

Heads Up for Wellbeing - Substance Misuse



Substance Misuse

• All drugs have the potential to cause harm as they can change how most people act, feel and behave. Young people are particularly vulnerable as substances affect the brain and organs of young people more. Alcohol and tobacco are addictive and are often used amongst teenagers and young adults. Illegal drugs include cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy and heroin. Some teenagers are likely to experiment, test boundaries and take risks. Drinking alcohol and trying drugs is one of the ways in which young people may do this. Young people are more likely to go home alone or with a stranger, be assaulted or injured, embarrass themselves or get into trouble with the police if they get drunk or use illegal drugs.

How do I know if there is a problem?

- Misusing substances often starts as a way of coping with difficult situations or feelings, and finding that the substance helps you feel better and more relaxed.
- A young person may spend more of their time thinking about, looking for or using drugs or alcohol. Drugs or alcohol can then become the focus of the young person's life
- If a young person is using drugs or alcohol on a regular basis, their behaviour often changes. Look out for signs such as:
 - Unexplained moodiness
 - Behaviour that is "out of character."
 - Loss of interest in school or friends.
 - Significant change in school performance.
 - Becoming very secretive
 - Unexplained loss of clothes or money.
 - May start to feel depressed, anxious or angry.

Advice for Parents

- There are some things that you can do to support your child and make a difference.
- Talk and listen openly and honestly about drugs and alcohol whenever your child starts asking you questions. It is important that they hear your views. Use everyday opportunities, for example a storyline in a TV programme, as a prompt.
- Encourage sports, hobbies, clubs and social activities that keep your kids active and fulfilled.
- Teenagers often say boredom and hanging around with nothing to do is a reason for drinking or taking drugs. Encourage them to get a holiday job or volunteer.
- Make sure you know the facts and laws about drugs and alcohol and can talk to them in a balanced and constructive way.



Supports available in school/out of school for pupils/parents

- Encourage your child to speak to people they trust - their pastoral teacher, class teacher, another family member or a close friend.
- Speak with your child's pastoral teacher yourself, and work on this together.
- If you think your child may be using drugs or alcohol to help them cope with worries or mental health problems. go to your GP and ask for help.

Substance Misuse – useful contacts – where to get help

www.talktofrank.com

- Information and advice about drugs and alcohol, their effects and the law
- They have a number you can call for more information 0300 123 6600

www.alcholeducationtrust.org

- St Mungo's have recently partnered with Alcohol Education Trust to help with resources and guidance for PSE.
- There is a dedicated parent area on the website and you can also sign up for the parent newsletter
- Follow them on social media: Facebook: talkabout alcohol, Twitter:@talkalcohol

www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/axis-service-falkirk

- The Barnardo's Axis service works with young people up to 18 (or 26 if Care Experienced) who have problematic drug, alcohol or solvent abuse.
- Follow Barnardo's on social media: Facebook: Barnardo's, Twitter: @barnardo's, Youtube: Barnardo's - Believe in me, Instagram: @barnardos_uk

Other useful websites:

- www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/drugsandalcohol/
- www.thescottishrecoveryconsortium.org
- www.sfad.org.uk (Scottish Families affected by Alcohol and Drugs)