



PREVENTION PLAYBOOK

FOR TODAY'S PARENTS

Quick Reference Guide & Toolkit

START THE CONVERSATION

Ask Open-Ended Questions

- What have you heard about vaping/drinking at school?
- What would you do if someone offered you...?
- What questions do you have about drugs and alcohol?

Take Advantage of Natural Opportunities

- Talk about news stories concerning substance use
- Point out substance use in TV shows/movies
- Check in after social events and parties
- Chat during car rides while you have a captive audience

Be Curious, Not Judgmental

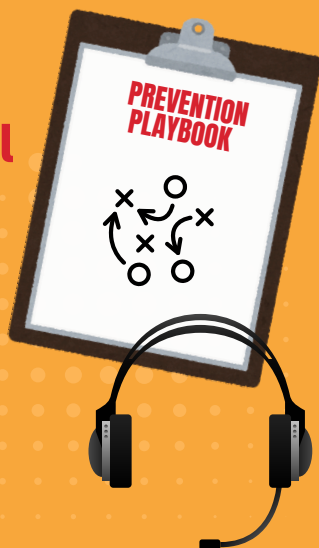
DO ASK:

- ✓ I'm curious about...
- ✓ What's your take on...

DON'T SAY:

- ✗ You need to...
- ✗ Let me tell you...

Listen first and then share your values and expectations.



GET THE STATS

Most teens overestimate how much their peers drink and use drugs.

- ➡ 70% of high school students have never used an illicit drug
- ➡ Only 18% of high schoolers report current marijuana use
- ➡ Binge drinking among teens has declined 40% since 2000
- ➡ 90% of addiction begins before age 20



COACH THEM UP!

- Let your teen know that most of their peers are making healthy choices
- Inform them that their brain isn't fully developed until age 25
- Make sure they know that early use significantly increases their risk of addiction.

- CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/>)
- Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/prevention>)

FLAG ON THE PLAY

Watch for these warning signs of substance use.



Physical

- Bloodshot eyes
- Unusual smells
- Changes in appetite
- Coordination problems

Behavioral

- Declining grades
- New friend groups
- Secretive behavior
- Missing money/items
- Changes in sleep patterns

Emotional

- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Withdrawal from family
- Loss of interest in activities



RUN THESE PLAYS FOR HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

For Stress: Deep breathing, exercise, journaling, listening to music, and talking to trusted adults.

For Escape: Reading, art, nature and meditation.

For Social Connection: Clubs, sports, and volunteer work.

For Excitement: Adventurous activities and creative projects.

SUIT UP WITH HEALTHY COPING SKILLS



Middle School

- Simple breathing exercises (4-7-8 technique)
- Physical activity and movement
- Creative expression (art, music, writing)
- Identifying trusted adults to talk to
- Basic mindfulness and grounding techniques



High School

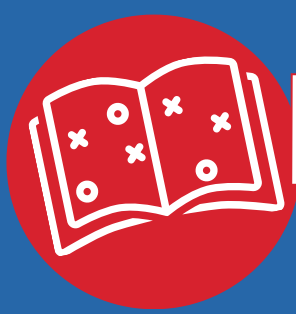
- Advanced stress management techniques
- Problem-solving frameworks
- Time management and organization skills
- Healthy relationship building
- Future planning and goal setting
- Community service and purpose-driven activities



**EMOTIONAL REGULATION
COMMUNICATION SKILLS | CONFLICT
RESOLUTION | SELF-ADVOCACY
HEALTHY BOUNDARIES**



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RUN THE RIGHT PLAYS

FOR PREVENTION

DEFENSIVE PLAYS:

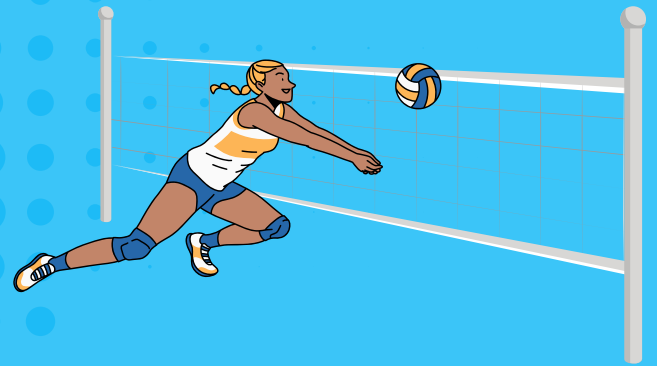
- Secure medications and alcohol at home
- Know your teen's whereabouts and friends
- Create substance-free social opportunities
- Monitor social media appropriately
- Use parental controls on devices

OFFENSIVE PLAYS:

- Encourage involvement in structured activities
- Support their interests and hobbies
- Create regular family time
- Celebrate their achievements
- Build their sense of purpose and belonging

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT:

- Practice saying "no" in different scenarios
- Rehearse "easy outs" like "My parents drug test me"
- Role-play peer pressure situations
- Discuss exit strategies for uncomfortable situations



THE 4M'S PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

MANAGE *Screen Use and Substance Access*

- Set clear screen time limits and enforce them consistently
- Use parental controls and monitoring software
- Control access to substances (secure alcohol, medications)
- Know passwords and check devices regularly

MODEL *Healthy Boundaries with Technology and Substances*

- Demonstrate healthy technology boundaries
- Show appropriate ways to handle stress
- Model responsible alcohol use (if applicable)
- Display healthy coping mechanisms

MEANINGFUL *Focus on Meaningful Activities*

- Encourage activities that build real skills
- Prioritize face-to-face social interactions
- Support hobbies that create sense of accomplishment
- Choose educational and prosocial media content

MONITOR *For Warning Signs*

- Watch for changes in behavior, mood, or performance
- Stay alert to warning signs of problematic use
- Regular check-ins about online and offline activities
- Trust your instincts if something seems wrong

MAKE FAMILY CONNECTION A PRIORITY

Eat dinner together and create device-free family time.

BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE

Encourage them to try new things and celebrate effort, not just achievements.

CREATE STRUCTURE

Communicate expectations, establish routines and consistently follow through.



Over half of popular shows include substance use, and exposure to these depictions significantly increases teen likelihood of experimentation.

Talk About What They Are Watching

- Point out **consequences** that aren't being shown
- Ask if they feel what they are watching is **realistic** and what would happen in real life
- Talk about the creator's **motivation** and **who benefits** from normalizing substance use
- Explore **alternative ways** for characters to handle their problems

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Protect Their Brain

Gaming problems can predict substance use vulnerability.

Gaming and substance use activate the same brain reward systems and can serve as an emotional escape from their problems. It is important to address underlying emotional issues, teach healthy stress management and set boundaries.



HEY COACH!

You're doing great! Remember to hold regular family meetings to discuss substance use and set clear family rules and expectations. Make a list of emergency contacts and local mental health and substance use resources. If your team requires it, keep drug testing supplies and Naloxone on hand. Stay educated about current drug trends, maintain open communication with your teens and regularly review and revise your playbook!

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Coming together for a better community



RUN THE RIGHT PLAYS FOR PREVENTION