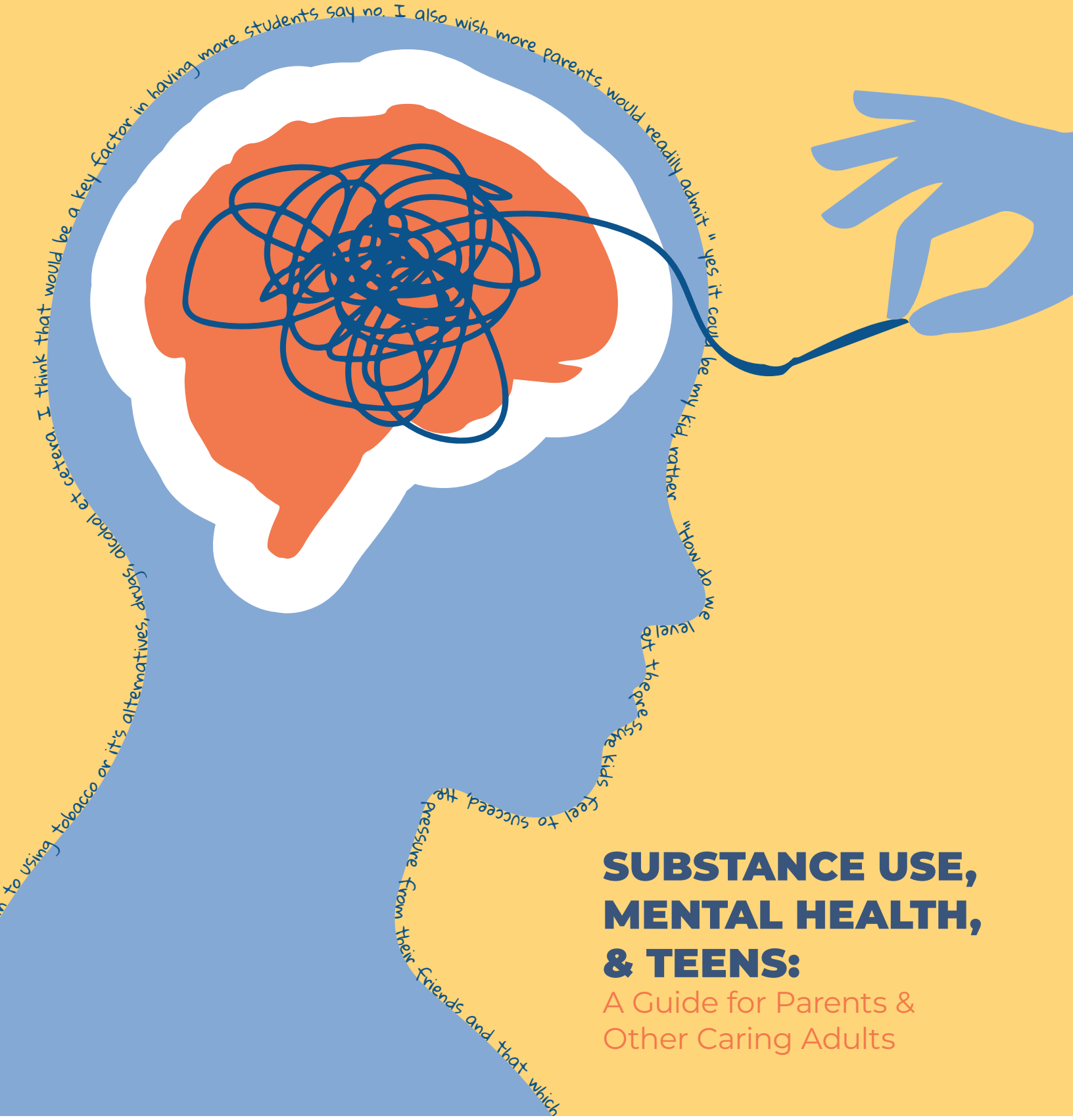

SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL HEALTH, & TEENS:

A Guide for Parents & Other Caring Adults

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
Office of Education
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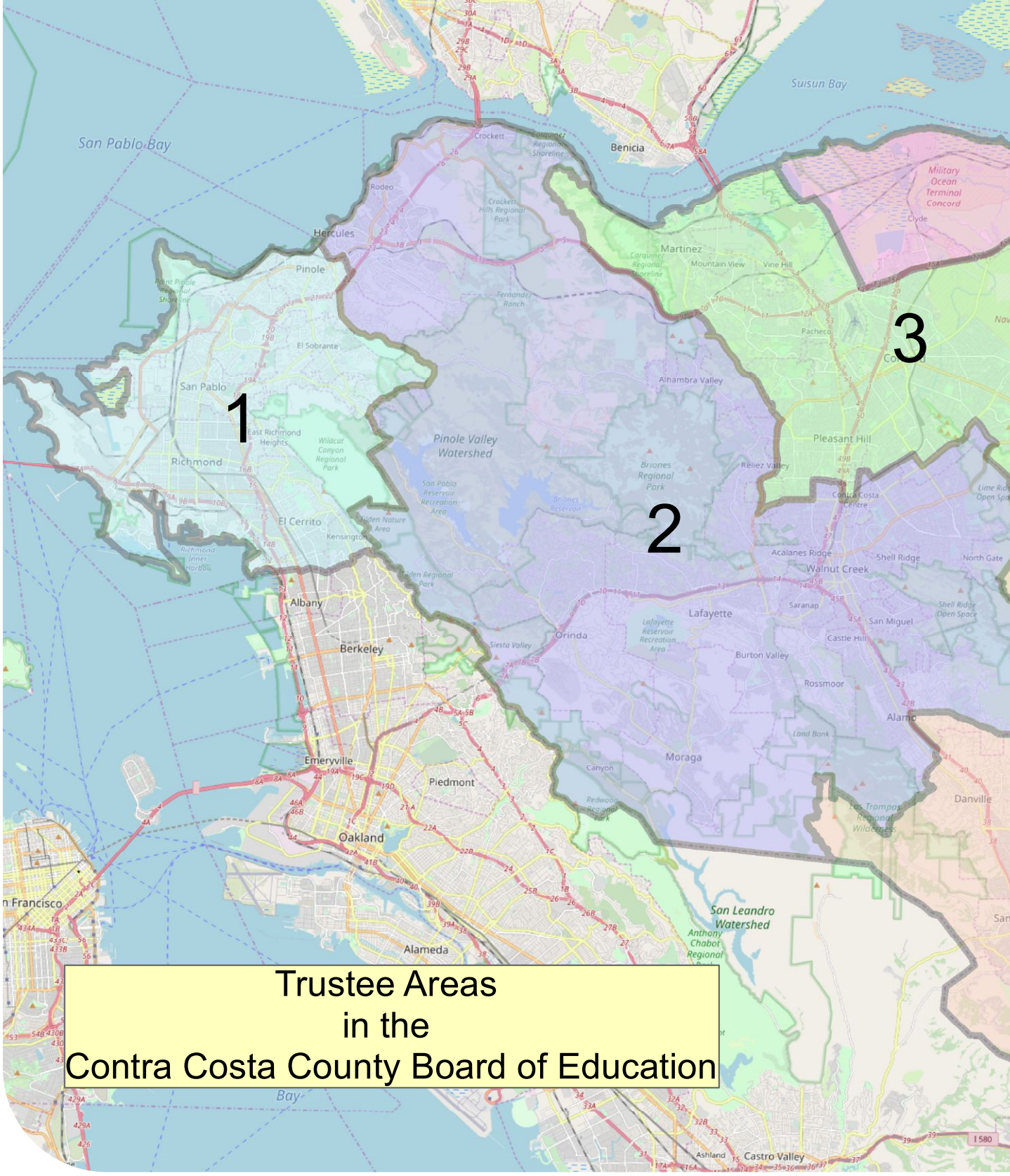

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LYNN MACKEY

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY Office of Education
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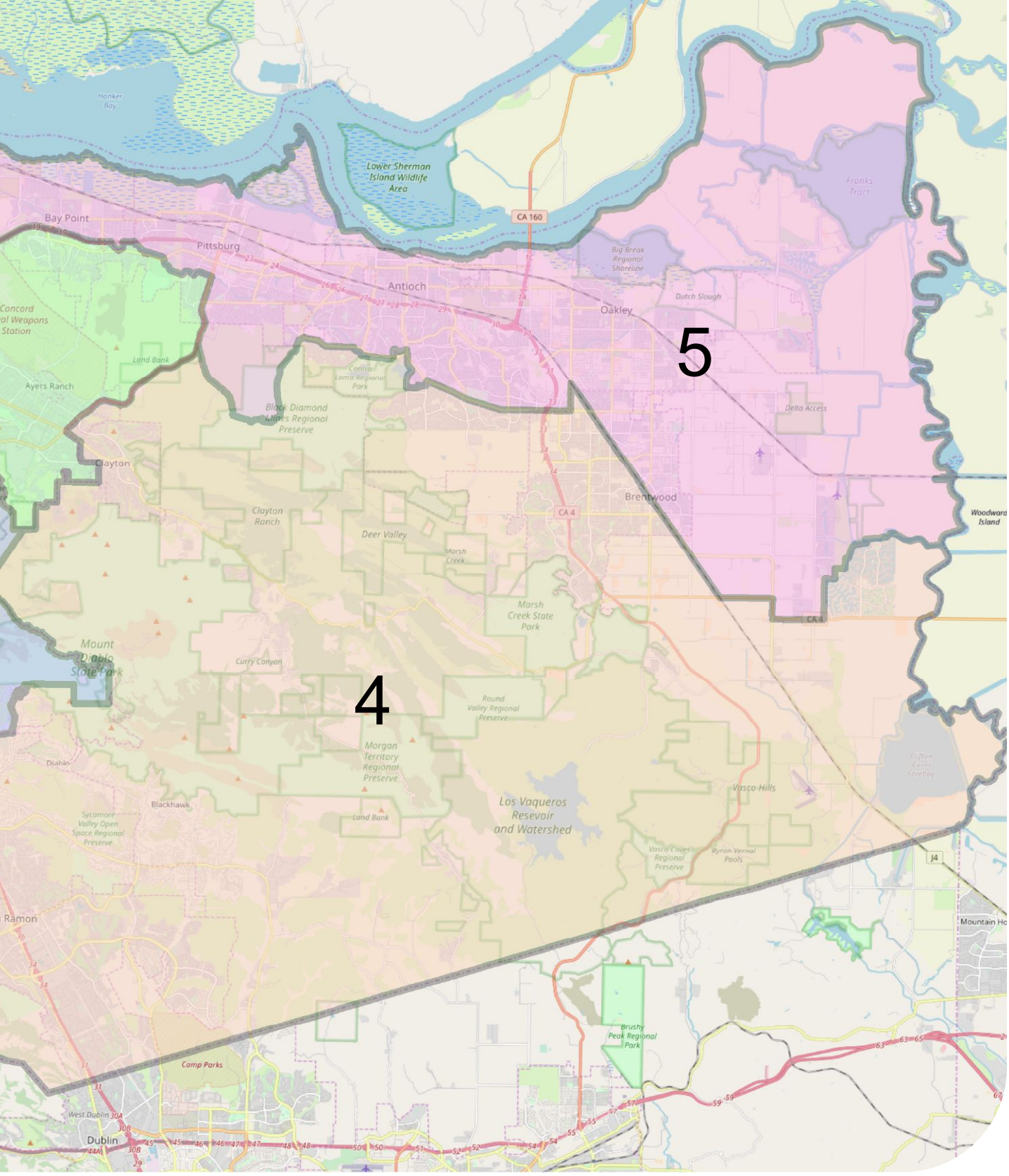

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LYNN MACKEY, Contra Costa
County Office of Education
Superintendent of Schools

hello!

Families play a critical role in both reducing risk and increasing protective factors. Protective factors are the attributes and conditions that increase well-being. The National Council on Mental Wellbeing found that while adults believe what matters most to young people are their friends, fitting in, and appearance, young people ages 13-18 reported that what matters most to them is family.

Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are a risk factor for both substance use and mental health challenges. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ACEs are "potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood" and include experiencing or witnessing violence, as well as growing up in a household with substance use or mental health problems. ACEs may put children at high risk of health problems, including mental health illness and substance use.

One of the most important protective factors for children and teens is feeling connected to a caring adult. Parents and other caring adults, like you, matter in the lives of young people. While we may not be able to remove all risks for the children and teens we know, we can be a caring adult for the young people in our lives.

I hope the resources in this guide will be useful as we look to help our young people grow into healthy adults.



Learn more about the impact of ACEs, as well as prevention strategies and related resources at **https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html.**

WHAT'S INSIDE

02-13 ABOUT OUR TEENS

14-23 SPOTLIGHTS ON SUBSTANCES

24-27 MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

28-33 TIPS FOR CARING ADULTS

OUR TEENS CURRENT USE

	7th Graders	9th Graders	11th Graders
 ALCOHOL	3%	6%	17%
 CANNABIS/ MARIJUANA	2%	5%	14%
 CIGARETTE	0%	0%	2%
 VAPING	3%	5%	11%
 PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE	N/A	1%	1%

Learn more about the California Healthy Kids Survey and explore county and district data reports at **https://calschls.org/reports-data/public-dashboards/.**

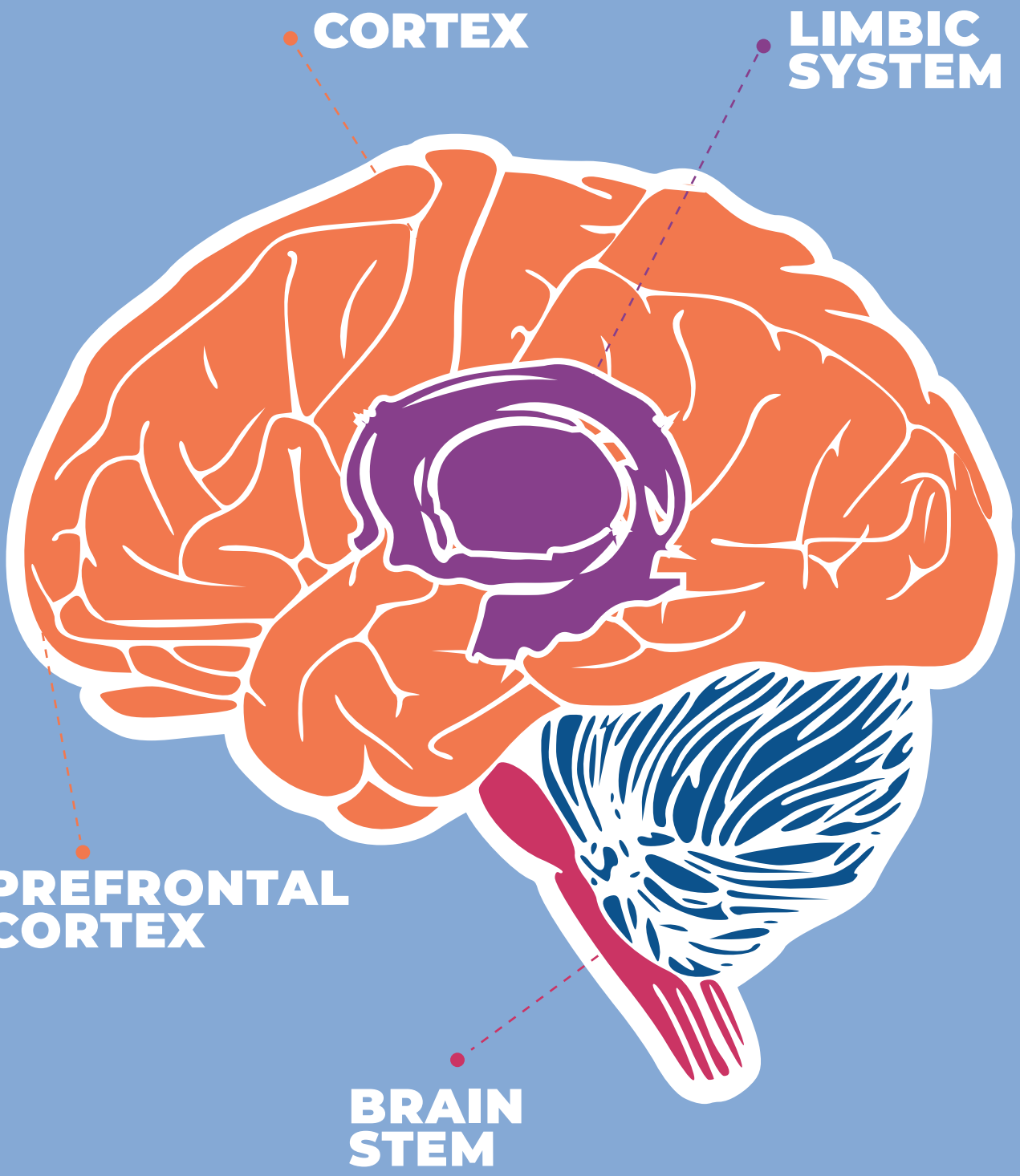


SOCIAL + EMOTIONAL HEALTH

	7th Graders	9th Graders	11th Graders
EXPERIENCED CHRONIC SADNESS/HOPELESSNESS	31%	37%	46%
SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE	14%	15%	18%

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Because most school buildings were closed due to the pandemic, the survey was expanded to help districts better understand the impact of COVID-19 and how best to support students' needs. The first survey question asked students if they attended school in person, remotely, or both in person and remotely. Based on their response, they were directed to questions only relevant to them. All students had the opportunity to respond to the substance use and social and emotional health questions.





The adolescent brain is still growing until about age 25.

BECOME Brain Savvy

The teenage or adolescent brain is a work in progress and that is a good thing! Let's take a closer look...

BRAINSTEM: The brainstem is the first part of the brain to develop and is responsible for survival functions, including regulating breathing, heart rate, and balance.

LIMBIC SYSTEM: The limbic system is responsible for our behavioral and emotional responses, including our flight or fight response when we face real or perceived danger. This system is super charged from around ages 12 to 17. Understanding the limbic system means a better understanding of teenagers and how to parent them.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX: The prefrontal cortex is responsible for executive functioning, such as complex planning, decision making, and self regulation of behavior. The prefrontal cortex becomes the focus of neurological development in late adolescence and young adulthood, around ages 18 to 25. Adopting strategies that promote and encourage executive thinking empowers young people and can inform our parenting style and tactics.

While it may feel like drug use is common during adolescence, the majority of young people do not use alcohol or other drugs. According to the 2019-2021 countywide California Healthy Kids Survey report, **90% of 7th graders, 72% of 9th graders, and 66% of 11th graders have never used alcohol or other drugs.**

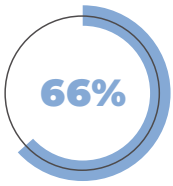
STUDENTS WHO HAVE SAID NO



7th Graders



9th Graders



11th Graders



Adolescent brain development presents both opportunities and challenges.

Due to this rapid period of brain development, adolescence is a great time for young people to learn new skills and hobbies and establish healthy habits and coping skills. However, risky behaviors, like using tobacco and other drugs, can also more strongly impact the adolescent brain. The part of the brain responsible for decision making and impulse control is still in development during the teen years. Because young people's brains are still developing, they are especially vulnerable to the effects of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis/marijuana, prescription drugs, and other substances, and more susceptible to addiction. Also, when drugs are misused, abused, or taken in combination with other drugs, overdose can more easily occur.

Adolescence is a time of opportunity, where parents and other caring adults can co-create environments that leverage where teens are in their brain development. We can provide spaces where young people are able to explore positive and healthy risk-taking behaviors, such as trying new activities and building relationships with peers and caring adults.

Is it normal adolescent brain development or a possible mental health challenge?

Many symptoms of mental health challenges can seem similar to aspects of typical adolescent development, so it can be difficult to tell whether a young person is simply going through natural changes or developing a mental health challenge. For example, social withdrawal is a symptom of many mental health challenges AND it is common for a young person to withdraw from family to spend more time with friends. However, if the youth is withdrawing from everyone, friends and family alike, there may be cause for concern.



LEARN MORE
https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/adolescent-brain

"90% of those with substance use disorders began using substances before the age of 18. Delaying first use until age 18 is good, delaying until age 21 is even better, and delaying until age 25, when we know that the brain is fully developed, is best."

- Emily Justice, Contra Costa County Office of Education, Manager, Tobacco Use Prevention Education

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Typical Adolescent Behavior May Include

Withdrawing *from family* to spend more time with friends.

Wanting to **stay up late** and **sleep in late**.

Getting frustrated or irritable from time to time.

Avoiding school work or experiencing some stress related to grades, upcoming tests, etc.

Pushing back against household rules, getting in trouble at school.

Seeking out and engaging in risk taking behaviors, such as trying out for a sports team or experimenting with alcohol and other drugs.

Signs of a Mental Health Challenge May Include

Withdrawing *from everyone*, both friends and family.

Struggling with not being able to sleep at all or needing 11+ hours a night.

Mood that is constantly escalating or responding **with violence**.

Unable to regulate emotions related to school or sudden reductions in grades.

Escalating rebellious behavior or breaking laws.

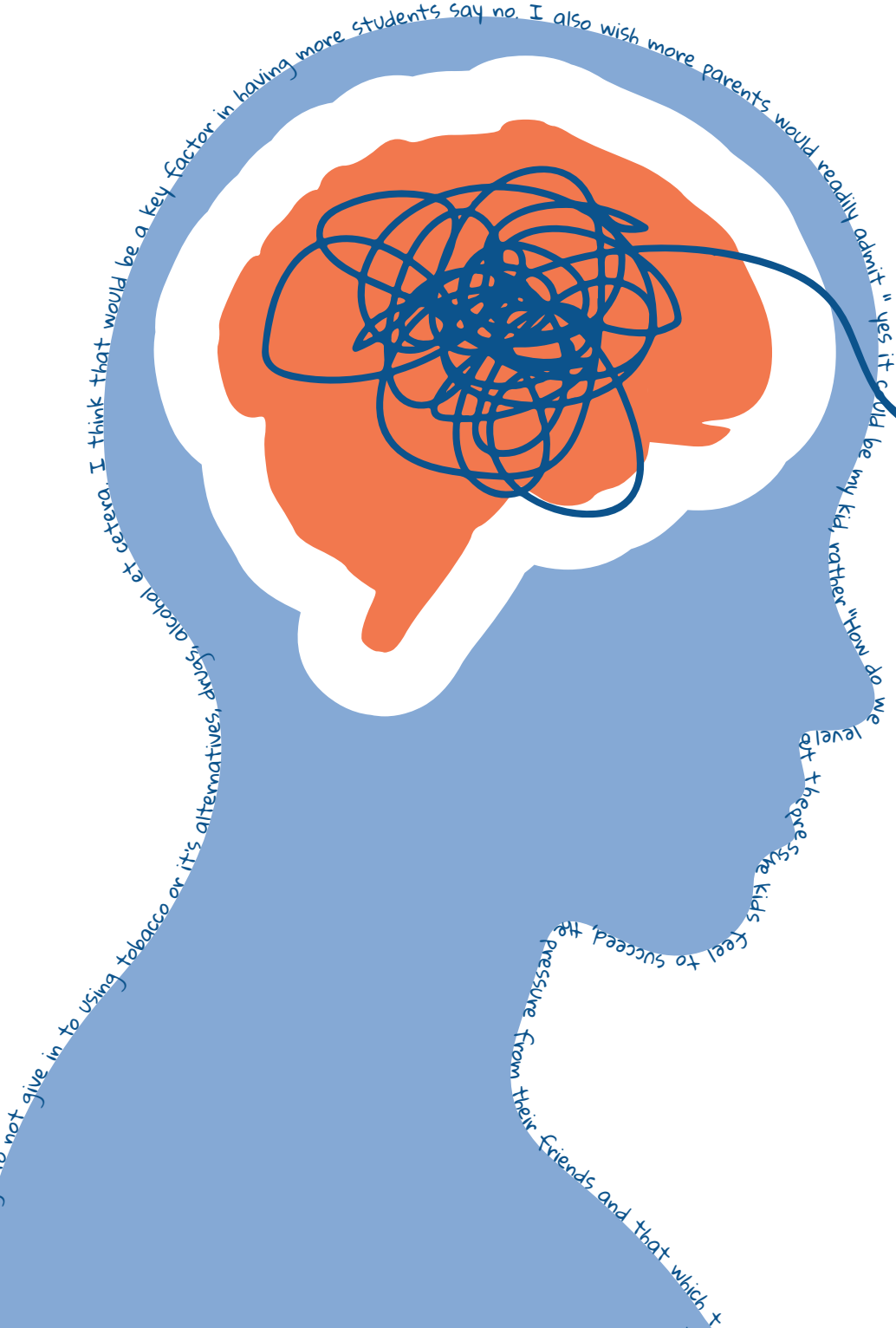
Binge drinking* or using regularly, whether frequent weekend use or use to self-treat issues like anxiety.

*Binge drinking is defined as drinking 4-5 or more drinks on a single occasion.

If you are in a crisis and need help immediately, **call 211** or **800-833-2900** or text **'HOPE' to 20121** now. Doing so will quickly put you in touch with a Contra Costa Crisis Center counselor.

"The missing piece for me is how to help fix the problem once it has taken hold."

PARENT VOICES



"How can we as a community combat what society is making the new normal. With legalized marijuana and e-cigarettes so easily accessible, it is hard to convince kids that they are harmful and messing with their brain development. Also, once they are hooked, how do we get them away from it?"

Learn more about the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a young person is experiencing a mental health challenge, as well as related resources at **mentalhealthfirstaid.org.**

It is important to recognize that, in addition to recognizing the signs and symptoms of possible mental health or substance use challenges that a young person may experience, adults also play an important role in increasing those protective factors that support the overall well-being of children and teens.

Protective Factors

- **Nurturing and attachment**
- **Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development**
- **Parental resilience**
- **Social connections**
- **Concrete supports for parents**
- **Social and emotional competence of children**



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROTECTIVE FACTORS, see Protective Factors to Promote Well-Being www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING



Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

SEL also helps to create welcoming environments for all. When students, families, and community members feel a part of the school community, research has shown that learning thrives, test scores rise, attendance improves, and there is less need for punitive discipline.



LEARN MORE
https://bit.ly/SEL_CCCOE

Support for Families Experiencing Housing Instability

All children and youth need safe and stable housing in order to thrive. Those experiencing homelessness often struggle with hunger, fear of family separation, exposure to trauma, and difficulties in school. The numbers of families experiencing housing instability are often underestimated since many people without homes are invisible in their communities. This includes families doubled up or living in motels or shelters. Homelessness extends beyond living on the streets.

Among the nation's homeless population, more than 1.5 million students, from kindergarten through 12th grade experience homelessness at some point during a school year. These children and youth lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.**

***The U.S. Department of Education's definition of homelessness.*

Table 1. Numbers and percentages of students experiencing homelessness, in each of the five Consortium counties and in California (2019)

County vs State	Total student enrollment	Number experiencing homelessness	Percentage experiencing homelessness
Alameda	236,076	4,014	1.7%
Contra Costa	175,040	3,062	1.7%
San Mateo	97,275	2,347	2.4%
Santa Clara	276,637	4,409	1.6%
Solano	66,140	1,402	2.1%
California	**6,329,883**	**269,269**	**4.3%**

Source: University of California Los Angeles (2020a, 2020b).



In California, the number of students experiencing homelessness has increased by 48 percent over the last decade.

Homelessness and its causes are varied and complex. Homelessness signals that families are living in extreme poverty and are forced to ration limited resources for shelter, food, health care, and child care when they are unable to afford basic necessities. Common causes of homelessness include lack of affordable housing, domestic violence, divorce, health problems, and economic challenges. Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to have physical, mental, or behavioral health challenges than their housed peers. They are also more likely to achieve below grade level, repeat a grade, have excessive absences, or drop out before graduating from high school.

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Schools serve as a safety net for students experiencing homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures that students experiencing homelessness have access to the full range of supports needed for academic success. McKinney-Vento protects students' rights to immediate enrollment, school stability, transportation, and family assistance.

Each school district has a designated homeless education liaison to assist families experiencing housing instability with additional resources, information and educational rights and support.



FIND YOUR DISTRICT LIAISON AT:
https://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1077397&pageId=2979072

SPOTLIGHT



"I have experienced it from my own family members and acquaintances that the younger someone starts using any substance the harder it is to leave it."

- Contra Costa County Parent

LEARN MORE AT: https://madd.org/why-21/

EXPLORE MORE MYTHS AND FACTS AT:
https://www.madd.org/the-problem/myths-and-facts

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW ALCOHOL CAN IMPACT A TEEN'S LIFE AT:
https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm

ALCOHOL

Young people who start drinking before age 15 are SIX TIMES more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21 years.

While most young people are not currently using alcohol, alcohol is still the most commonly used substance among young people. Underage drinking can be incredibly dangerous and can impact many aspects of a young person's life, including increasing the likelihood of experiencing school, social, legal, and physical problems.

MYTH	FACT
Alcohol is not that big of a deal anymore. Shouldn't I be more worried about other more dangerous drugs?	**Teen alcohol use kills 4,300 people each year**, which is more than all illegal drugs combined.
The law only makes youth want to drink because it's a "forbidden fruit."	In states where the **drinking age was 18, young people drank more than in states where the minimum drinking age was 21.** They also continued to drink more as adults in their early 20s.
Drinking is just a phase all kids go through; they'll grow out of it.	Most young people do not drink alcohol. The earlier that someone begins drinking, the more likely they are to be alcohol dependent in later life. **95% of the 14 million people who are alcohol dependent began drinking before the legal age of 21.**

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The following classifications of prescription medications are considered to be the most misused, abused, potentially addictive, and dangerous in terms of possible overdose:

- **OPIOIDS also known as painkillers** (Ex: as Vicodin, OxyContin, Norco, Percocet, Codeine, Morphine)
- **SEDATIVES** (Ex: Xanax, Ativan, Valium, Ambien)
- **STIMULANTS** (Ex: Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine)

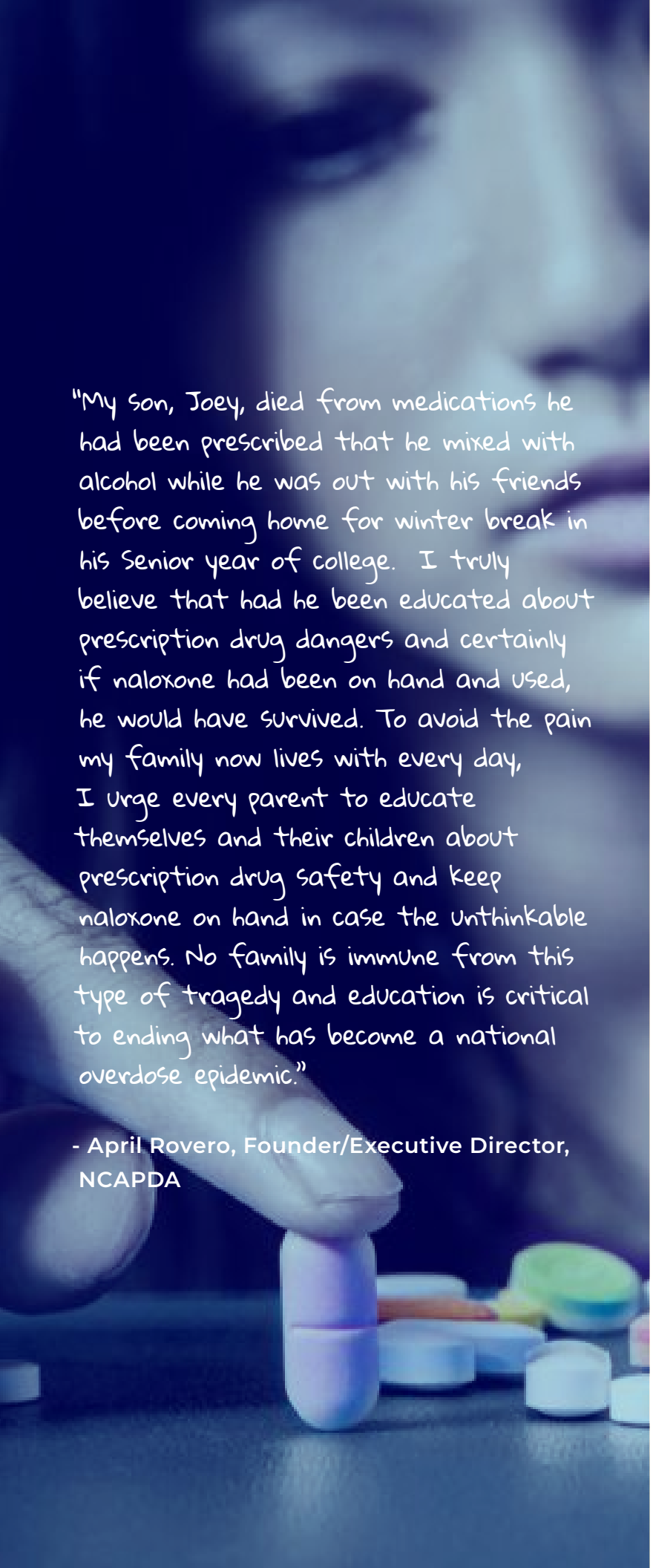
Prescribed medications can be an important treatment option for mental and physical health conditions but they also come with risks. When used recreationally to get high, misuse of prescription medications can lead to serious health issues, including substance use disorder or fatal overdose. Prescription medications are particularly dangerous when mixed with other substances. For example, when used with alcohol, use of prescribed painkillers can suppress breathing to the point it completely stops.

It is important for both young people and adults to be knowledgeable about prescription drug safety. We must reiterate the importance of only taking medications as recommended or prescribed by a medical professional and obtained directly from a legitimate pharmacy.

A low perception of the dangers of prescription drug misuse can lead to teens seeking out what they believe to be legitimate medications on social media sites, via illegitimate on-line pharmacies, or from other people. The counterfeit medications they are likely to receive may be laced with fentanyl, a powerful opioid that is 50-100 times more potent than morphine.



LEARN MORE about fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills at: https://www.songforcharlie.org/



"My son, Joey, died from medications he had been prescribed that he mixed with alcohol while he was out with his friends before coming home for winter break in his Senior year of college. I truly believe that had he been educated about prescription drug dangers and certainly if naloxone had been on hand and used, he would have survived. To avoid the pain my family now lives with every day, I urge every parent to educate themselves and their children about prescription drug safety and keep naloxone on hand in case the unthinkable happens. No family is immune from this type of tragedy and education is critical to ending what has become a national overdose epidemic."

- April Rovero, Founder/Executive Director, NCAPDA

FENTANYL IS A SYNTHETIC OPIOID and is deadly in very small amounts. We have lost multiple young people in Contra Costa County, one as young as 14 years old, to fentanyl overdoses in the last year.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FENTANYL:

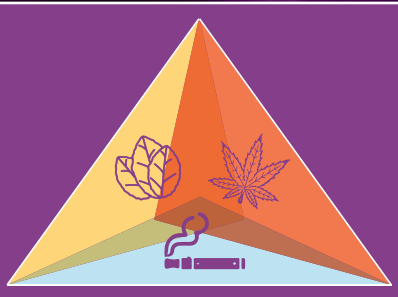
Fentanyl is an extremely powerful opioid, prescribed for acute pain that cannot be managed with other treatment options. While fentanyl is used in legitimate clinical settings, it is also being illegally produced and sold.

Counterfeit (fake) pills often contain fentanyl. Many of these fake pills are made to look like and are falsely marketed as legitimate prescription medications, such as Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax and Adderall. Fake pills are easy to purchase, widely available, and can be deadly. Fentanyl has become a major contributor to the alarming increase of overdose deaths. Just one of these pills can be laced with enough fentanyl to cause a fatal overdose.

LEARN MORE about the danger of fentanyl-laced pills at: https://www.dea.gov/onepill

LEARN MORE about youth and cannabis at
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/DO/letstalkcannabis/Pages/parents-mentors.aspx.





This "triangulum" reflects the intersection of tobacco, cannabis/marijuana, and vaping. Tobacco and cannabis co-use includes blunts–little cigars or cigarillos hollowed out and filled with cannabis–and vape pens that contain THC. Whether they contain nicotine or THC, all vaping devices are considered tobacco products.

CANNABIS/MARIJUANA

It is important to remember that the majority of young people are not using marijuana/cannabis. Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is the psychoactive substance found in cannabis/marijuana that makes people feel "high." THC potency has increased drastically, from less than 2% in smoked cannabis in the 1960s to 1980s, to upwards of 95% in the concentrated THC products such as oil, shatter, and edibles that are currently sold. The primary concerns with adolescent use of marijuana/cannabis include the increased risk of mental health issues, impaired driving, and the potential for addiction. Like other substances, the younger that someone begins using marijuana/cannabis, the more likely they are to experience the negative effects of use.

MYTH	FACT
Marijuana/cannabis is legal in some states, so it must be good for you.	Marijuana/cannabis is legal in some states for those who are 21 and older. In California, the law legalizing recreational cannabis use is called "The Adult Use of Marijuana Act" and was never intended to legalize use for those under 21.
Marijuana/cannabis is medicine, so it is okay for a young person to use.	Medical marijuana/cannabis is only intended to be used to help side effects of serious illnesses in which there are no other workable treatment options, such as increasing appetite in patients with AIDS, anorexia, or cancer, or decreasing the pain in people with chronic pain. In these extreme cases, there may be benefits; however, if used recreationally, there may be many more negative consequences with use.
Using marijuana/cannabis helps learning.	Marijuana/cannabis throws your hippocampus and amygdala out of balance. It can interfere with your hippocampus' ability to turn short-term memories into long-term ones. Also, it can disrupt your ability to access your long-term memory. Young people who use marijuana/cannabis are also more likely to have lower grades and less likely to graduate.



LEARN MORE about how marijuana/cannabis can impact a teen's life at:
https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/teens.html.

TOBACCO/VAPING



THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF TOBACCO OR NICOTINE USE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

- **Adolescent use of e-cigarettes/vape pens has surpassed combustible tobacco products.** Young people who would never have tried a cigarette are being introduced to nicotine through these devices.
- **Nearly all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vape pens, contain nicotine and nicotine is a highly addictive neurotoxin.** Exposure to nicotine during adolescence can harm brain development.
- **Tobacco use continues to cause preventable, long-term harms on health.**

TARGETING MANY POPULATIONS

Tobacco companies have a long and well documented history of targeting many populations, including people in low-income communities, racial and ethnic minorities, those in the LGBTQ+ community, women, youth, members of the military, and those with mental health illness. This targeting has resulted in higher rates of use among some groups and higher rates of tobacco-related illness.

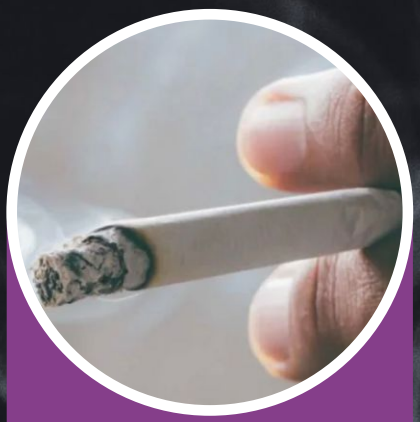


LEARN MORE:
https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/topic/targeted-communities.

E-cigarette/vape pens come in many different shapes and sizes, although they have basic components in common. A battery powers an atomizer (coil), which heats up the flavored e-liquid. Sometimes referred to as e-juice or vape juice, e-liquid is available in a range of nicotine strengths and flavors. These devices emit an aerosol, not a vapor. Aerosol is more discreet than cigarette smoke, dissipates more quickly, and may have a sweet smell. While Juul has decreased in popularity, other pod-based systems, like Puff Bar, Flum, Hyde, etc. are now the products of choice for young people who use tobacco.

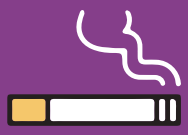
NICOTINE

Nearly all adult tobacco users began using tobacco under the age of 18, highlighting the importance of preventing, or at least delaying, tobacco use as long as possible.



CIGARETTE

contains about 10 mg of nicotine, although a smoker only inhales about 1 mg into their lungs.

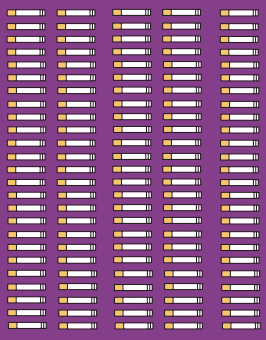


ONE CIGARETTE = 10 mg of nicotine = 1 mg of nicotine inhaled



POD-BASED SYSTEM

with 5% nicotine strength and 1.3 ml tank contains 125 mg of nicotine, or 125 cigarettes worth.

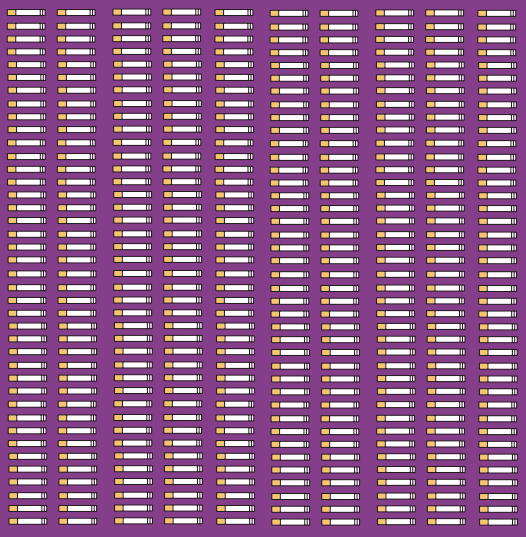


1 POD SYSTEM = 125 cigarettes



LARGE POD-BASED SYSTEM

with an 8 mL tank, contains 400 mg of nicotine, or 20 packs of cigarettes, worth



1 LARGE POD SYSTEM = 400 cigarettes

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RISKS:
https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html.

TOBACCO USE + ORAL HEALTH

Oral health impacts one's overall health both physically and mentally. Smoking can cause permanent consequences to the mouth and teeth, including gingivitis, gum disease, permanent tooth loss, and bad breath. Vaping e-liquids can cause mouth dryness and chronic mouth dryness can lead to bad breath, mouth sores, and tooth decay. Not only can smoking cause permanent damage, but it can also hurt a person's self-esteem as their smile suffers the impact of yellowing teeth and irreversible damage.

LEARN MORE about the relationship between tobacco and oral health at **mouthhealthy.org**. Visit **cchealth.org/dental** for resources, or seek information on how to sign up for Dental insurance/find a dentist in Contra Costa County.

PREVENT AND REDUCE TOBACCO USE

Effective ways to prevent and reduce tobacco use among young people include reducing access, increasing perception of harm, and encouraging current tobacco users to access available resources to cut back or quit. Reducing access can be done within the home, by making sure that any tobacco products are not accessible to young people. In addition, there are many local, state, and national efforts to reduce youth access to tobacco through tobacco retailer licensing.

LEARN MORE about local efforts to reduce youth access and exposure to tobacco in our communities, visit **https://cchealth.org/tobacco/.**



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

https://www.americastoothfairy.org/news/4-ways-vaping-can-ruin-your-teens-smile

To learn more about tobacco prevention in Contra Costa County, visit cocoschools.org/TUPE.

KICK IT California

Kick It California offer free services for teens and adults, including self-help materials and one-on-one counseling. Services are available in multiple languages.

In Contra Costa, dial 2-1-1 for direct quit tobacco referrals.

MENTAL HEALTH



If you are in a crisis and need help immediately, call 211 or 800-833-2900 or text ‘HOPE’ to 20121 now. Doing so will quickly put you in touch with a Contra Costa Crisis Center counselor.

WHY Mental Health MATTERS FOR YOUTH

MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES ARE COMMON

1 in 5 youth will experience a mental health challenge at some point during their life and 17.1 million youth under the age of 18 have or have had a psychiatric disorder–more than the number of children with cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and is important at every stage of life, from childhood through adolescence and adulthood. Mental health challenges are common and do not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, or other aspects of identity. Anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of their background, however, culture, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation can make access to mental health treatment more difficult.

3 most important things to know

- **Many factors contribute to the development of mental health conditions including life experiences, biological factors, and family history of mental illness.**
- **Untreated behavioral illness can decrease quality and enjoyment of life.**
- **A person is more than their mental illness. A lot of people care and are working hard to improve access to mental health services.**

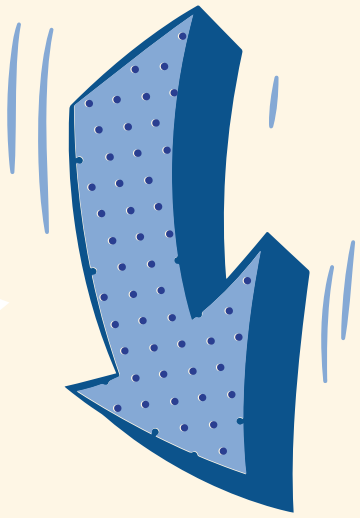
IMPACT ON TEENS

Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in the number of young people reporting feelings of chronic sadness. Poor mental health can impact many areas of a teen's life, including struggling with school and grades. Because the brain is going through another period of rapid development, many health-related habits developed during the teen years will carry over in adulthood. In addition to reducing risk, such as substance use, it is also important for parents and other caring adults to help youth develop good mental health.

INCREASE

- **EDUCATION** of staff, young people, families, and communities.
- **ACCESS** to mental health information and resources in schools and communities.
- **PARTNERSHIPS + COLLABORATION** between school districts, County Behavioral Health, and community-based organizations.
- **ADVOCACY** opportunities for those young people, parents, and others impacted by mental illness.



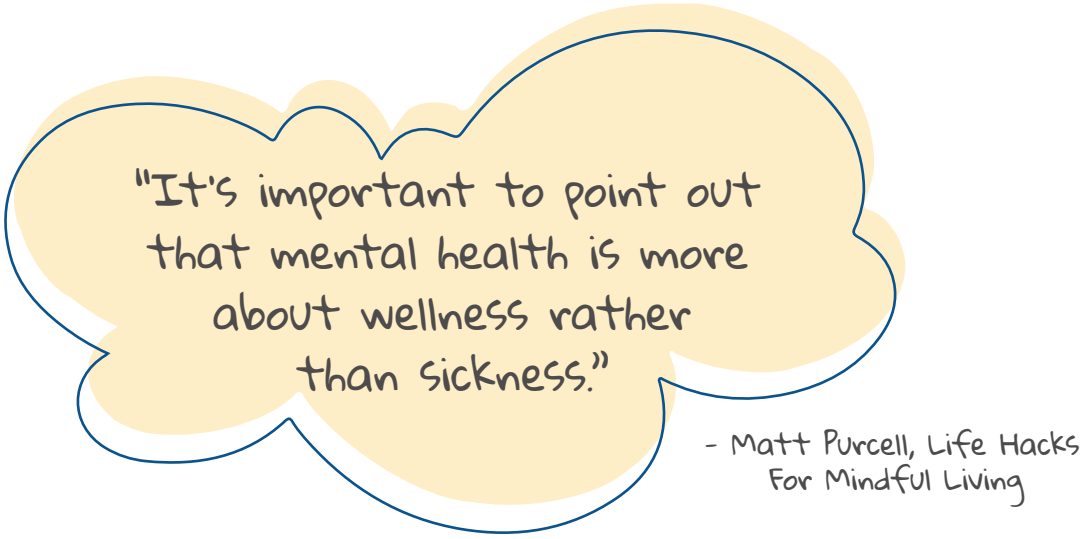


REDUCE STIGMA

STIGMA

Stigma, the negative or unfair beliefs that an individual or group holds about something, is a major barrier to people getting help for both mental health and substance use challenges. Some young people may not seek help because they are embarrassed or worried about being judged. Young people may also minimize how they are feeling because they don't want to upset or disappoint the adults that care about them. While we should never pressure someone to share their feelings with us, we can always reassure them that we care about them and want to help.

Responding to the challenges of mental health conditions and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness requires all of us.



The good news is that we know what works to support young people and their mental health: **feeling connected** to school, family, and other important people and organizations. Connectedness is an important protective factor and refers to a sense of being cared for and supported. Young people who feel connected are less likely to experience negative health outcomes related to substance use and mental health. See the tips at the end of this guide, for practical strategies to increase connectedness.



LEARN MORE: Visit the Contra Costa County Office of Education's Wellness In Schools Program (WISP) website, for more information and resources. https://bit.ly/SEL_CCCOE

TIPS



"As a teacher and parent dealing with children using substances, I have taken it upon myself to become educated."

- Contra Costa County Parent

TIPS FOR CARING ADULTS

TIP 1: ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, SUBSTANCES, AND MENTAL HEALTH.



- Become **brain development savvy.**
- Become **substance savvy.**
- Learn about the dangers of substance use and share what you learn with the young people in your life.
- Learn about the **signs and symptoms** of opioid and substance use disorder and intoxication and where to get help in your community.
- Learn the **signs of overdose**, get trained in overdose rescue and keep naloxone overdose rescue medication on hand. Naloxone can be purchased with or without a prescription at most pharmacies and is usually covered by medical insurance.

LEARN MORE AT https://cccmedscoalition.org/naloxone-availability/

RELATED RESOURCES:

- **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):**
  https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/parents-educators
  The latest science-based information about drug use, health, and the developing brain. Designed for young people and those who influence them—parents, guardians, teachers, and other educators—these resources inspire learning and encourage critical thinking so teens can make informed decisions about drug use and their health

- **Partnership to End Addiction:** https://drugfree.org/
  Tips for parents on preventing substance use and guidance on managing recovery from addiction. Includes free parent support helpline and family support locator plus many other resources.

- **MADD Power of Parents (Alcohol/Cannabis)** www.madd.org/the-solution/power-of-parents

TIP 2: EXPLORE PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS REGARDING SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH.



- Each person has rules or guiding principles for our lives that impact our own actions, as well as our view of others' actions. These may come from our family, our personal experiences, our culture, and/or our own spiritual beliefs.
- One important thing that adults can do is challenge the personal belief that drugs are "just a part of adolescent development."

As caring adults in the lives of young people, we can all work to shift from viewing adolescent substance use as inevitable and irreversible to preventable and remediable.

TIP 3: TALK EARLY AND OFTEN.

- An effective conversation begins with taking a look at the language we use and the messages we send to the young person we want to support. This includes using non-stigmatizing, person-first language such as "a person with a substance use disorder," instead of "a drug addict."
- Designate a time to talk and be mindful of the setting. Young people may feel more comfortable talking about substance use or mental health with you privately than in a group setting or vice-versa.
- Encourage your child to talk to you by being open and receptive to what they share and providing guidance when needed.
- Mealtimes and traveling in the car can both provide opportunities to have conversations and build trust in a one-on-one setting or as a group.
- Allow young people to be inquisitive, ask questions, share their thoughts and experiences, and listen to the thoughts and experiences of others.
- Discuss the dangers of taking any pill they aren't sure came from a legitimate pharmacy and any street drug as it may be laced with enough fentanyl to cause a fatal overdose.



LEARN MORE AT https://cccmedscoalition.org/fentanyl-what-you-need-to-know/

For young people experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge, a trauma-informed and recovery-oriented approach invites us to shift our question from "What is wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?" "What do you need?"

RELATED RESOURCES:

- **SAMSHA "Talk. They Hear You" Campaign**
  https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you

- **Mobile App**
  https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/mobile-application
  Resources to address the issue of alcohol and other drugs, including a mobile app to prepare for conversations. The app includes conversation starters, ways to keep the conversation going, and an interactive practice simulation section.

Let's Talk Tobacco–One Conversation at a Time

https://bit.ly/TalkTobacco

The Let's Talk Tobacco card deck includes tips for productive conversations, resources for parents and families, and over 30 questions to open up discussion.

TIP 4: REDUCE ACCESS AT HOME.

- If there is alcohol, cannabis/marijuana, and/or tobacco in your home, make sure it is not accessible to young people.
- Lock up any medications you need and properly dispose of those no longer needed or expired.



LEARN MORE about medication disposal sites in your area:
https://cccmedscoalition.org/medication-disposal-resources/

- Work with your child's physician regarding alternatives to prescription painkillers (opioids) for pain management for sports related injuries, wisdom teeth extraction and minor surgeries.

TIP 5: ACT QUICKLY TO RESPOND TO POSSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES.

- Take care of yourself and others by utilizing and encouraging self-help strategies. This goes for both young people and caring adults. Self-help, or self-care, is personal, so develop your own self-care plan by brainstorming the people and activities that improve your own mental or physical health.

- If your child is using alcohol or other substances, utilize the **Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT)** approach.



LEARN MORE AT https://drugfree.org/parenting-toward-recovery/.

- Seek appropriate professional help, if needed. Access social service and health information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling "211" from any phone. In addition to calling 211, you can also access information on the 211 Contra Costa website.

Opioid related overdose victims may be revived with a medication known as naloxone or Narcan, if available. Parents and other caring adults are encouraged to learn the signs of overdose and to keep naloxone on hand. Most pharmacies can provide it without a doctor's prescription and it is covered by most medical insurance companies. Contact NCAPDA at info@ncapda.org or 925-480-7723 for overdose rescue training and for additional resource information.

"We all need support for this (teen mental health and substance use) and we need to support it together!

- Contra Costa County Parent

The Contra Costa County Office of Education is working in partnership with schools throughout the county to train school staff and have Naloxone available for emergency use.



If you are in a crisis and need help immediately, call 211 or 800-833-2900 or text 'HOPE' to 20121 now.
Doing so will quickly put you in touch with a Contra Costa Crisis Center counselor.

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TOBACCO-USE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY Office of Education

MEDICATION EDUCATION MEDS COALITION CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AND DISPOSAL SAFETY
Saving Lives Through Collaborative Action

NCA PDA
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