

# OPIOIDS RUIN LIVES



## YOU CAN BE A CHILD'S GREATEST CHAMPION AND ADVOCATE!

*No educator wants to think that a student may be addicted to opioids. The problem of opioid abuse affects every community, no matter a person's race, or background.*

It's never too early or too late to talk with parents and students about the risks of prescription opioid misuse. As kids age, they make more decisions on their own and face greater temptation and peer pressure. Though it may not seem like it, young people really do hear your concerns. As an Educator, it's important you help them understand what prescription opioids are, why they shouldn't misuse them, and the danger of combining opioids with alcohol or other drugs.



### EDUCATOR GUIDE

## WHY DO TWEENS AND TEENS USE DRUGS?

It is helpful for educators to understand why an adolescent might be using drugs. The adolescent years are a key window for both substance use, and the development of substance use disorders. Brain systems governing emotion and reward-seeking are fully developed by this time, but circuits governing judgment and self-inhibition are still maturing, causing teenagers to act on impulse, seek new sensations, and be easily swayed by their peers—all of which may draw them to take risks such as trying drugs.

During tween/teen years, from mood swings to rebellion, many types of challenging behavior are normal, but experimenting with substance use isn't one of them. We need to rethink our perception of norms. Not everyone vapes, drinks, or uses drugs. A variety of experiences can become an excuse or reason for substance use. Periods of transition in young people's lives, like moving, divorce, puberty, change in schools, an illness or death in the family, can become a time of distress, leading some to attempt to find solace in alcohol or drugs.

## THERE ARE A VARIETY OF REASONS THEY USE, INCLUDING:

- **Curiosity and experimentation**
- **Peer pressure and trying to fit in**
- **Pressure to perform in sports or academically**
- **Pain relief after an injury**
- **Media influence: studies show that teens who watch shows or movies that depict substance use are more likely to copy those behaviors**
- **Risk-taking as a way to feel more independent**
- **The primary reason for drug abuse in teens is the need to self-medicate emotional pain.**

***Substance abuse becomes a way to escape distressing circumstances, feelings, or relationships***

***Understanding why young people use substances is a valuable step toward keeping them safe and healthy.***

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## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF TEEN OPIOID USE

You may notice your students seeming like they are in a constant fog or out of it. They may have trouble focusing on their school work or care about anything other than getting more drugs. Knowing the signs of opioid use can help you determine if they are struggling with opioid addiction and allow you to provide support and encouragement for them to seek treatment.

## POTENTIAL SIGNS OF DRUG USE INCLUDE:

- **Extreme fatigue**
- **Disheveled appearance**
- **Problems at home or school**
- **Changes in sleep habits**
- **Withdrawal from friends and family**
- **Poor coordination**
- **Shallow breathing**
- **Agitation**
- **Mood swings**
- **Depression**
- **Appetite changes**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Irritability**

*Signs of use and addiction can be physical, psychological, and emotional. If you notice changes in a student that seem to come out of nowhere, they may be struggling with addiction.*

## WARNING SIGNS OF ADDICTION IN TEENS

There are both physical and behavioral signs of drug use in teens. The behavioral signs of teen substances use can sometimes resemble typical teen angst or rebellion. There are also physical signs of drug use in teens that educators should be familiar with. Together, these early signs of teen substance abuse can help identify when a teen is struggling.

## 10 PHYSICAL SIGNS OF TEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 1 - **Bloodshot or watery eyes**
- 2 - **Runny nose, Frequent nosebleeds**
- 3 - **Sudden, unexplained weight loss or gain**
- 4 - **Shaking and tremors**
- 5 - **Poor hygiene and diminished personal appearance**
- 6 - **Smell of smoke on breath or clothes**
- 7 - **Compulsive eating, frequent hunger**
- 8 - **Puffy, swollen face**
- 9 - **Either fatigue or hyperactivity**
- 10 - **Wearing inappropriate clothing, such as long sleeves in summer to hide needle marks**

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## 10 BEHAVIORAL SIGNS OF DRUG USE IN TEENS

- 1 - **Emotional instability, extreme moodiness**
- 2 - **Loss of interest in once-favored activities**
- 3 - **Feelings of intense sadness**
- 4 - **Irritability, anger, aggression**
- 5 - **Difficulty staying focused, causing problems in school**
- 6 - **Secretive behavior, territorial, hiding in their room**
- 7 - **Stealing, unexplained need for money**
- 8 - **Sleeping more than usual, staying in bed all day**
- 9 - **Avoiding eye contact, withdrawing into their shell**
- 10 - **Replacing longtime friends with a new friend group**

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## KNOW THE FACTS

Before, teens had to go search for drugs and decide whether they should really risk it -- going to the streets to buy drugs. But now, because it is so easily accessible on their feed and on their timeline, many are thinking "Why NOT?" The drugs being sold today are not what they are advertised to be. Most all the drugs purchased illegally today are laced with deadly amounts of fentanyl. This creates dangerous scenarios where the outcome can be deadly.

## FACTS ABOUT FENTANYL

(Source: Alabama District Attorneys Association)

- **Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid analgesic that is similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent.**
- **Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths.**
- **Illegal fentanyl is being mixed with other drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and MDMA. This is especially dangerous because people are often unaware that fentanyl has been added.**

## FACTS ABOUT ALABAMA DRUG USAGE

(Source: Alabama District Attorneys Association)

- **The location of the State of Alabama makes it a convenient spot for connections to illegal drugs. With the major interstates that run across Alabama, and with the close proximity to Atlanta, Georgia, a major illegal drug distribution area for the Southeast, the illegal drug trade is very active in Alabama.**
- **Fentanyl overdose deaths in Alabama increased a staggering 135.9 percent from 2020 to 2021 (453 deaths in 2020 to 1,069 in 2021.)**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KIDS BUYING DRUGS ONLINE

Kids used to have limited options for where they could find and get drugs: friends at school, home medicine cabinets, or on the street. Now, they don't even have to leave their house. Buying drugs online has become increasingly popular and drug dealers are targeting kids on social media.

The infographic features a blue header with the logo for 'the hub' and the title 'THE DARK SIDE OF SNAPCHAT & INSTAGRAM'. Below the header, there are two main sections. The left section, on a pink background, is titled 'What you think Snapchat & Instagram are for: Selfies, funny filters and friends.' and shows a smartphone displaying a Snapchat post of a girl with a piggy mask and an Instagram post of a group of people. The right section, on a black background, is titled 'In reality, drug dealers are targeting kids on Snapchat and Instagram!' and shows a smartphone displaying a Snapchat post of a pile of red pills and an Instagram post of a 'Menu' for 'Hypoxia (Long Script)' listing various drugs and prices. At the bottom, a blue banner says 'Talk to your kids about the dangers of buying prescription drugs (or any drug) online!'.

SOURCE: <https://www.thehubct.org/post/kids-can-buy-drugs-easier-than-you-think>

Drug dealers have evolved from selling drugs on the street corners to utilizing social media to make transactions without ever leaving their homes. Finding these drug dealers is easy and can happen less than 3 minutes online. Teens can buy drugs online or on social media, pay with digital wallet apps, and have the drugs delivered to their home without their parents' knowledge. Criminals are constantly referring to drugs by different names to avoid detection. In this age of technology, some of those words have been replaced with pictures and emojis.

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## KNOW THE CODE

They may look innocent, but the combination of cookie, snowman, box, and parachute emojis can be code for “a large batch of cocaine has arrived.” A school bus is code for Xanax; a blue heart, methamphetamine. A maple leaf represents **all drugs**. It’s important for educators to be aware of what this language is - it’s like a different language that our teens are using. Emojis, on their own, should not be indicative of illegal activity, but coupled with a change in behavior, change in appearance, or significant loss/increase in income should be a reason to start an important conversation.”



EMOJI CODES GRAPHIC SOURCE: <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/Emoji%20Decoded.pdf>

## KNOW THE NICKNAMES

Many opioid medications and illicit opioids have slang or street names. A person may refer to a drug by a nickname or in slang to prevent loved ones or friends from knowing what they are using. Knowing the nicknames of opioids may help you determine if a loved one is abusing these drugs. Many of these drugs have nicknames that intentionally sound harmless so that adults don't know

what it is, despite the fact that opioids are highly-addictive and very dangerous. Recognizing these opioid drug slang names early on may also help prevent a person from becoming an addict.

## THIS IS A LIST OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOID STREET NAMES WITH THEIR CORRESPONDING BRAND AND GENERIC NAMES:

### ● **Oxycodone:**

Brand names: Oxycontin, Percocet, Percodan  
Street names: Oxy, Hillbilly Heroin, Percs, O.C., Rims, Tires, Greenies

### ● **Hydrocodone:**

Brand name: Lortab, Norco, Vicodin  
Hydrocodone street names: Vike, Bananas, Fluff, Hydros

### ● **Morphine:**

Brand names: Kadian, Duramorph, MS Contin  
Street names: Miss Emma, Monkey, White Stuff, M

### ● **Codeine:**

Brand name: Various  
Street names: Lean, Captain Cody, Little C, Schoolboy

### ● **Buprenorphine:**

Brand names: Suboxone, Subutex  
Street names: Buse, Sobos, Strips, Oranges

### ● **Fentanyl:**

Brand names: Actiq, Sublimaze  
Street names: Apache, China Girl, Goodfella, China White, TNT, Friend, Dance Fever

### ● **Hydromorphone:**

Brand names: Dilaudid, Exalgo  
Street names: Smack, Dillies, Footballs, Juice

### ● **Methadone:**

Brand names: Dolophine, Methadose  
Street names: Tootsie Roll, Red Rock, Mud, Dolls

### ● **Oxymorphone:**

Brand name: Opana  
Street names: Biscuits, Mrs. O, O Bomb, Octagon

### ● **Tramadol:**

Brand name: Ultram  
Street names: Chill Pills, Trammies, Ultras

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## COMMON OPIOID STREET SLANG NAMES

In addition to prescription opioids, there are also opioids and opioid combinations that are illicit and have no medical use. These drugs are sold on the street under both their common names and street names. Some people who use opioids may look for stronger forms of the substance illegally, like heroin. Street opioids may be less expensive, more readily available, and much more potent. Unfortunately, buying drugs on the street or internet can be extremely dangerous, as many of these drugs are “cut” with other substances that the user is unaware of.

## COMMON STREET OPIOIDS AND THEIR SLANG NAMES INCLUDE:

- **Black Tar Heroin:**

Street names: Chiva, Mexican Black Tar Heroin, Mexican Tar

- **Cocaine with Heroin:**

Street name: Speedball

- **Heroin:**

Heroin street names: Black Tar, Black Pearl, Black, China White, Dope, White Girl, White Horse, Brown Sugar, White Lady, Smack, Snow, Snowball

**SOURCE:** <https://vertavahealthmassachusetts.com/blog/common-opioid-street-slang-nicknames/>

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS OVERDOSING

It may be hard to tell whether a person is high or experiencing an overdose. If you aren't sure, treat it like an overdose – you could save a life.

- 1 - **Call 911 Immediately.\***
- 2 - **Administer Naloxone, if available.\*\***
- 3 - **Try to keep the person awake and breathing.**
- 4 - **Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.**
- 5 - **Stay with the person until emergency assistance arrives.**

\*Most states have laws that may protect a person who is overdosing or the person who called for help from legal trouble.

\*\* Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of opioid overdose and save lives. It is available in all 50 states and can be purchased from a local pharmacy without a prescription in most states.

**SOURCE:** <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fentanyl/>

## HOW TO TALK TO YOUR STUDENTS

The tween, teen and young adult years can be confusing, complicated, and formative. Understanding what's happening socially and developmentally, and how it can intersect with substance use, is fundamental to setting the stage for healthier outcomes.

Open and honest conversations are one of the most powerful tools educators can use to connect with parents and students. When tackling some of life's tougher topics, especially those about drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge. Here are a few conversation points on how to talk with your students and their parents, no matter their age.

- **Always keep conversations open and honest.**
- **Come from a place of caring, even when you're having tough conversations.**
- **Balance positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement.**
- **Keep in mind that teachable moments come up all of the time.**

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## LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESOURCES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND FIND HELP

### ALABAMA

#### Addiction Prevention Coalition

Pursuing freedom and healing from addiction. At all costs. Our vision is to prevent substance abuse and relapse by inspiring and educating people to live with hope, resilience, and purpose. Visit our website or call 205-874-8498.

#### Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH)

ADMH contracts with community-based entities throughout Alabama to offer outpatient and residential services. If you, or a family member or friend, is struggling with addiction or in need of support. For Substance Abuse help, call 1-844-307-1760. For Mental Illness help, call 1-800-367-0955. [Understanding the Opioid Crisis.](#)

#### Connect Alabama App

Through the Department of Mental Health, is a behavioral health services and treatment finder application, provides individuals instant access to education, information and services related to substance use, mental health, and prevention. Download on iOS through the app store and for Android devices via Google play.

### NATIONAL

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous. If you're struggling with prescription opioids, there is hope. Recovery is possible.

#### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's SAMHSA's National Helpline

**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**, or TTY: **1-800-487-4889** is a confidential, free, 24/7, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. If you, or a loved one needs treatment for a substance or mental health-related matter, go to [Find.Treatment.SAMHSA.gov](#) or call the 24/7, national helpline.

#### The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Provides support for people in crisis. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between 10 to 24. Sometimes they feel as though their struggle is being underestimated by their age. But we need to listen to them and let them know help is available. Call or Text 988 – calls are confidential.

LEARN MORE AT:  
[BESMARTDONTSTART.COM](https://www.BESMARTDONTSTART.COM)

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