Getting Candid: The Importance of Trust in Youth Substance Use Prevention

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Our Mission:
To make mental wellbeing, including recovery from substance use challenges, a reality for everyone.

Raise your hand if...
You are coming from the Northwest or Alaska
Southeast, Northeast, Southwest or Hawaii
You work in a school setting
Inpatient setting, Outpatient setting
This is your first trip to D.C.
You’re a fan of...
Learning Objectives

Upon completion, participants will be able to:

• Explain how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted youth state of mind and the rates of substance use.
• Explain the role of trust in conversations with youth surrounding substance use.
• Identify 3-4 substance specific messages to utilize with youth.
• Explain how to utilize the message guide and supplementary toolkit resources to engage youth in substance use prevention conversations.

Substance use is preventable & remediable rather than inevitable & irreversible.

It is our collective obligation to create environments that keep the heat down for adolescents, preventing substance use from boiling over into a bigger problem.

Substance use is preventable & remediable rather than inevitable & irreversible.

About Getting Candid

Purpose: To assess effects of the pandemic on substance use risks & drivers
Approach: National online assessments, focus groups, youth ambassadors, expert advisors
Result: Message guide & toolkit for youth-serving providers to support effective prevention messaging with youth ages 12-18

National Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jan 2021</th>
<th>May 2021</th>
<th>Jun 2022</th>
<th>Oct 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (n=600)</td>
<td>Discussion Groups</td>
<td>Youth (n=881)</td>
<td>Test draft messages</td>
<td>Youth (n=898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of COVID on youth state of mind, knowledge and access to substance use prevention messages, tools/resources</td>
<td>Youth (n=888)</td>
<td>Test draft messages</td>
<td>Youth (n=898)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What Providers Believed about Youth

**MATTERS MOST:** Family

**KEY REASON:** Not to use: Concern about messing up future plans

**MOST EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY:** In-person

**MOST TRUSTED MESSAGERS:** Parents & guardians

What Youth Identified About Themselves

**MATTERS MOST:** Peers, friends, fitting in and appearance

**OTHER MOST TRUSTED MESSAGERS:** Health care providers & those who formerly used substances

Jan 2021 and June 2022 data

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**Trusted Adults**

Doctors, nurses, or other healthcare providers were the most trusted source of accurate information about substance use followed by parents or caregivers.

Parents and caregivers were who youth were most comfortable speaking with about substance use followed by friends or peers. Less than 2 in 10 said they would be most comfortable talking to a healthcare provider.

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Reasons people my age choose...

**TO use substances**
- Cope with depression, anxiety, other MH issues (42%)
- Friends or other people are doing it (39%)
- To cope with problems w/family, friends, school (34%)
- Enjoy it and/or think it’s fun (30%)

June 2022 data

**NOT to use substances**
- May be bad for their health (32%)
- Just not interested (32%)
- Might mess up their goals/plans for the future (31%)
- Want to make healthy choices (31%)

June 2022 data

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**How I Feel About Myself**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I am a good person who has a lot to offer.</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to stand up for myself and what I believe in.</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am hopeful about the future.</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can calm myself down.</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes the pressure I feel at school and at home feels like too much to handle.</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall I like who I am.</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a genuine sense of belonging at school</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I don’t have a lot to contribute.</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

June 2022 data
Knowledge and Perceptions of Fentanyl

A majority of youth are NOT concerned about alcohol and other drug use in their own lives.

- But if someone they know was using drugs, 77% report they would be concerned about fentanyl exposure.
- However, less than 50% report knowing what fentanyl is and report that it would be one of the hardest substances for them to acquire.

June 2022 data

Your Role as a Youth-Serving Provider

- Create a safe space to normalize conversations about substance use & connection to health, school, finances, & relationships
- Maximize regular touch points & established relationships to reinforce prevention messages & encourage healthy peer relationships
- Identify potential risk & protective factors

Getting Candid Toolkit

https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/getting-candid/

- Establish Trust
- Gather Insights
- Frame the Conversation
- Make the Case
- Suggest Action
- Implementation Tools
- Cannabis Resource Center
Substance Fact Sheets
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/getting-candid/make-the-case/

Cannabis Resource Center
- State Fact Sheets on Cannabis
- Policy
- Prevention
- Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment
- Safe Storage
- Legal Consequences
- Medical Use
- Other Cannabis Products
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/getting-candid/cannabis-resource-center/

On Demand Course
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/program/getting-candid/implementation-tools/

Influencer & Youth Facing Work
Our TikTok Influencers campaign launched in Feb!
Visit our Youth Facing Page!
https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/itsthelittlethings/
LGBTQ+ Affirming Care

[link to website]

Communication Pathway

- Establish Trust
- Gather Insights
- Build rapport and establish trust.
- Seek guidance and input from youth on what matters to them.
- Choose the frame for communication based on insights from youth.
- Select evidence to provide compelling reasons not to use drugs or alcohol.
- Select one or more actions to suggest.

Inside the Getting Candid Message Guide

[link to website]
How would you approach this if a friend came to you for advice?

What are your thoughts on legalized marijuana?

What matters most in your life and why?

What’s on your mind?

What is particularly important to you right now?

How would you avoid drinking, if you decided to?

What worries you about using someone else’s prescription medication?

Reflect Back with a Listening Statement

You are feeling...

frustrated that your teachers won’t cut you some slack.

I hear...

that you want to be treated like an adult.

It sounds like...

you want an opportunity to show you are responsible.

A Time of Opportunity

- Adolescent brain = preference for novelty, activity and positive risk-taking
- Socially enriched environments can help the brain to change and adapt

We need to reframe adolescence from eye roll to opportunity.

Nat Kendal-Taylor, CEO of The Frameworks Institute

Communication Pathway
"What Matters" Becomes the Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Matters...?</th>
<th>Message Frame</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans for the coming year, for entering high school, college or for the future in general</td>
<td>The future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical or mental health</td>
<td>Risk of addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships (e.g., parents/guardians, friends, teachers, coaches, mentors)</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities in or out of school (e.g., music, sports, volunteering)</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being respected for autonomy and being able to make one's own choices</td>
<td>Self-affirmation</td>
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Most effective messages tested with youth:

- **The future**: Don’t let drug and alcohol use change or control your plans for the future.
- **Risk of addiction**: Drug and alcohol use change parts of your brain that impact how you think and act. The more you use them, the harder it can be to stop, even if you want to.
- **Relationships**: There are people in your life who matter to you. And you try hard not to let them down. (For middle school) And you try hard to make them proud. (For high school)
- **Activities**: Participating in sports, music, hobbies or other activities can help you build friendships, stay in shape, get into & receive scholarships for college & have fun.
- **Self-affirmation**: You respect yourself & want to make decisions that are best for you. Trust yourself & your choice not to use drugs or alcohol.

- People in recovery from addiction often say one of the things they regret most about their addiction was the trust they lost from people who care about them.
- Vape companies regularly change up their chemical formulas to get around regulations and safety testing of their products.
- It only takes a pinprick-sized amount of fentanyl to be a deadly dose. And it’s sometimes hidden in fake prescription pills.
- Delta-8 THC is not regulated so you don’t really know what is in it. Some people end up having a medical emergency because the concentration was too high or they didn’t realize delta-8 THC was psychoactive until it was too late.

The “Sandwich” Approach to Providing Information

1. **Ask**
   - Would you be open to hearing about...?
   - What do you know about...?
   - What would you most like to know about...?

2. **Provide Information**

3. **Ask**
   - How, if at all, has this impacted your thinking?
   - What might be your next step?
Actions identified by youth as those they would most likely take:

1. **Resonated with middle school youth.**
   - Talk to your friends and encourage them not to use alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana and other drugs.

2. **Make your own personal commitment or pledge to avoid alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana and other drugs.**

3. **Find someone you can talk to if you feel tempted or pressured to use alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana and other drugs.**

4. **Explore new ways of dealing with stress.** Like music, reading, art, getting outdoors, talking with friends you trust or just being by yourself.

5. **Educate yourself about alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana and other drugs by visiting a website or information on social media.**

**Scenario: Alex, age 15**

I can't deal with school right now. My cousin overdosed a few weeks ago and he's in pretty bad shape. I'm worried about him. My parents are all up in my business about it and the last thing I need is a lecture about being "disruptive in class."

**Questions?**

For more information or to inquire about these resources, please email us at: gettingcandid@thenationalcouncil.org