

Why do young people use drugs?

When asked, young people offer a number of reasons for using drugs; most often they cite a desire to change the way they feel.

Other reasons include:

- ✓ Escape school and family pressures
- ✓ Low self-esteem
- ✓ To be accepted by their peers
- ✓ To feel adult-like or sophisticated
- ✓ Curiosity
- ✓ Perception of low risk associated with drugs
- ✓ Availability of drugs

For more information:

Jeff Griffith Youth Center, Hollywood

7051 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90038
(323) 860-2280

Provides substance abuse counseling and primary health care to youth 14-24 years of age. Also provides referrals.
methrecovery@lagaycenter.org

The West Hollywood Recovery Center

626 N. Robertson Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90069
(310) 360-4833
www.thewhrc.org

Torrance Memorial, Thelma McMillen Center for Chemical Dependency Treatment

Teen outpatient program, free and confidential assessment
3333 Skypark Dr., Suite 200
Torrance, CA 90505
(310) 257-5760 After hours emergency (310) 257-5777
www.TorranceMemorial.org/tcmcmillen

City of West Hollywood Public Safety Division

(323) 848-6414 TTY (323) 848-6496

West Hollywood Sheriff's Station

(310) 855-8850



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www.weho.org



Teen Drug Awareness

Don't let common teen challenges cause your child to experiment with substances.

According to a recent national confidential survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 15,000 teenagers ages 14 to 18 have experimented with illegal substances. Of these, 37 percent have smoked marijuana, 7 percent have tried cocaine, 18 percent have used inhalants and 11 percent have used methamphetamines. The remaining 27 percent have tried more than one of the above substances, along with experimenting with other drugs.

What are some of the reasons for drug use? Research shows that adolescents are at a higher risk of first-time use during periods of “change” in order to cope with stress. A new school year may bring many new changes: new school, new teachers, new friends and new social and emotional challenges. Don’t let these common teen challenges cause your child to experiment with substances.

Risk Factors

Prevention experts have identified “risk factors” and “protective factors” to help determine how drug abuse begins and how it progresses. Risk factors can increase a person’s chances for drug abuse, and protective factors can reduce the risks.

Here are some early signs of risk that may predict later drug use:*

- ✓ **Association with drug abusing peers**
- ✓ **A lack of attachment and nurturing by parents or caregivers**
- ✓ **A caregiver who abuses drugs**
- ✓ **Aggressive behavior**
- ✓ **Lack of self-control**
- ✓ **Poor classroom behavior or social skills**
- ✓ **Academic failure**

**It’s important to remember that not everyone at risk for drug abuse actually becomes a drug user.*

Protective Factors

The American Academy of Pediatrics claims parents can be the number one force against their child’s drug use.

- ✓ **Research shows that kids who learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use.**
- ✓ **Start by establishing rules in your home. Make it clear that drug use will not be tolerated.**
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for children to talk about changes happening in their world. Keep the lines of communication open.**
- ✓ **Help build confidence.**
- ✓ **Teach them how to handle peer pressure.**
- ✓ **Reinforce the lessons over time.**
- ✓ **Be a role model. Set a good example by being a consistent, positive presence in children’s lives. By talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol, you can help them make better choices and live safer, healthier lives.**

Teenagers are smart. They listen. They learn. And they can apply what they hear and know to situations they face.