

## *Getting Help With Substance Abuse Problems:*

To locate a drug and alcohol treatment program nearest to you call,

**1-800-662-HELP**

Help is available within most communities, many of which offer payment assistance for eligible recipients.



Dear Parents,

This brochure is written to inform you about the issues of substance abuse among our teens today. I hope that this brochure helps provide you with the information and tools you may need to help keep our youth healthy and safe. I urge you to use it as a guide when speaking to your teen, and understand that communication is key in addressing topics like substance abuse. We must work to establish a constant and positive line of communication with our children, to help prevent substance abuse and the tragic consequences.

Gerard T. Leone, Jr.  
Middlesex District Attorney

This pamphlet was produced by:

**Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.**

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**Information for a Healthy Life**

Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc.



**PARENTS**

**LEARN,  
EVALUATE,  
AND  
TAKE ACTION AGAINST**

**Teenage Abuse of Alcohol & Drugs**



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## LEARN THE FACTS

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It is estimated that as many as 4,000 deaths occur each year from alcohol overdosing: drinking too much too fast. Families learn, in the most difficult way, that alcohol can be a lethal drug.

Alcohol use is correlated with illegal drug use. It can be a gateway drug for the use of other drugs.



Peer pressure begins early. One third of 4th graders and more than half of 6th graders say they have been pressured by friends to drink alcohol. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration SAMSHA)

The median age at which children begin drinking is about 13. (National Institute on Drug Abuse and Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

Teens who use alcohol are more likely than teens who do not drink to become sexually active at earlier ages, to have sexual intercourse more often, and to have unprotected sex. (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)



Young people who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until the legal drinking age of 21. (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

## EVALUATE YOUR TEEN

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Knowing the signs and symptoms of alcohol or drug dependency will allow you to promptly help your teen. Some signs that might indicate a chemical dependency problem are:

- Your child is withdrawn, depressed, tired, and careless about personal grooming
- Your child is hostile, uncooperative, and frequently breaking curfew
- Relationships with family members are deteriorating
- Significant and sudden weight loss
- Your child is suddenly hanging around a new group of friends
- Your child's grades have slipped and school attendance is irregular
- Your child has suddenly lost interest in hobbies, sports, and other once favorite activities
- Your child's eating or sleeping patterns have drastically changed
- Your child's eyes are red-rimmed and/or his or her nose is runny in the absence of a cold
- Household money has been disappearing

## TAKE ACTION

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**Talk** to your teen openly about your suspicions when you are calm and your child is not under the influence.

**Do not** delay talking with your teen or make excuses for their abnormal behavior.



**Tell** your child that you are concerned because you care. Reaffirm that you still love him or her.

**Find out** what your child has been dealing with that may lead him or her to drug use.

**If...** your child admits to using drugs or alcohol, work collectively as a family to solve the problem.

**Be** firm and enforce the consequences that are part of your family rules and values.

**Actively** listen to your child and answer their questions.

*\*Remember you are not alone. Addiction is a disease that can be treated and people can recover from it.*