

H.O.P.E.

Helping Our Parents Endure

HOPEforNutley.org

NEWSLETTER



Watch the Hope For Nutley Speaker series featuring Mike Petrillo and his story of beating addiction. Please forward this to a friend family member or loved one
[HOPE Speaks Vol1 Mike Petrillo](#)

HOPE Newsletter - Issue 48 Why Do Teens Use Drugs



Tip: Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to guide their teen in making positive decisions about drug and alcohol use. Talk to your kids about drugs.

The teen years are often a time to explore and learn more about themselves as they approach adulthood. Often, this involves experimenting and testing their boundaries. The desire to do something new or risky is a normal part of teen development.

Teens who perceive little risk in using drugs are more likely to use drugs. Teens may also use drugs or alcohol to:

- Relieve boredom
- Feel good
- Forget their troubles and relax
- Satisfy their curiosity
- Ease their pain
- Feel grown up
- Show their independence
- Belong to a specific group

What are the Risk Factors and Protective Factors for Drug Use?

Many factors influence a child's likelihood to use illegal substances or develop a substance abuse disorder. Effective drug prevention focuses on reducing the risk factors and strengthening the protective factors that are most closely related to substance abuse.

Risk factors are circumstances or events that increase a child's use and abuse of drugs. The more risk factors present, the more likely a child may be to use drugs and develop problems. Risk factors for drug use include:

- Low grades or failure in school
- Victim of bullying or cyberbullying
- Low self esteem
- Permissive parenting
- Parent or older sibling drug/alcohol use
- Living in a community with a high tolerance for smoking, drinking, or drug use among youth
- Attending a school without strict rules for tobacco, alcohol, or drugs and inconsistent enforcement for breaking those rules
- Belief that there is little risk in using a drug.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are those characteristics that can reduce a person's risk for substance abuse or addiction. Protective factors that may decrease the risk of drug use include:

- Strong bond with a parent or caregiver
- High self esteem

- Parent or caregiver who talks regularly with their child about drugs
- Active in faith-based organizations, school, athletic, or community activities
- Spending time around positive role models
- Living in a community that offers youths activities where drugs and alcohol are not tolerated
- Attending a school with an effective alcohol and drug education program and a non-tolerance policy for alcohol and drugs
- Belief that using drugs may be harmful or risky

As a parent you can control many of the risk and protective factors in your home. Remember that parents and caregivers are the most important role models in children's lives. **For more information see [Growing up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention](#).**

Source: O'Connell, M.E., Boat, T., & Warner, K.E. (Eds.). (2016) Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among young people: Progress and possibilities. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.

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