parental disapproval of underage substance use is the #1 protective factor for youth using substances. There is no script available for talking to youth about substances. However, there are resources available to help guide you.

## Supporting Prevention at Every Age

### 6-9 YEARS

- Help guide decision-making skill development.
- Discuss good health and avoiding things that might harm the body.
- Discuss how to avoid & escape situations that make them feel uncomfortable.
- Talk about drug-related messaging they encounter.

### 10-12 YEARS

- Empower them to make good decisions and resist pressures to try drugs.
- Get to know your child's friends and caregivers, and check in to make sure they are on the same page about prohibiting drug use.
- Note the difference between fantasy and reality while watching media.

### 13-15 YEARS

- Provide praise for positive decisions.
- Help build their self-esteem and self-image.
- Talk about their choices of friends; substance use in teens starts as a social behavior.
- Assist them in creating a list of assertive tactics and prepared responses for saying "no" to peer pressure.

### 16-18 YEARS

- Encourage participation in healthy activities.
- Monitor and supervise activities.
- Talk about how to stand up for their beliefs so they will be empowered to take a stand when someone is pressuring them to make high-risk choices.
- If they resist, back off and try another time. This shows you respect their privacy.

### 19+ YEARS

- Respect privacy and independence while expressing the desire to help. Keep lines of communication open.
- Stay alert to mental health issues related to drug use.
- Talk about over-the-counter and prescription medicine abuse. Discuss risks of binge drinking.
- Encourage them to intervene if a friend needs help (passed out, unconscious) by calling 911.

### ALL AGES

- Have ongoing conversations about substance use. Repetition is key!
- Model appropriate behaviors to promote healthy living.
- Be aware of your family history of substance abuse, and discuss any potentially elevated risks.
- Convey you care about and love your child, even when you're having tough conversations.



# Available Resources

You and your loved ones are not alone!



## ALWAYS CALL 911 IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.

**Mental Health or Substance Use Crisis:** Call 988

**MA Substance Use Helpline:**

Call 800.327.5050 or go to [www.helplineMA.org](http://www.helplineMA.org)

**MA Behavioral Health Helpline:**

Call/text 833.773.2445 or go to [www.masshelpline.com](http://www.masshelpline.com)

**Community Behavioral Health Centers:**

Go to [www.mass.gov/community-behavioral-health-centers](http://www.mass.gov/community-behavioral-health-centers)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Helpline:**

Call 800-662-4357 or go to [www.samhsa.gov/find-help](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help)

**Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery:**

[www.moar-recovery.org/resources](http://www.moar-recovery.org/resources)

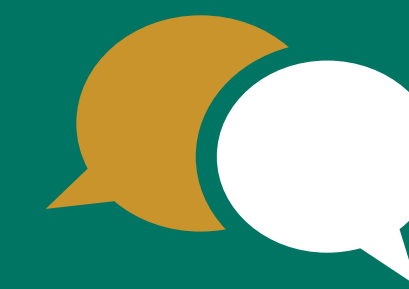
**INTERFACE Referral Services Helpline:**

Call 888-244-6843 or go to <https://interface.williamjames.edu>

**Learn to Cope:** [www.learn2cope.org](http://www.learn2cope.org)

You can always reach out to a primary care provider or any school personnel, including counselors and nurses, for help.

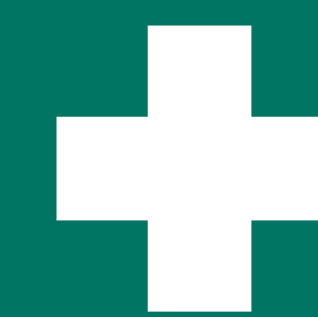
## Suspect Substance Abuse?



You never can be too safe or intervene too early. Talk to youth as soon as your instinct tells you something is wrong or you spot signs of drug use.



Express your concern and willingness to help, make observations, ask questions and listen to their answers.



Get professional help. A family doctor or addiction specialist can screen for signs of drug abuse and other related health conditions.



Call **SAMHSA's National Helpline** (1-800-662-4357) for referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups and community-based organizations.



Be sure youth know that loved ones will stand by them and offer support.

# **You are about to enter a display of a teenager's bedroom where there are many potential signs of substance use.**

Items indicating potential substance use are marked with a colored dot. For the purpose of teaching, this display has many more signs than would be present in a real bedroom.

## ***This display is not intended to scare caregivers.***

It is meant to serve as a learning opportunity for identifying potential signs of substance use as well as opportunities for having meaningful conversations about delaying risky behaviors that could lead to substance use disorder.

### **Please be respectful of the display.**

Handle items gently and return them to their place when you are done.

A staff member is available in the room to help guide you and answer any questions.

Support and treatment resources are available to all participants.

### **Thank you!**

For more information, visit our webpage:



**Great Meadows**  
PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATIVE