

THE PREVENTATIVE PARENT

HELPING PARENTS BE PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN THE
LIVES OF THEIR TEENS

In this Newsletter:

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- Stress Triggers and Coping
- Community Resources



Cannabis - Is it Harmful?

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It is inevitable. With the rising rates of cannabis use, and popularity in the media and among peers, teens will ultimately come across information and use of cannabis. As a fact this can be scary, so let's explore the facts together.

1. THC is an addictive substance. Often I hear "It's just a leaf." However, the definition of a substance is a chemical that alters the physiology and function of one's body. THC alters physiology and can form a chemical dependence.
2. Cannabis, THC, CBD, Marijuana... What are we talking about here?! Cannabis refers to any substances derived from the Cannabis Sativa plant (of which there are over 500). Any substance from this plant can be referred to as a cannabinoid (this is where we get the abbreviation CBD). THC is the addictive cannabinoid from the cannabis plant that gives you a "high" or euphoric feeling. This is often what people are referring to when using the terms pot, weed, dab, or MJ.

Teens are in the most important part of brain development in which chemical substances, such as cannabis, can leave lasting impacts. This could lead to impaired executive functioning, increased paranoia, increased anxiety and depression, impair learning and memory retention, and long term lead to substance use disorders. As a parent, there are many things you can do to minimize underage use, and help teens learn safe boundaries. First, acknowledge that taking risks are an important part of growing and learning. Teens might be curious and try a substance. They might then learn what is bad for them through these risks.

You can also help them learn new information from factual sources, instead of from peers, or, our favorite, Tik Tok. Have conversations often with your teen about substance use, your expectations, and brainstorm ways your teen can be safe in social situations. If you don't know something, research together to find factual information. You are also allowed to be curious and ask questions to your teen about their interest in substances. Above all else, *listen!*

I've said it before and I will say it again, your substance use as an adult is noticed by your teen. If you tell them one thing (not to use) and you do the exact opposite (use), they will not believe what you say. Be aware of your impact on your teen as an adult in their life. Model choices you want them to make. For more information check out this [website](#).

Stress + Teens

What a combo! Teens will experience lots of stressors in their life. Now is the perfect opportunity to experience stress, learn about stress, and build resilience. Much more often than in childhood, teens will be taking on more responsibilities, more difficult homework, and engaging in more sports, clubs, or activities that can add to their plate. How do we help them manage, and what coping skills can we help them build into their daily routine? First things first, stress is a normal function of life. We all face small stressors each day from misplacing our phone to dealing with a difficult situation with a peer. Our mindset leading up to facing the stressor impacts the ability to overcome those stressors. Remind your teen that stress is normal, and it is okay to experience heightened times of stress. Now, if stress becomes chronic, or toxic, this is where we might want to seek out additional support for our teen such as therapy.

We can make sure we are in a good state to face daily stressors by meeting our basic needs. This means sleep, nutrition, movement, and personal hygiene. Think about it in your own life: when you don't get a good's night rest, often everything feels more stressful. When you didn't eat lunch, you become hangry and more irritated by the small stressors. Set your teen up for success by building in a good sleep routine, making sure they have nutrition in their body, and encouraging personal daily hygiene such as showering, brushing their teeth, and combing their hair. Bonus points if they are up and active 3-4x a week! It's okay to take breaks, although it is also important to face our stressors, not avoid them. Avoidance doesn't mean the stress goes away. Stress is still there, and we will still have to face it. This is where coping skills come in. There are helpful and unhelpful coping skills. Helpful skills help us in the present and future. Unhelpful skills might be a quick "band-aid" fix, but might cause more stress in the long-term. Unhelpful coping could include substance use, avoidance, overeating/undereating, binge watching tv, and procrastination. On the flipside, reading a book, taking a walk, talking to a friend or adult, taking a bath, and going outside could be more helpful. How do you model healthy coping?

To finish up, help your teen acknowledge when life might be getting more stressful. How do they feel? What are their warning signs of stress? What might trigger them? Helping them develop curiosity about their stress is the first step in facing their stress in a healthy way.



Community Resources

SEE WHAT RESOURCES ARE IN THE COMMUNITY

After School Programs for Children & Youth:

Take the Next Steps Kidz Club:

<https://www.tns.org/kidz-club-after-school-program>

Monroe Boys & Girls Club:

<https://bgcsc.org/clubs/monroe-club/>

Sky Valley YMCA After School Care: <https://ymca-snoco.org/programs/child-care/school-age-care/>

Mental Health Services

CH Counseling Services

<https://www.chcounselingservices.org/counselors>

Stories of Hope

<https://www.rosydeprado-storiesofhope.com/>

SeaMar Behavioral Health

<https://www.seamar.org/snohomish-bh-monroe.html>

Community Support Groups for Teens

Queer and Trans Youth Community Group:

<https://www.rosydeprado-storiesofhope.com/groups>

Monroe School District offers a new way to engage with mental health services!

Care Solace is a company devoted to connecting you with a mental health provider in two weeks or less. Check out this link to start your mental health journey:

<https://caresolace.com/site/monroefamilies>

