

STONEHAM HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDE

A guide for parents with useful health and safety information including substance use prevention, mental health resources, and overall health promotion.



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STONEHAM COALITION FOR A SAFE & HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The Stoneham Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Community is housed in the Town of Stoneham Prevention and Outreach Department. The Coalition is a comprehensive, community-based organization that works collaboratively with residents, town departments and agencies to reduce substance use, particularly in the youth community, and foster environments that are safe, healthy, and substance-free.

The Stoneham Coalition is funded by a 5 year federal grant through the Office of National Drug Control Policy called the Drug-Fee Communities (DFC) grant.

Our Objectives

To ensure ease of access to resources available to individuals and families struggling with drug and alcohol abuse.

To identify resources and implement programs within the town to help reduce and prevent the growing issue of drug and alcohol abuse.

To identify and advocate for policies at the local, state and national level that help communities deal with the epidemic of alcohol and drug abuse

Staff Contact

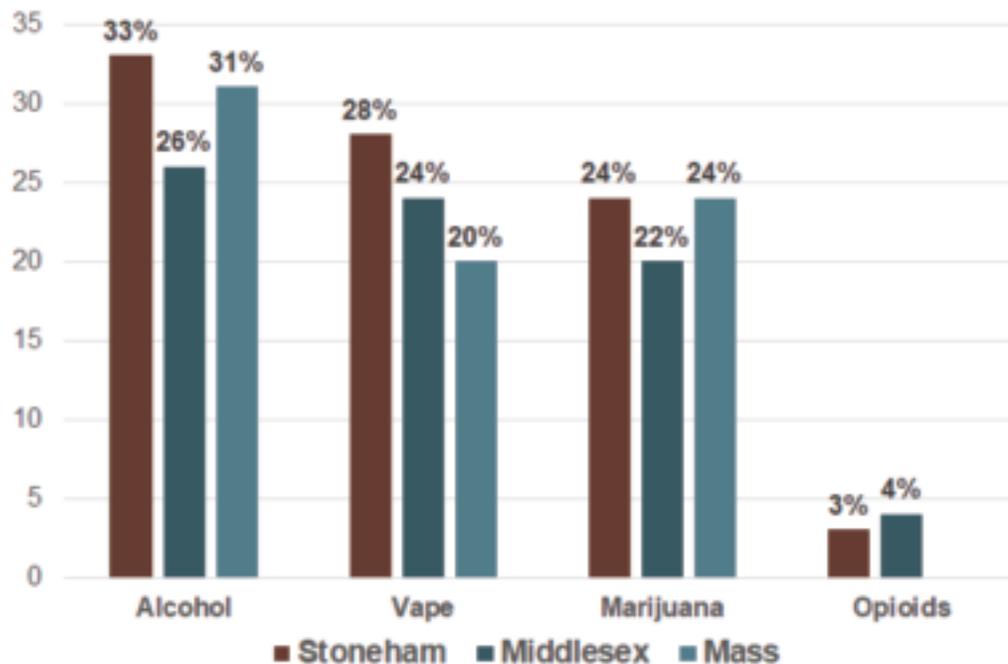
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Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2019 Results

In 2019, the Stoneham Coalition and the Stoneham Public Schools collaborated to coordinate a youth assessment called the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). This survey is administered every two years to 6th -12th graders. The YRBS measures the prevalence of a variety of risky behaviors, including substance use, violence, and other antisocial behaviors. In 2019, Stoneham was included in the Middlesex League Region, a group of 13 surrounding towns and cities, that received grant funding from Lahey Health. This approach not only gave us Stoneham specific numbers, but regional averages as well.

High School Students Past 30-day Use



Students are asked both if they have used a substance in their lifetime and if they have used in the past 30 days. The past 30 day use rate is considered current use. As shown in the trend chart, Stoneham current use is greater than the Middlesex league average and the State of Massachusetts average

1 in 3 Stoneham High Students report drinking in the past 30-days



9 out of 10 Stoneham High Students report their parents disapprove of regular alcohol use among adolescents



Stoneham Police Department

The Stoneham Police Department continues to be a strong partner in prevention for the Stoneham Coalition. SPD has been dedicated to improving the lives of Stoneham residents, including development of a confidential tip line, permanent prescription drop-off boxes, drug take-back days, two dedicated school resource officers, mental health and crisis intervention training for the department, and many other community-based programs.

Confidential Tip Line

Call or text!

Drug Tips: 781-832-0156

General Tips: 781-832-0292

NOT AN EMERGENCY LINE - Please call 911 for emergencies

Helpful tips include:

Drug activity, underage drinking, theft, violence, wanted persons

Information to include:

Gender, age, race, location, time

100%

**SPD OFFICERS MENTAL
HEALTH FIRST AID
TRAINED**

Crisis Intervention Team

The lack of mental health crisis services across the U.S. has resulted in SPD officers serving as first responders to most crises. A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program is an innovative, community-based approach to improve the outcomes of these encounters. 44% of SPD officers are trained to respond to a mental health crisis.



Starting in the beginning of 2020, the Stoneham Police Department joined the One Mind Campaign, an initiative uniting local communities, public safety organizations, and mental health organization so the three can become "of one mind."

What the Community Needs to Know Social Host Liability and Compliance Checks

Social Host Liability

When prom, graduation, and summer time approaches, it is important for parents and students alike to understand the risk and liability of allowing underage drinking to happen at home, in a rented hotel room or any other property under your control. Massachusetts has a set of social host laws that help prevent underage drinking. The law in Massachusetts is clear: **Whoever furnishes alcohol to a person under 21 years of age shall be punished by a fine of up to \$2000, or imprisonment for up to a year, or both.** The Town of Stoneham can now hold social hosts civilly responsible as well, with the passage of the town bylaw. A social host is anyone (adult or minor) who is in control of the premises and who furnishes alcohol or allows it to be consumed on the premises.

Action Plan for Parents

- > Talk with your children about alcohol. Tell them what will happen if they break your rules about alcohol or other drugs.
- > Have an ongoing discussion about the risks involved.
- > Be involved. Know who, what, where and when.
- > Don't assume that other parents have the same rules you have.
- > Create a plan with your children about what to do in a risky situation. Texting, calling or going to a safe location are all good ideas.

Safe, healthy,
alcohol-free children...
PRICELESS

Compliance Checks

Stoneham Police, Stoneham Coalition, and the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission have partnered to conduct annual compliance checks on alcohol establishments as a tool to reduce the availability of alcohol to underage youth.



Daily Programming includes college readiness, financial literacy, and so much more. For more information please visit us at: BGCStoneham.org



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- ✓ Education & Career Center
- ✓ Health & Life Skills Instruction
- ✓ Sports, Fitness, & Recreation
- ✓ Substance Abuse & Mental Health Education



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#ConnectAndCope**

MysticValleyPublicHealth.org

**Stoneham Police
Department
Domestic
Violence Unit (24/7
assistance)**



Provide follow-up to domestic violence incidences which includes:

- Assistance in requesting a restraining order
- Rides to court
- Support from civilian victim advocate providing referrals for legal help, mental health, substance abuse, financial assistance, shelter access and safety planning

Stoneham Police Department Domestic Violence Unit

Call: 781-438-1215 x3106 (Victim Advocate)

Call: 781-438-1215 x3159 (Sgt. Thistle)

Stoneham Alliance Against Violence (SAAV)



Offering programs and information to raise community awareness about domestic violence in all forms. We provide victims of abuse with resources, referrals and support.

- Referrals to criminal justice and healthcare
- Provide funds directly to victims for emergency housing, locksmiths, travel vouchers, food, clothing, etc
- Counseling and other community resources

Let's Talk

Call: 781-438-7228 (volunteer helpline-daytime)

Email: SAAV.stoneham@gmail.com

Facebook: Stoneham Alliance Against Violence

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Developmental Assets

and Supporting the Whole Child

Search Institute has studied Developmental Assets in the lives of millions of young people across the United States and around the world. Research consistently shows that young people from all backgrounds do better when they have a strong foundation of these strengths in their lives.

Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention, it identifies:

- The supports, opportunities, and relationships young people need across all aspects of their lives (called “external assets”); and
- The personal skills, self-perceptions, and values they need (called “internal assets”) to make good choices, take responsibility for their own lives, and be independent and fulfilled.

External Assets



Support



Empowerment



Boundaries &
Expectations



Constructive Use of Time

Internal Assets



Commitment to Learning



Positive Values



Social Competencies



Positive Identity

When youth have more developmental assets, they are:

- More likely to thrive now and in the future
- Less likely to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors
- More likely to be resilient in the face of challenges

Developmental Assets & Supporting the Whole Child

Relationships are critical to young people’s development. They are also “active ingredients” in schools, programs, and other services that have an impact on young people’s lives. But too often we see relationships as too soft or too amorphous or too time-consuming or too idiosyncratic to be the foundation for intentional planning, measurement, and learning.

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Developmental Relationship Framework

Elements	Actions	Definitions
 <p>Express Care Show me that I matter to you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable.....Be someone I can trust. • Listen.....Really pay attention when we are together. • Believe in me.....Make me feel known and valued. • Be warm.....Show me you enjoy being with me. • Encourage.....Praise me for my efforts and achievements. 	
 <p>Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best.....Expect me to live up to my potential. • Stretch.....Push me to go further. • Hold me accountable...Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Reflect on failures.....Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks. 	
 <p>Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate.....Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Empower.....Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Advocate.....Stand up for me when I need it. • Set boundaries.....Put limits in place that keep me on track. 	
 <p>Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me.....Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Include me.....Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Collaborate.....Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • Let me lead.....Create opportunities for me to take action and lead. 	
 <p>Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire.....Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Broaden horizons.....Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Connect.....Introduce me to people who can help me grow. 	

Supporting your young child with stress and anxiety

Although not a substitute for treatment, the following tips can be helpful for people experiencing anxiety

TALK

Speak to your child about their anxiety and worries

SLEEP

Make sure your child is getting plenty of sleep

RECOGNIZE

Help your child to recognize their feelings and the signs of anxiety

CHALLENGE

Help your child to challenge their unhelpful or intrusive thoughts. 'Name' bad thoughts so they aren't as scary

SOLUTIONS

Explore solutions with your child to overcome stress or anxiety in ways that are manageable for them

RELAXATION

Help your child learn relaxation techniques, such as deep (or box) breathing, consider yoga or meditation

ROLE MODEL

Be a positive role model and be aware to how you react to stressful situations

LISTEN

Take time to listen to what your child has to say, make them feel heard

PROBLEM SOLVE

Help your child to problem solve effectively

IMAGERY

Using imagery can help to reduce arousal and anxiety

ENVIRONMENT

Create a positive environment where you praise, support, and encourage your child

GET HELP

Don't be worried to ask a professional for help!

Teenagers and Stress

Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress often and can benefit from learning stress management skills. Inadequately managed stress can lead to anxiety, aggression, physical illness, or poor coping skills such as drug and/or alcohol use

PARENTS CAN HELP!

MONITOR

If stress is affecting your teen's health, behavior, thoughts, or feelings

LISTEN

Carefully and watch for sign of stress

LEARN & MODEL

Healthy stress management skills

SUPPORT

Involvement in sports, arts, and other pro-social activities

HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE:

- Exercise and eat regularly
- Avoid excess caffeine
- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, & other drug use
- Practice relaxation exercises, such as abdominal breathing and yoga
- Develop assertiveness training skills. State feelings in a polite, but firm way (I feel angry when you yell at me, please stop yelling.)
- Rehearse situations that cause stress. For example, take a speech class if public speaking causes anxiety
- Learn practical coping skills, like breaking a large task into smaller, more attainable tasks.
- Decrease negative self-talk. Challenge negative thoughts about yourself with alternative neutral or positive thoughts.
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent job, rather demanding perfection

TOP SOURCES OF STRESS - SHS RESPONSES

School Demands (assignments, homework)	31%
Busy Schedule (school, activities, sports)	30%
Worrying about the future such as college, career	12%
Other family or personal issue	11%
Parent/family expectation about academics, grades, etc.	9%

81%

Stoneham High School students report feeling overwhelming stress

LGBTQ+ Youth & Teens

HOW SUPPORTIVE PARENTING CAN PROMOTE HEALTH



Parents and families play an essential role in promoting adolescent health and well-being.

Studies have shown the positive health outcomes for LGBTQ youth whose families are supportive and accepting, including greater self-esteem and resilience, and a lower risk of negative health outcomes such as depression, distress, hopelessness and substance use

Risks of Substance Use

Research indicates that, compared to non-LGBTQ peers, young adults who are LGBTQ have 1.3 times the odds of heavy alcohol use, 1.6 times the odds of cannabis use, 2.9 times the odds of injection drug use, and 3.3 times the odds of cocaine use

RISK FACTORS



HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- Talk about how families come in all shapes and sizes
- Teach them that Love is Love. Talk about finding the right person to love and not necessarily a person of the opposite sex
- Create a sense of diversity using gender-neutral terms: "So is there anybody at the party you like?"
- Don't talk about your child's future "husband" or "wife"
- Don't tell "gay jokes," use disparaging words or stereotype the LGBTQ+ community
- Show support for LGBTQ+ issues

Social Emotion Learning

Helping Stoneham Youth Make Successful Choices

What is SEL? Social emotional learning (SEL) is a lifelong process in which adults and children obtain and apply knowledge, dynamic skills, and attitudes to:

- Understand and manage emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Feel and show empathy
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions

The five core competencies of SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Cultivating social and emotional skills in all adults in the family, school, and community supports the growth of children's social and emotional competencies



Family Activities

As a parent or guardian, you are teaching social and emotional skills to your children everyday through modeling. Being aware and intentional about modeling emotions and interactions will support the growth in children's understanding of social and emotional skills. The foundation begins with safe, caring and trusting relationships with caregivers, which can help develop healthy social and emotional skills. Below are examples of how parents can help their children develop each of the five core competencies:

SELF-AWARENESS:

For young children, you can connect feelings with words, validate a child's feelings, teach them that asking for help is alright, and talk about perseverance. As they get older, you can encourage mutual discussion of feelings, support your child through sharing personal stories they can relate to, and model open communication of emotions.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Provide clear instructions, expectations, boundaries, and consequences for behaviors. Help your child understand goal setting, give them space to overcome challenges, and talk about resilience, perseverance, and a growth mindset

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Discuss feelings, kind behavior, making friends, personal space, respect, respect for others, and diversity. Nurture empathy and compassion, and for older children, build a dialogue around empathy, acceptance, and diversity in the real world

RELATIONSHIPS

Talk about friendships, discuss trust and honesty, and teach the value of kindness. As kids get older, talk regularly about their relationships with their peers, discuss bullying and what they can do to prevent and stop harassment, and ask them to reflect on self-respect and how they want others to see them.

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Allow your child to make choices, provide options, use teachable moments, and discuss problem solving. With older children, discuss logical consequences, support your child when they make decisions you don't agree with, and talk about accountability and responsibility.

Racial Equity

10 TIPS FOR TEACHING AND TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE

1) START EARLY.

- By six months of age babies are noticing racial differences; by age 4, children have begun to show signs of racial bias.
- Let your child know that it's perfectly okay to notice skin color and talk about race. Start talking about what racial differences mean and don't mean

2) ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD.

Encourage your child to ask questions, share observations and experiences, and be respectfully curious about race

- Expose your child to different cultural opportunities – photographs, films, books, or cultural events, for example – and discuss the experience afterwards.
- You don't have to be an expert on race to talk with your child. Be honest about what you don't know and work with your child to find accurate information

3) BE MINDFUL.

Encourage your child to ask questions, share observations and experiences, and be respectfully curious about race

- Expose your child to different cultural opportunities – photographs, films, books, or cultural events, for example – and discuss the experience afterwards.
- You don't have to be an expert on race to talk with your child. Be honest about what you don't know and work with your child to find accurate information

4) KNOW AND FACE YOUR OWN BIAS.

Let your child see you acknowledge and face your own biases

- We're less likely to pass on the biases we identify and work to overcome
- Give your child an example of a bias, racial or otherwise, that you hold or have held. Share with your child things you do to confront and overcome that bias

5) KNOW AND LOVE WHO YOU ARE.

- Talk about the histories and experiences of the racial, ethnic, and cultural groups you and your family identify with.
- Talk about their contributions and acknowledge the less flattering parts of those histories as well. Tell stories about the challenges your family (your child's parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents and great grandparents, others) has faced and overcome.

10 TIPS FOR TEACHING AND TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE

6) DEVELOP RACIAL CULTURAL LITERACY.

Develop racial cultural literacy by learning about and respecting others.

- Study and talk about the histories and experiences of groups we call African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and whites, among others.
- Be sure your child understands that every racial and ethnic group includes people who believe different things and behave in different ways . There is as much diversity within racial groups as across them.

7) BE HONEST.

Be honest with your child, in age-appropriate ways, about bigotry and oppression.

- Children are amazing at noticing patterns, including racial patterns (who lives in their neighborhood versus their friends' neighborhoods, for example). Help them make sense of those patterns, and recognize that bigotry and oppression are sometimes a big part of those explanations.
- Be sure your child knows that the struggle for racial fairness is still happening and that your family can take part in that struggle.

8) TELL STORIES.

"Lift up the freedom fighters ": Tell stories of resistance and resilience.

- Every big story of racial oppression is also a story about people fighting back and "speaking truth to power." Teach your child those parts of the story too.
- Include women, children and young adults among the "freedom fighters" in the stories you tell. A story about racial struggle in which all the heroes are men wrongly leaves many people out.

9) BE ACTIVE.

Be active - don't be a "bystander" on race.

- Help your child understand what it means to be, and how to be, a change agent.
- Whenever possible, connect the conversations you're having to the change you and your child want to see, and to ways to bring about that change .

10) PLAN FOR A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT.

- It's okay to say, "I'm not sure" or "Let's come back to that later, okay?" But do come back to it.
- Make race talks with your child routine. Race is a topic you should plan to revisit again and again in many different ways overtime.

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5

Conversation Goals When Talking to Your Child About Drugs and Alcohol

19

Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse

Over 80 percent of young people ages 10–18 say their parents are the leading influence on their decision whether to drink. Send a clear and strong message that you disapprove of underage drinking and use or misuse of other drugs.

Show you care about your child's health, wellness, and success

Young people are more likely to listen when they know you're on their side. Reinforce why you don't want your child to drink or use other drugs—because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you're open and you show concern.

Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs

You want your child to make informed decisions about alcohol and other drugs with reliable information about its dangers. You don't want your child to learn about alcohol and other drugs from unreliable sources. Establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.

Show you're paying attention and you'll discourage risky behaviors

Show you're aware of what your child is up to, as young people are more likely to drink or use other drugs if they think no one will notice. Do this in a subtle way, without prying.

Build your child's skills and strategies for avoiding drinking and drug use

Even if you don't think your child wants to drink or try other drugs, peer pressure is a powerful thing. Having a plan to avoid alcohol and drug use can help children make better choices. Talk with your child about what they would do if faced with a decision about alcohol and drugs, such as texting a code word to a family member or practicing how they'll say "no thanks." Keep it low-key. Don't worry, you don't have to get everything across in one talk. Plan to have many short talks.



Preventing Prescription Opioid Misuse Among Student Athletes

Massachusetts is in the midst of an opioid crisis. Athletes in particular, due to their risk of injury and the resulting pain, may be at risk of misusing prescription opioids.

Playing a sport and being on a team benefits middle and high school athletes in many ways—including through social connections, structured afterschool time, and physical fitness—however, it can also lead to injury. In rare cases, sports injuries may result in pain that is severe or long-lasting enough to involve a prescription painkiller.

If a student athlete is injured, whenever possible, treat the injury first with rest, ice, compression, and elevation—but do seek medical care if it's necessary. Opioids for pain should be considered only by a physician and only when other treatment methods have not provided relief.

Parents, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, and school nurses involved in 6th–12th grade extracurricular sports have been required to complete an annual training on the risks of concussion and head injury.

Opioid-related legislation (an act related to substance use, treatment, education and prevention) has added a requirement that the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) provide educational materials on the dangers of opioid use and misuse to those persons participating in the annual head injury safety program. The educational materials must also be distributed in written form to all students participating in an extracurricular athletic activity prior to the commencement of their athletic seasons.

MOST IMPORTANT:

An injured athlete needs time to heal. Missing a game or two is better than missing an entire season—or more.



(See also mass.gov/dph/resourcesforyouth/opioidmisuse.)

After an injury, it is important to have a communication and a return-to-play plan in place. (Look at the format and wording of your school's concussion protocols for guidance.) Too often, athletes do not allow sufficient time to recover from their injuries and turn to pain medication to enable their continued participation in their sport. Care must be taken to avoid the common cycle of injury, pain, and re-injury.

In addition, keep in mind the mental and social components of being on a school team and how this may impact the athlete's recovery and behavior. Losing the social connection to the team can be as damaging in some ways as the physical injury. As appropriate, continue to include the student in team practices, games, and social events.

School Stress & Stimulant Abuse

Understanding the pressures your kids face and the risky solutions available to them

Many students are stressed out from academic pressure – AP classes, extracurricular activities, homework, college applications, and more. Some think that taking unprescribed stimulants (medications used to treat ADHD, such as Ritalin and Adderall) – will help them with extra energy to study longer, cram for exams and improve their grades. While prescription stimulants do promote wakefulness, studies have found that they do not enhance learning or thinking ability when taken by people who do not actually have ADHD, and taking these drugs without a prescription can lead to delirium, psychosis or heart failure. What's most troubling: Many students say it's easy to get these unprescribed medications if they want them. Unfortunately, many parents have no idea this is happening.



WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- Talk to your son or daughter about the dangers of drinking and using drugs, including misusing prescription drugs not prescribed to him or her.
- Remind your child that it's okay to ask for help – whether for academics, stress or mental health.
- Ensure your teen or young adult knows that they are valued for who they are, not what they achieve.
- Prepare your son or daughter with alternative coping skills such as breathing techniques, mindfulness, and other tools to help relax and redirect their thoughts when they are feeling anxious.

LETS TALK ABOUT VAPING

TIPS TO START THE DISCUSSION

You can't control everything your child child does, but talking with them about issues like vaping will let them know that you're concerned about their health. Vaping (e-cigs, Juuls, mods, vape pens, etc.) is a recent trend that has grown in popularity among young people, and it's important to dispel myths. The nicotine and other chemicals in vape products can harm a teen's developing brain and lead to addiction. Starting the conversation about vaping at home is an important first step to protecting them from these risks.



THERE IS NO "PERFECT TIME"

Driving in the car together or waiting at an appointment is often the best time. You can start by mentioning a news story, a TV show, or something that you heard about vaping. Or ask your child what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together such as seeing someone use an e-cigarette, passing a vape shop when you are out, or seeing an e-cigarette advertisement.

THERE IS NO "PERFECT TALK"

Consider your talks with your child about vaping as a learning opportunity for both of you, and perhaps just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. You may have some facts about vaping at hand, but concede that you don't know all the answers. It will go a long way to keep your kids from going on the defensive.

BE PATIENT AND READY TO LISTEN

Your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture. So avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.

ASK WHAT YOUR CHILD THINKS

Show some genuine curiosity. Ask your child, "What's your take on vaping?" or "Do you know kids who use e-cigarettes?"

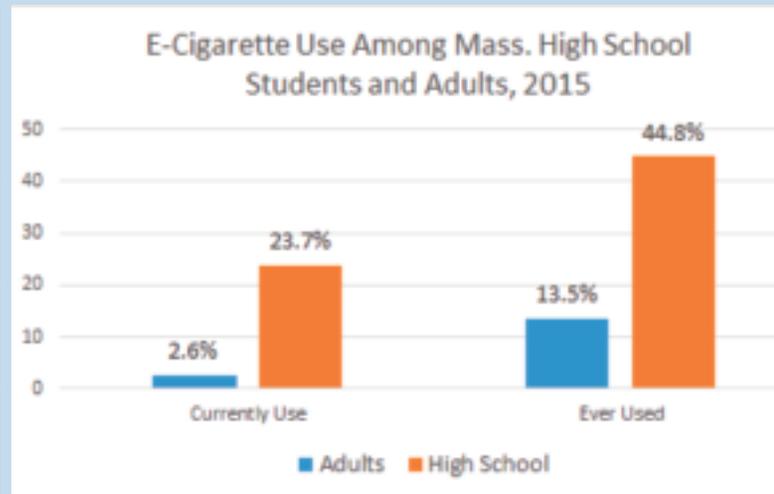
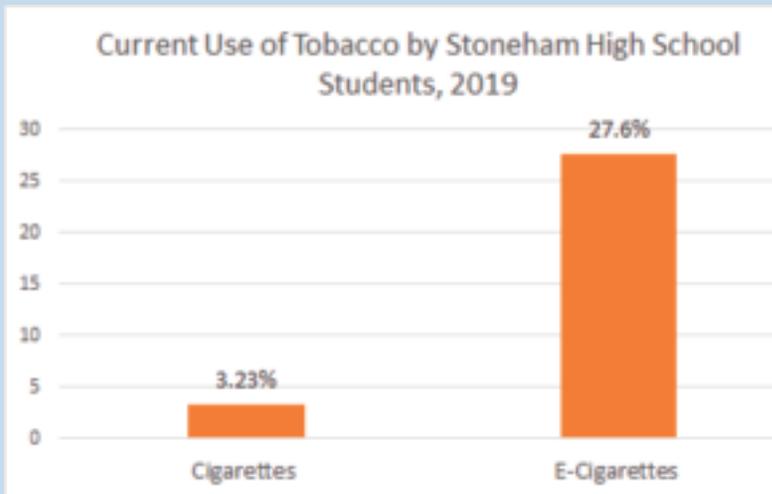
BE OPEN AND HONEST

Be truthful about what you know about the dangers of vaping, and what you don't. You can honestly say, though, "Vaping isn't harmless. I hope you can steer clear of it."

THE NEW LOOK OF NICOTINE ADDICTION

Nicotine Addiction is nothing new, but vaping has changed the face of this addiction from old-fashioned cigarettes to new technologies, such as e-cigarettes, vapes pens, or Juuls. These new products are not harmless - they still contain nicotine and other chemicals that can harm health and lead to addiction. In addition, the tobacco and vaping industries have made these products more easily accessible and desirable for young people, with sweet flavors and cheap prices.

Though e-cigarettes do have potential to help adults who already smoke transition away from cigarettes and other tobacco products, **high school students vape 9 times more often than adults**, and most youth are not prior smokers. It's important that you discuss vaping with your child and make it clear that it is not a harmless trend, and addiction is no joke.



TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT VAPING AND NICOTINE ADDICTION

Make sure they know the risks of using nicotine products such as e-cigarettes, vape pens, or Juuls. Nicotine can damage a teenager's developing brain and lead to addiction. Help your children understand that you are there to help them avoid anything that could harm their health. The earlier they start something like vaping, the harder it is to quit, so have an ongoing discussion and build a culture of honesty and safety in your home, that your children can take with them as they venture into the world.

UNDERAGE DRINKING

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the most widely misused substance among young people in the United States and poses enormous health and safety risks. It's important to talk to your children and teens early and often about the risks of underage drinking. As they gain more independence, teens sometimes make poor choices for their health without fully recognizing the consequences. However, as one of the most influential forces in a child's life, you can take steps to promote healthy behaviors.

90%

of alcohol consumed by teens is in the form of binge drinking

34%

Strongly disapprove of their peers getting drunk

44%

of teens do not think frequent binge drinking is risky

77%

of teens say alcohol would be easy to get if they wanted it

WHY DO TEENS DRINK?

Children naturally try to establish independence as they grow up, and often this leads to taking risks such as drinking without understanding the consequences. Peer pressure, perceived social norms, stress, boredom, and curiosity are additional factors. When on top of all this, alcohol is easily accessible, it can be difficult to resist

RISKS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Teen brains are still developing, leaving them especially vulnerable to the risks of alcohol use. Drinking impairs judgement and can cause injury or death, whether directly from alcohol or from actions taken under the influence, such as drunk driving. People who start drinking at a young age are 6x more likely to develop an addiction later in life.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- If alcohol is available in your house, do not make it available to your child. Model responsible drinking behavior if you choose to drink. Demonstrate other methods of relaxation and celebration
- Be actively engaged with your child, and talk with them regularly about what's happening in their life. If they say they're drinking, ask them why and approach the issue with empathy and support
- Try to meet and get to know your child's friends, in addition to their parents or caregivers
- Encourage and model fun and healthy activities, not involving alcohol. Guide your child to challenge themselves in healthy ways, with healthy risks
- Since the media is filled with alcohol-related content, discuss these messages with your child

CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN ALCOHOL USE?

BUILDING A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR YOUR AND YOUR FAMILY

It can be challenging to recognize whether you have a problem with alcohol, but understanding your own behaviors can give you control and build a healthier future for yourself and your family. You're not alone - many adults have unhealthy habits related to alcohol, even if it isn't as "serious" as needing to go to rehabilitation treatment. Your habits serve as a powerful example for your children, so demonstrating healthy behaviors is one of the best things you can do for your entire family's health.

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS OF ALCOHOL USE, AND THAT NO LEVEL IS CONSIDERED COMPLETELY SAFE

Recent global research found that alcohol is the leading risk factor for premature death and injury in adults under 50 and accounts for 20% of deaths. Though prior guidelines may have said that one or two drinks a day is safe or even healthy, the latest evidence shows that there is no "safe" level. Any amount of alcohol consumption increases your risks of cancer, injury, and other negative health outcomes. It is up to you how much of a risk you want to accept in your own life, and taking control of your alcohol use is an important step in taking control of your well-being.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP TO ALCOHOL AND RECOGNIZE EARLY SIGNS OF A PROBLEM.

People often experience warning signs before their alcohol use becomes a more serious problem. If you can catch these signs early and make a change before additional problems develop, you have a great chance of avoiding serious consequences. Some common signs to look for are:

- Drinking alone or in secrecy
- Making excuses for drinking, such as to relax, deal with stress, or feel normal
- Irritability and extreme mood swings
- Choosing drinking over other responsibilities and obligations
- Becoming isolated and distant from family and friends
- Experiencing temporary blackouts or short-term memory loss
- Feeling hungover when not drinking

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT, AND TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TO MAKE A CHANGE

There are many resources and people out there who want to help. Here are a few:

- Make an appointment with your doctor, therapist, social worker, or another health professional
- Attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or other anonymous self-help group
- Call a toll-free hotline, such as 1-855-DRUGFREE that is made especially for parents
- Locate treatment at findtreatment.samhsa.gov.
- Talk to anyone in your life who can encourage you and give you whatever help you need. People care about you and want to see you healthy. You might be surprised that people might even want to join you in building a healthier life.

ALCOHOL AND MENTAL HEALTH

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND TRAUMA

Substance use and mental health are closely linked, yet one has not been found to directly cause the other. Here are some things to keep in mind about this relationship:

- Alcohol and drugs are often used to self-medicate the symptoms of mental health problems
- Alcohol and drug abuse can increase the underlying risk for mental disorders
- Alcohol and drug use can make symptoms of mental health problems worse

The relationship between traumatic experience and substance use is clearly established. Trauma has been shown to be a risk factor for substance use

STONEHAM HIGH SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

81%

Stoneham High Students report overwhelming stress

27%

Stoneham High School students report feeling depressed

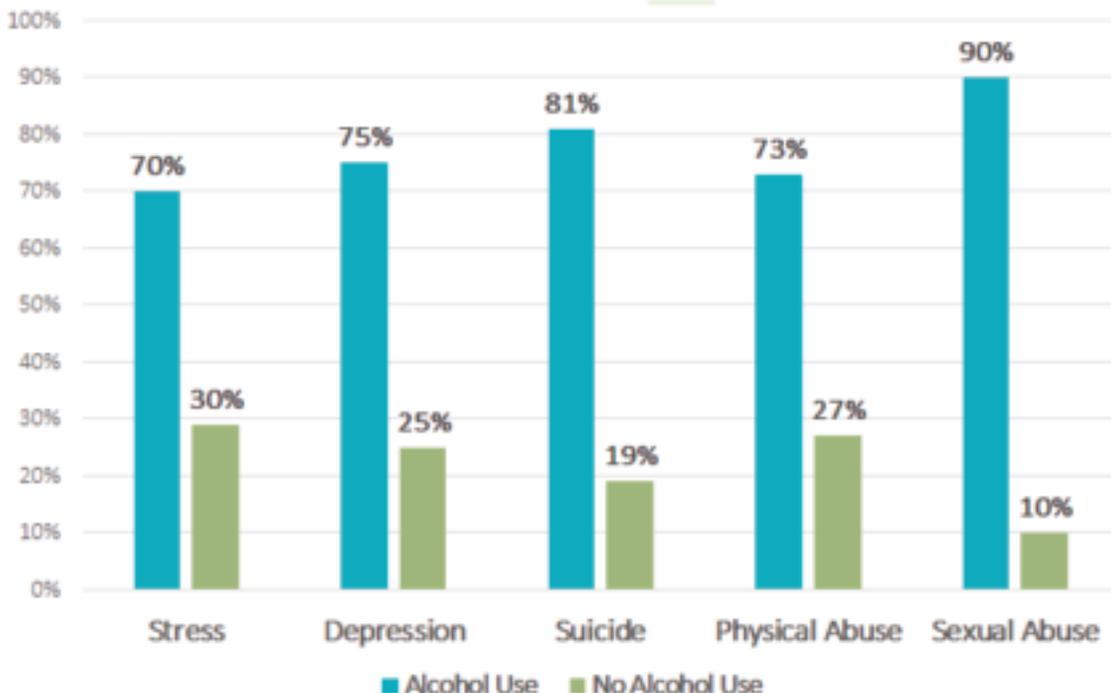
17%

Stoneham High School student have considered or made a plan for suicide

4%

Stoneham High School students have attempted suicide

STONEHAM HIGH SCHOOL RESPONSES MENTAL HEALTH AND ALCOHOL USE



Lifetime alcohol use responses from youth who reported experiencing stress, depression, suicide, physical abuse, and sexual abuse

For the 81% that report overwhelming stress, 70% have used alcohol, 30% have not.

Source: Partnership for Drug-Free Kids - Where Families Find Answers. Burton, R., & Sheron, N. (2018). No Level of alcohol consumption improves health. The Lancet

ALCOHOL IN THE COMMUNITY

HOW WE CAN TURN DOWN THE HEAT ON ALCOHOL USE

OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

As adults, we have a responsibility to do everything we can to make sure our young people grow up to have healthy, strong futures. And one thing that stands in the way of that is drug and alcohol use. **It's our job to support policies and programs** that prevent and reduce drug use among adolescents



When adolescents experiment with alcohol or other drugs, it can heat up and boil over into a bigger problem. By **creating environments that keep the heat down for adolescents**, we can prevent substance use from boiling over into a bigger problem. We can create these environments by decreasing risk factors!

RISK FACTORS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

High Availability

The more available alcohol or drugs are in a community, the higher the risk that young people will abuse these substances. Even perceived availability is associated with risk; i.e., in schools where children think that drugs are more available, a higher rate of drug use occurs.

Source: Frameworks Institute
Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol Drugs & Health

Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Alcohol Use

Most adults express concern about underage drinking and voice support for public policies to curb it, yet behind the concern lies a paradox: Youth often get their alcohol from adults, and model their own alcohol use off of adult alcohol use. Creating norms that don't involve alcohol is important to show our youth!

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT MARIJUANA



Adult-use of marijuana, or cannabis, is now legal in Massachusetts for people ages 21 and older. Understanding and preventing youth use is more important than ever with the increased availability. Parents & guardians play a very important role in addressing this issue, and are one of the most powerful influences in a child's life!

HOW IS MARIJUANA USED

Cannabis, or marijuana comes in many different forms and can be smoked, eaten, or vaped. Effects of cannabis vary significantly depending on the form consumed

EDIBLES

Cannabis can often be mixed with butter or oils and cooked into food. Edibles take longer to digest and to produce an effect. People may consume more to feel the effects faster, leading to high doses of consumption and negative effects

HASH OIL

Liquid that is usually used sparingly due to high potency, and added to the tip of a joint or cigarette and smoked.

CONCENTRATES

Extracts (dab, wax, or shatter) typically using butane has oil as a solvent, often vaped in small quantities due to the high level of THC.

FLOWER

The dried leaves and flowers (bud) of the cannabis plant that are smoked in a joint or bong. This is the most common form.

UNDERSTANDING THE LAW

Marijuana, in any form, is limited to adults over 21, with specific medical exceptions

There is a \$100 fine for underage consumption. Additional consequences for youth under 18 may include attending a class, community service, and school suspension

Failure to comply with penalties may result in a court hearing, \$1000 fine, and a delinquency complaint if under 16

Parents are the biggest influence in encouraging healthy behaviors

Marijuana can impact an adolescents health and well being

Talk to your children about marijuana use early and often

Cannabis can be addictive, especially for teens

GUIDE TO MARIJUANA

SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Teens will be teens. They sleep late, their groups of friends change, they can be moody and they may have on-again, off-again trouble in school. So how do you know when your teen is using marijuana or other drugs? Here are some signs to watch for:

- Declining school work and grades
- Abrupt changes in friends
- Abnormal health issues or sleeping habits
- Deteriorating relationships with family
- Less openness and honesty

What it comes down to is that **you know your teen best.** If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

TRY ACTIVE LISTENING

- Ask open-ended questions
- Let them know that you hear them by reflecting back what you hear
- Sum up and ask questions
- Ask permission to have the discussion
- Be patient - if the talk doesn't go as you wanted it to, remember that you will have more opportunities to speak to your teen about these issues, and next time you'll be able to improve
- Offer empathy and compassion

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

- Go for a walk or bike ride
- Read a book
- Listen to music
- Play a sport
- Bake cookies
- Talk with a friend
- Meditate
- Exercise or stretch

WHAT IF YOU SMOKE OR DRINK?

You may want to consider the effect your behavior has on your kids, especially if you smoke or drink in front of them. You may want to try modeling another behavior for your child when you're stressed to make sure that they get the right message about coping with difficult feelings. You may also want to ask yourself why you drink and/or smoke to give you some insight into your own behavior. You may also feel comfortable asking your teen about how your own use affects them by inviting them to share and ask questions. Open-ended questions such as "How does knowing that I smoke or drink alcohol make you think differently about your own decisions?"

Top 15 Parenting Tips

1 Your job is not to be cool or to be their friend.

Your job is to be a parent; this means that sometimes you may not be cool in their eyes. It is age and stage appropriate that your kids hate you at times. If and when they do, we have to feel OK about this, meaning we may not like it, but we cannot take it personally.

2 An adolescent's concept of risk is different from ours

Due to their adolescent brain, they do not see the consequences to risk that an adult does. They operate on their social rewards more so than other factors

3 Re-think their need for technology 24/7

Technology increases the potential for at-risk behaviors including drinking, drugging, sex, etc. Do they really need a cell phone all the time? Why would they need one while at school?

4 They may not be ready for making good decisions

We are trying to build their resiliency up so they can deal with complex decisions such as drinking, drugging, etc. That said, no matter how much we work at this they may simply not be able, developmentally, to make good decisions. Are we asking for them to make good choices well before they have the brain development to be able to do so?

5 Think about being home as much as possible

No one ever said on their deathbed that they wished they had spent more time in the office

6 Do more listening and less talking

What you say is less important than what they say. Not every moment is a teachable moment, but every moment can be a moment to learn more about your child

7 Put down the distractions

TV, iPhones, Blackberries, computers, tablets etc. Model good electronic behavior

Top 15 Parenting Tips 31

8 We complicate things

Sometimes our expectations are too high, we want our kids to be different (and all they want to do is be the same), we are constantly giving them feedback and trying to fix things. Create realistic expectations and stop trying to fix things.

9 Have stamina and never give up on your child

In my experience this is perhaps the most critical factor for parents and it almost always translates into healthy relationships with your children in the post-teen years.

10 It is hard being a kid today

Although it is also probably true that our kids have it easier than we did in some ways. I know of virtually no one who would voluntarily return to high school. It is nice to sometimes let your child know that it is tough being a teen.

11 Only fight about the top 3 issues

Let the other stuff go. In my house, my daughter's room was a disaster, but it was not in my top 3, so I let it go. If you fight about all of the issues, you will be fighting all of the time --- not exactly what we or they want.

12 Get into their world

In fact, the TV show "The Secret Life of An American Teen" was poorly reviewed, yet was the highest viewed show ever on ABC Family as teens flocked to see this. Try watching shows like "The Family Guy" (or other shows your teen watches) with an open mind.

13 Ask other parents for help and advice

You will be amazed at what you will learn. In addition, please seek professional help when needed. Some of the bravest and most caring parents are the ones who know when to access outside assistance.

14 Allow your child to make mistakes.

Be glad that they do so when they are in middle and high school, so that you can support them in this learning process.

15 Take them on a day trip!

Spend time together outside of the normal routine

Your Influence Matters

As Children enter middle and high school their chances of being offered alcohol, marijuana, prescription medications and other drugs increase. As the risk grows, **it's important to have frequent, positive, and open conversations** with your kids about the choices they face.

Minimize exposure at home. Even though they're your children, you should stop to consider what messages you are giving your children and teens. If you offer your teens a drink or other type of drug to use recreationally, will they think it's OK to drink and do drugs beyond the home? Teens who are exposed to alcohol, marijuana, prescription medications and other drugs in the home are more likely to use them.

Moving Conversations Forward

Listen with an Open Mind

A teen's ideas and opinions deserve consideration. Embracing your child's point of view and taking it seriously encourages them to see that your advice is based on true understanding.

Respond to the present moment

Focus on what your child is saying now, not what they've said in the past, what you think he or she should be saying, or what you believe.

Keep it informal

Meal times, in the car doing errands, or other activities you may do with your teen are great times to talk.

Ask open-ended questions

Get teens thinking and talking rather than giving them opportunities for a simple yes or no.

INSTEAD OF:

- "Will there be drinking at the party?"
- "Have you ever tried marijuana?"
- "I was your age once, I know what you're going through"
- "You need to think for yourself."

TRY:

- "if there's drinking at the party, what will you do?"
- "What do you think about marijuana and kids who use it?"
- "We didn't have social media when I was your age. How does that factor into your social life?"
- "What's the hardest think you deal with when it comes to just being yourself around your friends?"