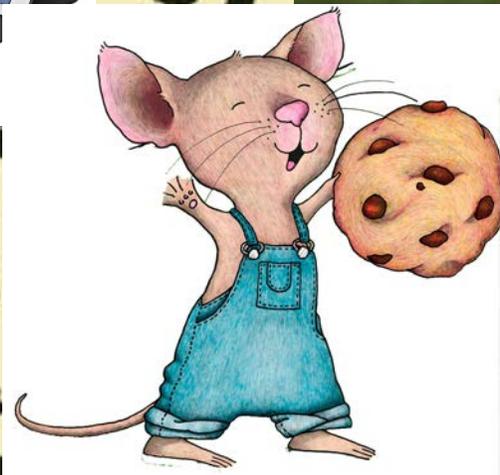


Adolescent Mental Health in 2021

Unique Challenges
Strategies For Parents

Aaron Weiner, PhD

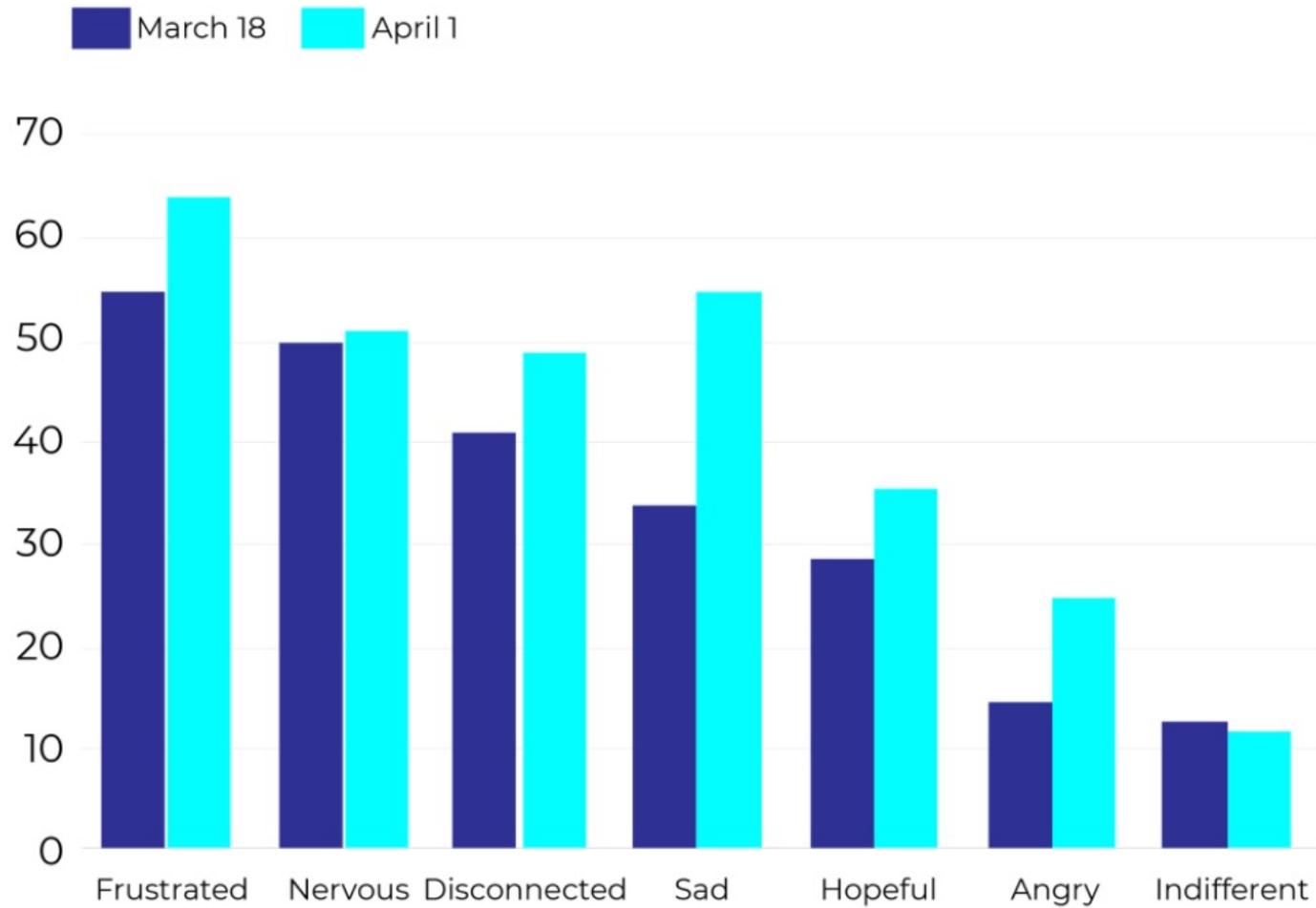
aaron@weinerphd.com





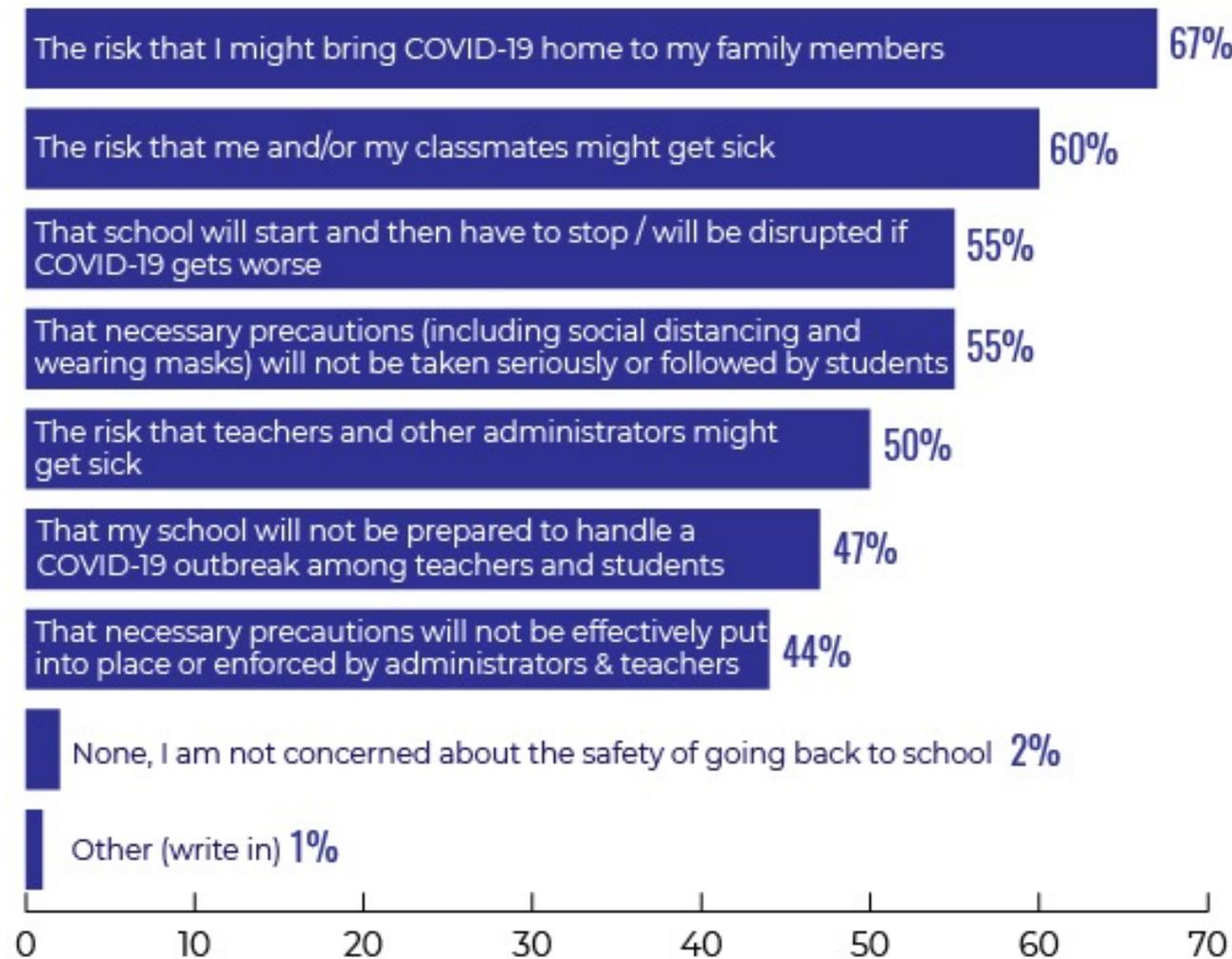


HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FEELING ABOUT COVID-19



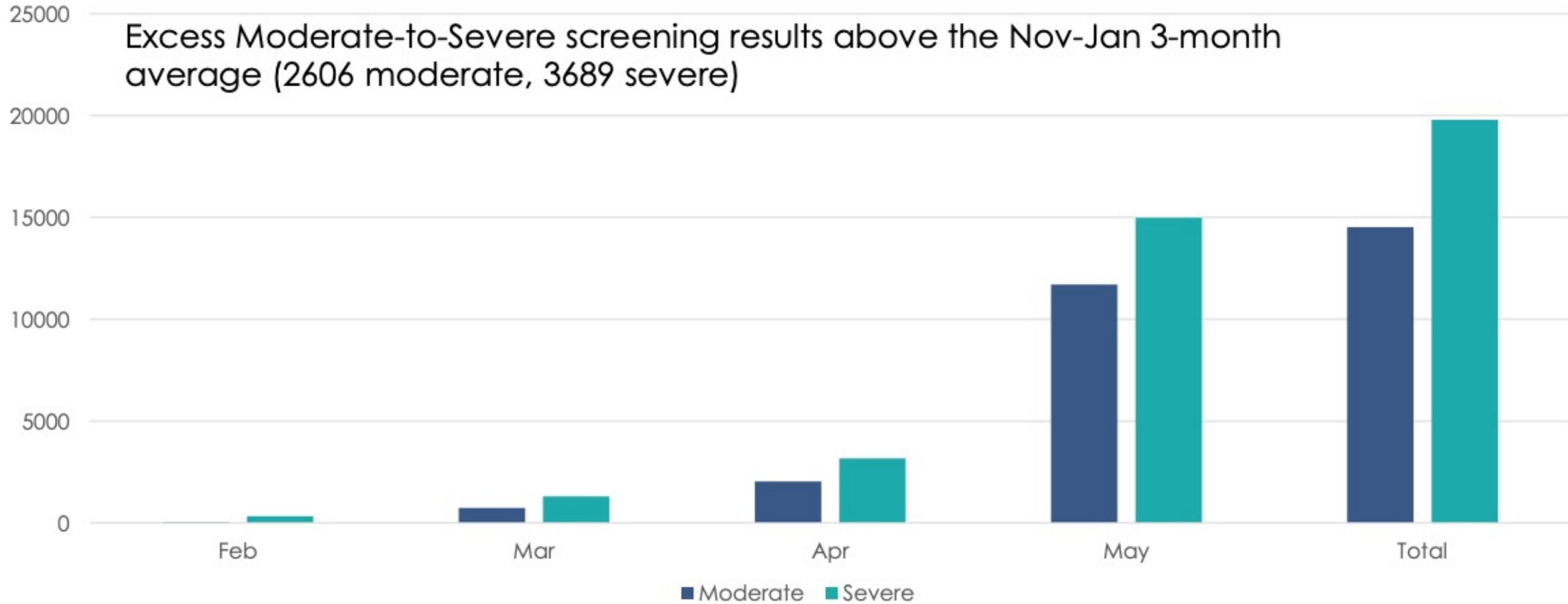
Source: DoSomething.org Member Survey, March 18, 2020, n=3,301, April 1, 2020, n=2,314.
What best describes how you feel about the COVID-19 outbreak?

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT WHEN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL



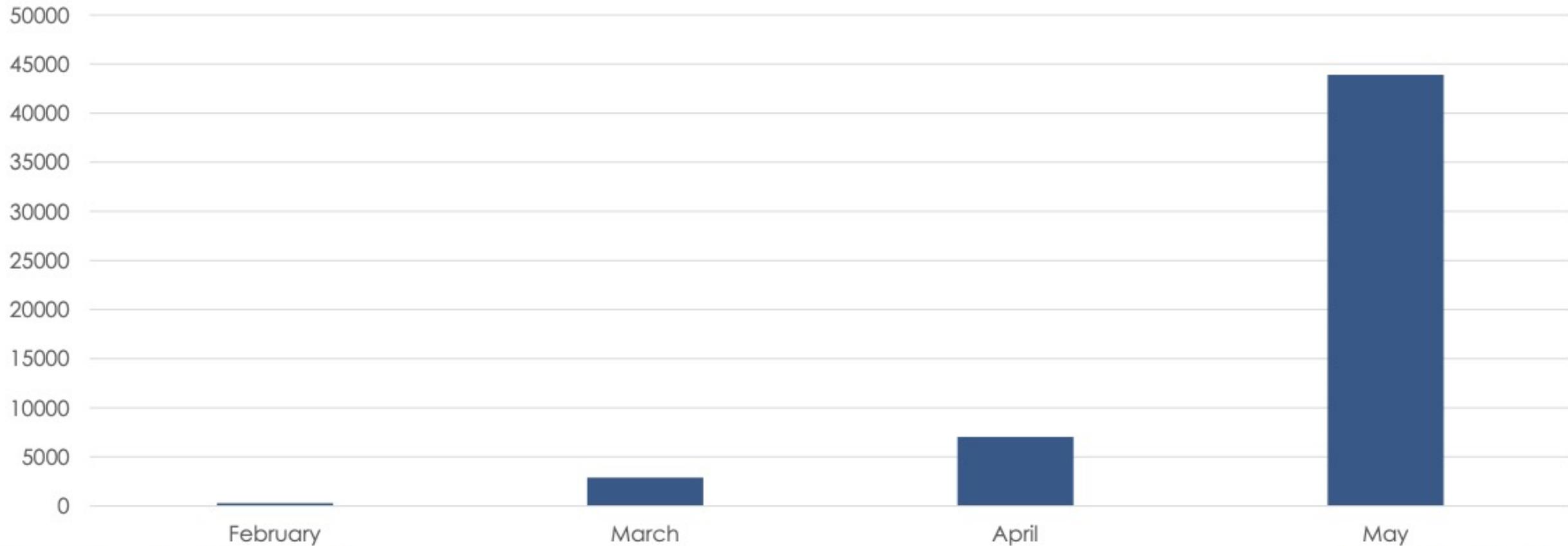
Source: DoSomething.org Member Survey, August 10, 2020, n=1,177
What are you most concerned about regarding the safety of going back to school in light of COVID-19? (Select all that apply.)

More Than 34,312 Additional Screeners Have Anxiety Since COVID-19 Pandemic



More Than 54,093 Additional Screeners Have Depression Since COVID-19 Pandemic

Excess Moderate to Severe Depression Screens above the previous 3-month average (10,867 moderate to severe)



Normal vs. Problematic Reactions



General signs of emotional distress

- **Internalizing**

- Academic problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- “Shutting down”
- Social withdrawal
- Somatic problems
- Excessive time in social media or games

- **Externalizing**

- Moodiness and defiance
- Alcohol and drug use
- Extreme sensitivity to criticism
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Violence or “acting out”

Specific concerns

- Depression
 - Negative thinking, expectancies, and comments
 - Statements of low self-esteem
 - Not enjoying normally pleasurable activities
 - Frequent crying
 - Suicidal indicators
 - Thoughts, statements, or writing about death or suicide
 - Speaking positively about the impact of death
 - Giving away valued items



- Anxiety
 - General sense of overwhelm
 - Avoidance of certain activities or groups
 - Panic attacks

Eating Disorders

- Preoccupation with food or weight
- Body dissatisfaction
- Emphasis on control
- Skipping meals or excessive exercise
- Binging
- Leaving after meals
- Excessive time in the bathroom
- Weight change
- Cavities or enamel erosion



Youth Substance Use

- By their senior year...
 - 70% have tried alcohol
 - 50% have used some illegal substance
 - 40% will have smoked a cigarette
 - 20% will have misused a prescription
- 8% of the general population has a diagnosable substance use disorder
 - 90% start during teenage years

2019 Monitoring the Future Survey

Key Findings: Percent Reporting Use of Selected Substances

	8 th Grade	10 th Grade	12 th Grade		8 th Grade	10 th Grade	12 th Grade
Vaping, Any				Tobacco w/Hookah			
Past Year	20.1	35.7	40.6	Past Year			5.6
Past Month	12.2	25.0	30.9	Past Month	1.3	2.4	4.0
Vaping, Nicotine				Flavored Little Cigars			
Past Year	16.5	30.7	35.3	Past Month	2.2	3.7	7.7
Past Month	9.6	19.9	25.5	Narcotics Other than Heroin			
Vaping, Marijuana				Past Year			2.7
Past Year	7.0	19.4	20.8	Past Month			1.0
Past Month	3.9	12.6	14.0	Marijuana			
Vaping, Just Flavoring				Past Year	11.8	28.8	35.7
Past Year	14.7	20.8	20.3	Past Month	6.6	18.4	22.3
Past Month	7.7	10.5	10.7	Daily	1.3	4.8	6.4
Cigarettes				Alcohol			
Past Month	2.3	3.4	5.7	Past Month	7.9	18.4	29.3
Daily	0.8	1.3	2.4	Daily	0.2	0.6	1.7
½ Pack +/-Day	0.2	0.5	0.9	Binge	3.8	8.5	14.4

Change from 2018 to 2019

■ Significant Increase

■ Significant Decrease



BLUEBERRY ICE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [13 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~



MANGO FROST POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [10 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~



PINK LEMONADE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [6 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~



LUSH ICE POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [12 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~



COOL MINT POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [6 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~



PINEAPPLE SLUSH POSH DISPOSABLE VAPE

★★★★★ [15 Reviews](#)

\$6.99
Regular Price
~~\$7.99~~

More THC, More Consequences

Percentage of THC and CBD in Cannabis Samples Seized by the DEA from 1995-2018

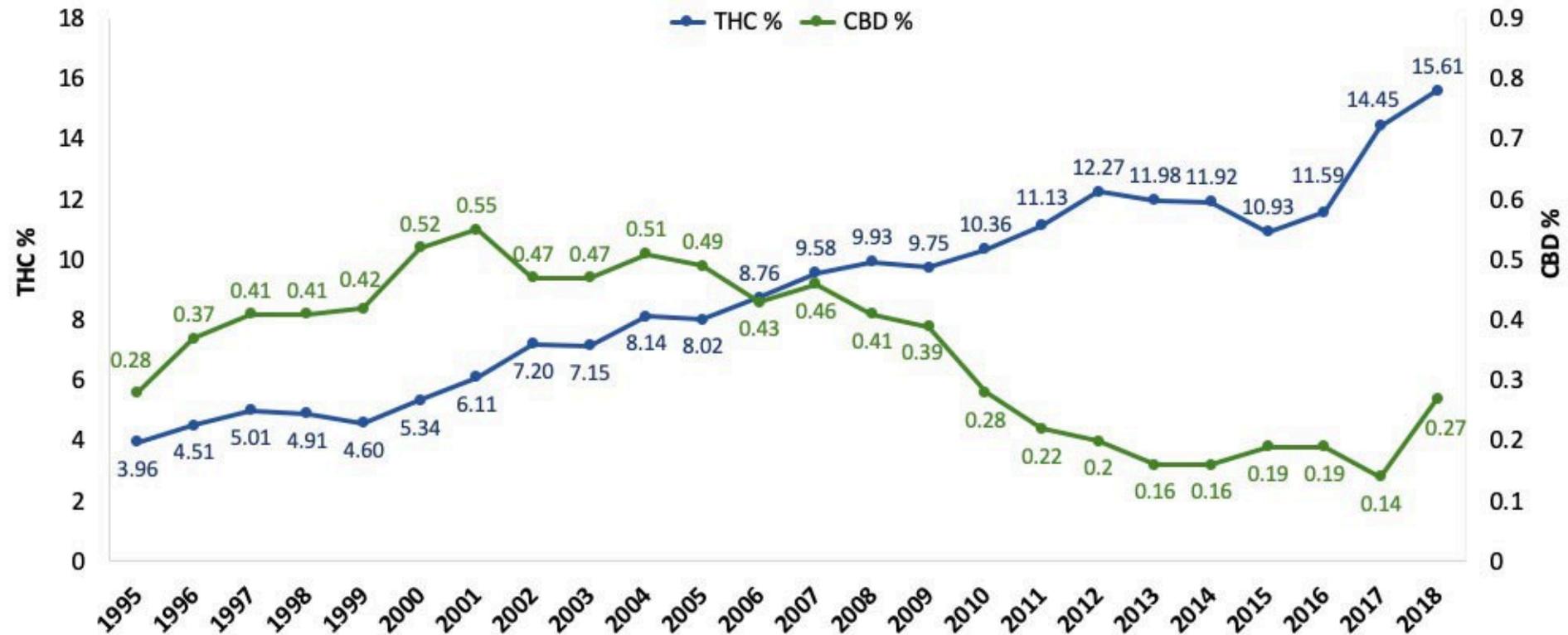


Fig 3. Proportion of products with different levels of THC per state.

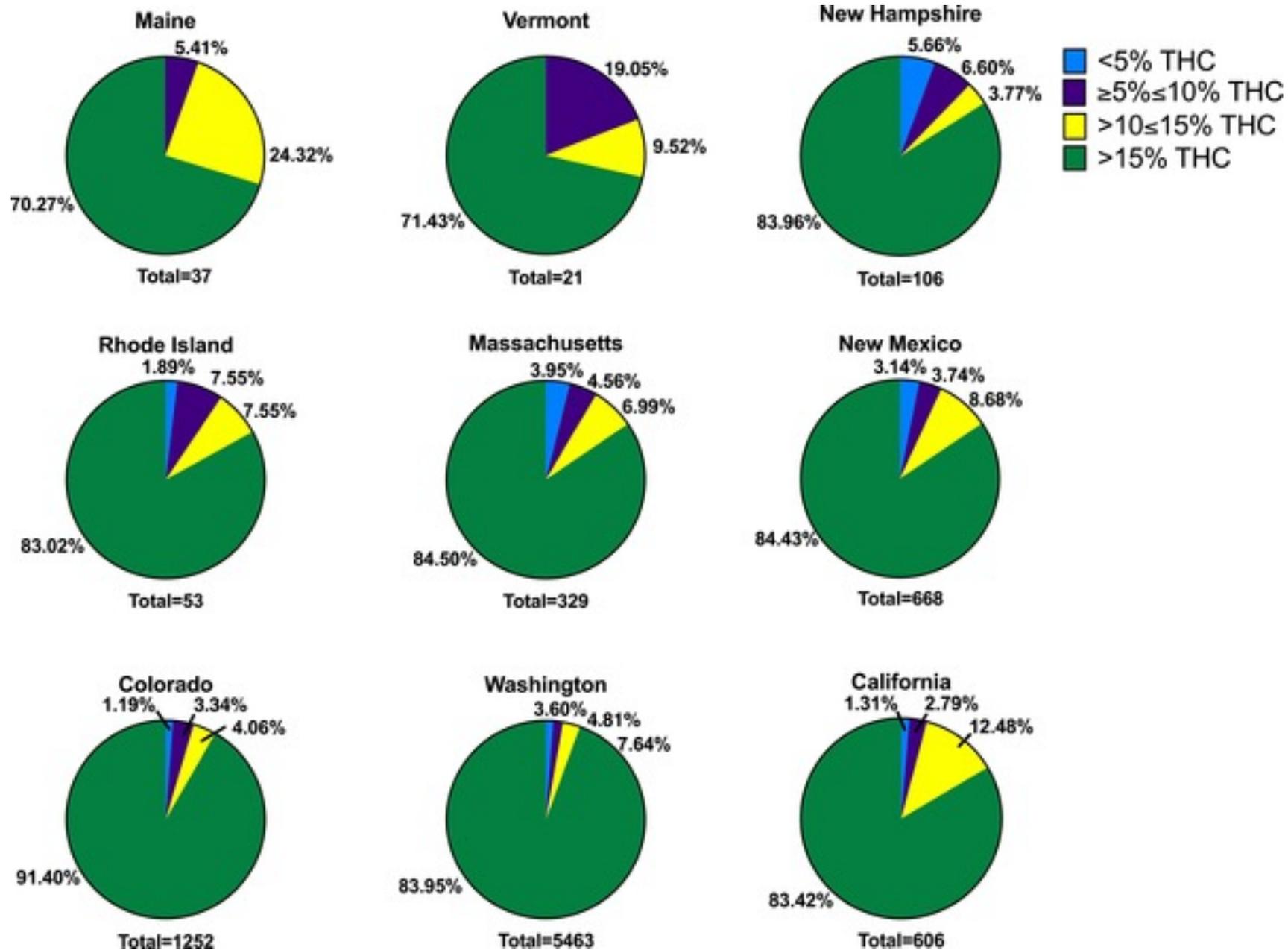
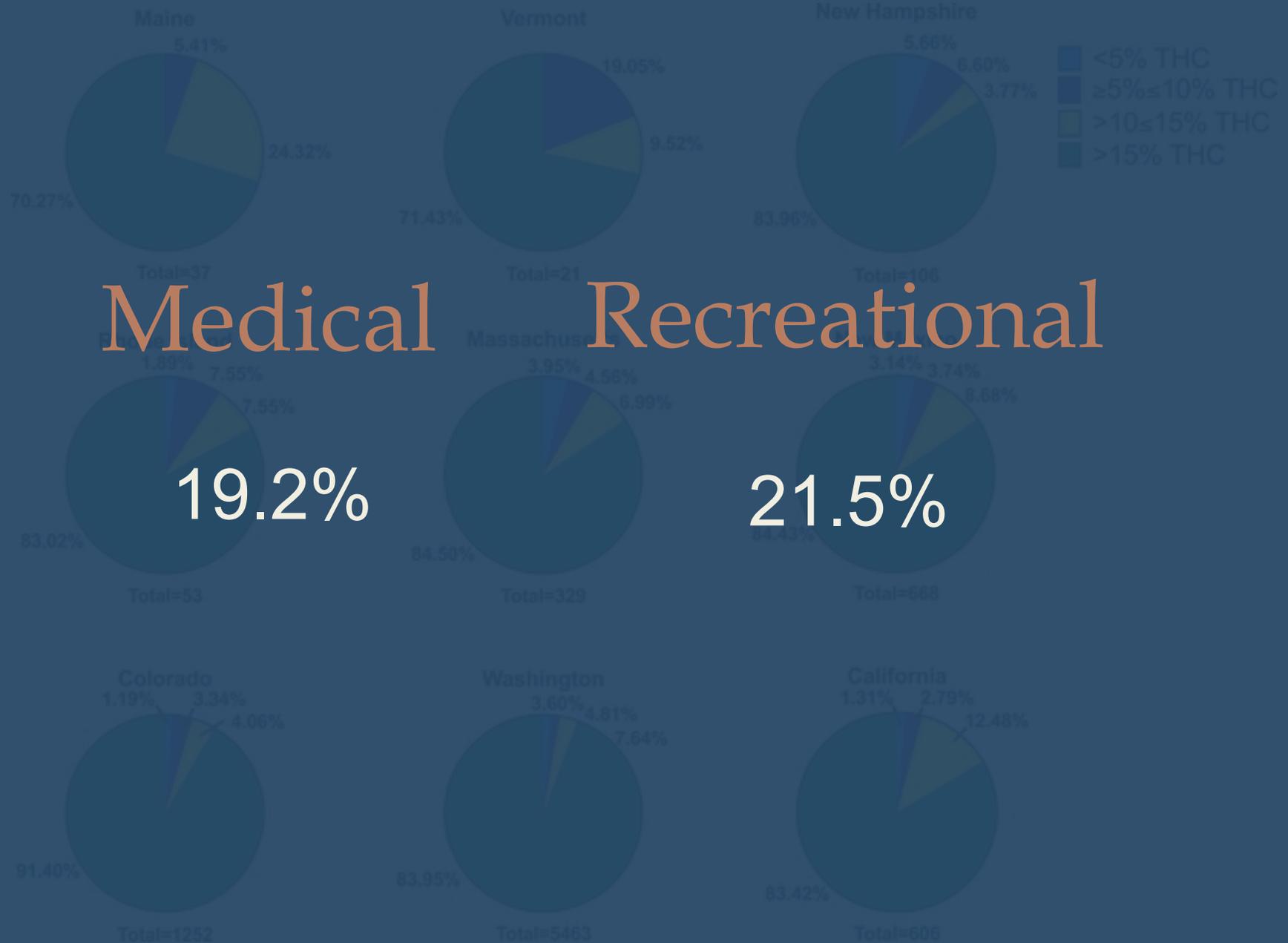


Fig 3. Proportion of products with different levels of THC per state.



Marijuana – Flavors, Edibles, & Marketing



So, how can we help?

Seek first to understand...

- Communicate with **LOVE**
 - **L**istening
 - Open-ended questions, reflections
 - **O**ffering
 - Feedback sandwich
 - Ask permission
 - Provide information
 - Ask for reactions
 - **V**alidating
 - Reinforces self-efficacy, self-trust
 - **E**mpathizing
 - Be in the hole with them
- Have persistence and don't get discouraged
- All behaviors have a **purpose**



Emphasize healthy connectivity

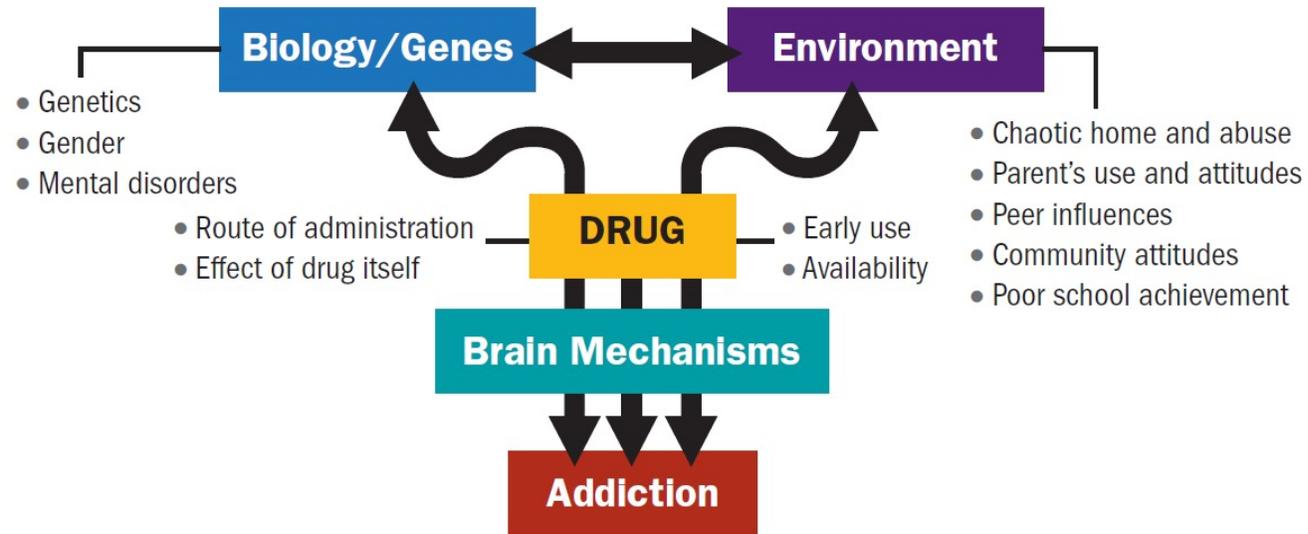
- Social
 - Face time is important
 - A part of the family, not apart from the family
- Behavioral
 - If you act depressed, you feel more depressed
 - Avoidance and safety behaviors are central to anxiety
- Emotional
 - Being unable to identify and express emotions can lead to unhealthy routes of expression



Encourage healthy coping

- Physical health - Everything is harder if our bodies aren't right
 - Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Nutrition
 - Screen time limits
- Meditation
- Talking through emotions and problems
- Therapy





Source: NIDA

REDUCING RISKS AND INCREASING PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR WHETHER TEENS INITIATE, REGULARLY USE OR BECOME DEPENDENT ON ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS ¹⁶		
	Some Key Risk Factors	Some Key Protective Factors
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of mutual attachment and nurturing by parents or caregivers • Ineffective parenting • A chaotic home environment • Lack of a significant relationship with a caring adult • A caregiver who misuses substances, suffers from mental illness or engages in criminal behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong bond between children and their families • Parental involvement in a child's life • Supportive parenting that meets financial, emotional, cognitive and social needs • Setting clear limits and expectations for behavior
Outside the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom behavior concerns, such as aggression and impulsivity • Academic failure • Poor social coping skills • Association with peers with problem behaviors, including drug misuse • Misperceptions of the extent and acceptability of drug-abusing behaviors in school, peers and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate monitoring of social behavior, such as curfews, adult supervision, knowing a child's friends, enforcing household rules • Success in academics and involvement in extracurricular activities • Strong bonds with pro-social institutions, such as schools • Acceptance of norms against drug misuse

Signs of Adolescent Substance Use

- Changes in personal appearance and habits
 - Decline in hygiene
 - Burns on fingers or lips
 - Dilated or red eyes
 - Long sleeves in warm weather
 - Wardrobe changes – what are they communicating?
 - Money irregularities – too little or too much
 - Secretive phone calls
 - Changes in sleep habits, energy
 - Often asking to go to the bathroom
 - “Munchies” or sudden appetite
 - Unusual smells, or overuse of scents and gum/mouthwash

Additional strategies

- Rewarding/reinforcing positive behavior is key
 - Meaningful, consistent, and paired with the behavior
- Acting out – need consistent boundaries and limits
- Have access to social media and mobile devices
- Be on the same page as your parenting partner
- Take care of yourself (and your marriage)
 - As family leaders, you set the tone
 - If your emotional or relational health suffers, it flows down to the kids

Summary

- Our kids need our support, now more than ever
- Stay tuned-in to your child – if you know what normal looks like, you'll know when it changes
- Keep warning signs in mind, and seek help if necessary
- Resilience and healthy coping skills can be built at home

Thank You!

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www.weinerphd.com

