



ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE, ADDICTION, AND TREATMENT

with Sarah Bagley, MD

■ Discussion Guide for Families

This discussion guide is designed for families who are interested in learning up-to-date information about addressing substance use and addiction in adolescents and young adults. Adolescence and young adulthood is a time when many people begin experimenting with alcohol and/or drugs. Although this experimentation does not always lead to addiction, most adults who have a substance use disorder started using before age 18 and develop the disorder by age 20. Drawing from experience as the Medical Director of the CATALYST addiction treatment clinic for teens and young adults at Boston Medical Center, Dr. Bagley shares the importance of addressing substance use during adolescence and the most effective approaches to treating addiction, including opioid addiction. The discussion guide can be used in a variety of settings including parent/school association or other school meetings, parenting classes and support groups, or in community or faith-based settings. Here are a few planning tips:

- Plan for participants to view Dr. Bagley’s videos either in individual segments or all together at one time. The videos are on YouTube and are a total of 30 minutes in length (divided into shorter segments).
- Decide who will facilitate the conversation.
- Allow about 30 minutes to discuss the questions. If the group is larger than 10 people, consider breaking into small groups.
- Ask the facilitator to walk through the resource list with the group (and, if possible, to review the resources themselves before the session).

■ Discussion Questions

1. While discussing the importance of addressing substance use in adolescents, Dr. Bagley referred to addiction as a “brain disease.” Did this change your thinking about teenagers and substance use? How? Will this cause you to respond to substance use in teens differently?
2. Teen brains are more susceptible to addiction than adult brains. What are signs of addiction in teens? What can parents do when they suspect addiction?



3. There has been a dramatic increase in opioid addiction and deaths in the United States. How many young people are affected? What kinds of effective treatment are available for teens and young adults?
4. The medical community recommends that medications be offered as an option to address opioid addiction in teens. Why are medications an important part of treating opioid addiction in teens?
5. It is critical that our communities are fully informed about teens, substance use, and effective approaches to treating addiction. What information will you share with other parents? What information will you share with your children?

■ Additional Resources

- National Institute on Drug Abuse (Content for for teens, parents, health professionals and educators) <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/>
- Partnership for Drug Free Kids (Content for parents, including a warm line, parent coaching, and online chatting) <https://drugfree.org/>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (information for providers, patients, and families, including a treatment locator) <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
 - ▶ SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) TTY: 1-800-487-4889. This Helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish
 - ▶ Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator: Find alcohol, drug, or mental health treatment facilities and programs around the country <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>
- The Association of Recovery Schools (Content for recovery high schools, communities, and individuals, and more information about the movement). <https://recoveryschools.org>
- The Association of Recovery in Higher Education (Content for collegiate recovery programs and communities, parents, students, parents, and professionals). <https://collegiaterecovery.org/>
- Young People in Recovery (Content for young people, family members, and community supporters about local community-led support chapters and training). <http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org>