

**SASCA**  
Screening and Assessment  
Services for Children and  
Adolescents  
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## What is a Psychoactive Drug?

- ▶ A **psychoactive drug** or **psychotropic substance** is a chemical that alters brain function, resulting in temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness, or behavior. Such drugs are often used for recreational and spiritual purposes, as well as in medicine, especially for treating neurological and psychological illnesses.

## Marijuana and Mental Health Issues

- ▶ Associations have been found between marijuana use and:
  - Mental health problems
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Suicidal thoughts among adolescents, and personality disturbances.
  - Lack of motivation to engage in typically rewarding activities.

## Marijuana Trends

- In Montgomery County, 7% of middle schoolers and 33% of high schoolers have used Marijuana 1 or more times in their life. - 2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Marijuana is a Gateway Drug; it can lead to the abuse of harder drugs, particularly when started at a young age. - "Challenging Marijuana Myths" message from the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse
- According to the National Institutes of Health, Marijuana's addictiveness is not debatable: 1 in 6 kids who ever try marijuana, will become addicted to the drug. - DrugFacts: Marijuana. www.drugabuse.gov
- Marijuana use is associated with mental health issues (anxiety, depression, panic and psychotic episodes) as well as similar health issues as chronic tobacco users. - DrugFacts: Marijuana www.drugabuse.gov

Brain scans are now showing irreversible, detrimental effects of marijuana on the developing adolescent brain. - www.drugfree.org



## Alcohol Trends

- Over 20% of middle school students and 56% of high school students had at least one drink in their lifetime.
- **Drinking & driving is still a problem.** 17% of middle school students and 19% high school students rode in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol.
- **15%** of high school students have had 5 or more drinks in a row within a couple of hours (binge drinking).
- **10%** of middle school & **29%** of high school students have one or more drinks frequently. ('Everyone' is not drinking.)
- ▶
- ▶ ~2013 *Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey Montgomery County Data*

## Read the Fine Print

- ▶ Alcohol kills 6.5 times more youth than all other illicit drugs combined
- ▶ Alcohol consumption by college students is involved in 1,700 deaths, 599,000 injuries, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault each year
- ▶ Of youth, ages 12-17, who drank within the past year, 39% had reported one serious problem and 18% had built up tolerance
- ▶ Youth who begin drinking before 15 are 4 times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who wait until 21

## TOP 10 MOST ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- ▶ OxyContin
- ▶ Xanax
- ▶ Vicodin
- ▶ Suboxone
- ▶ Adderall
- ▶ Valium
- ▶ Percocet
- ▶ Ambien
- ▶ Fentanyl
- ▶ Klonopin



## What we know

- ▶ All of the previously mentioned prescription drugs are dangerous if abused
- ▶ Are easily addictive and can cause emotionally difficult and physically painful withdrawal if not detoxed and treated medically.
- ▶ The opioid medications are physically addicting and after prolonged use will ultimately also call for a medically supervised detox to aid in painful withdrawal symptoms.

## PD/OD Trending Topic

- ▶ More people are overdosing and dying from prescription narcotics.
- ▶ Younger and younger teens are abusing drugs that they find in their parent's medicine cabinets or that they are getting from their friends on the street.
- ▶ More and more suburban parents and young adults are turning to the streets to buy heroin because of an initial addiction to medication.
- ▶ Uppers, downers and all-arounders, pharmaceutical companies turn out more prescription drugs than the population can consume, and the population consumes a lot of prescription drugs.

## Opiates/Prescription Drugs

- ▶ In Montgomery County, approximately **5%** of middle school & **14%** of high school students have abused prescription medications, & approximately **3%** of middle school & **4%** of high school students have used heroin.
- ▶ Prescription opiate addiction often **leads to heroin addiction** because **heroin costs less and is easier to obtain**.
- ▶ There may not be obvious side effects so **use may go unnoticed**. Many users are **highly functioning**. A teen in withdrawal from addiction to opiates **may appear to have flu-like symptoms** or claim to be sick frequently.
- ▶ **ADHD medications are abused as study aids**.

## Prescription Drugs

- ▶ Among youth who are 12 to 17 years old, 7.7 percent reported past-year nonmedical use of prescription medications
- ▶ 2010 Monitoring the Future survey, prescription and over-the-counter drugs are among the most commonly abused drugs by 12th graders, after alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco.
- ▶ obtain the majority of prescription drugs from friends and relatives, sometimes without their knowledge
- ▶ Deaths from prescription opioid medications now outnumber overdose deaths from all other drugs (including cocaine and heroin)

## Heroin Use

- ▶ Heroin use has increased since 2011 because it's more accessible and cheaper
- ▶ Users are not able to tell the purity or type of cutting agent used
  - Compare: Pills are easy to identify and effects users based on the milligram (5, 10, 15, and 30)
- ▶ Users can snort powder or inject
- ▶ Very nasty and addictive drug
- ▶ National trend, not just a local issue

## Heroin Use and Deaths Rise

- ▶ The number of heroin users in the U.S. jumped almost 80% from 2007 (373,000) to 2012 (699,000).
- ▶ Overdose deaths attributed to heroin reached 3,094 in 2010, up 55% from 2000
- ▶ About 80% of people trying heroin for the first time previously used prescription pain drugs
- ▶ New users typically start off smoking or snorting the powder, then move on to injecting

## Common Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol and Drug Use

- ▶ **Age of Onset**– the earlier the age at which someone starts using the greater the risk they will develop alcohol or drug related problem later in life.
- ▶ **Youth perception** that parents approve of their alcohol or drug use
- ▶ **Peers** engaging in problem behavior
- ▶ **Early and persistent problem behaviors**, risk-taking, and high sensation-seeking
- ▶ **Parental monitoring** (or perception of monitoring)
- ▶ **Parent or older sibling drug use** (or perception of use)
- ▶ **Low perception** of harm
- ▶ **Strong parent and adolescent relationship** and family cohesion
- ▶ **Youth access** and availability
- ▶ **Poor school achievement** and low school bonding

## ACTIONS FOR PREVENTION

Teen drug use & addiction are caused by a complex set of issues. There are a number of factors that can help protect teens; ***PARENTS ARE A MAJOR ONE OF THOSE FACTORS.***

Here are things you can do:

- ▶ Continue to **learn**.
- ▶ Have an **ongoing conversation**
- ▶ Learn **skills for effective communication** with your teen.
- ▶ **Prevent Access.**
- ▶ **Dispose of unused & outdated medications.**
- ▶ **Seek assistance**
- ▶ **Advocate**
- ▶ **Seek professional help at FIRST SIGN** of teen use.
- ▶ **Consider non-addictive forms of pain relief**
- ▶ **Broaden your child's support network**



## SASCA – Who We



- ▶ Therapist who conduct mental health and substance abuse screenings for children and adolescents
- ▶ Facilities in Rockville & Silver Spring
- ▶ Children and Adolescents under the age of 17yrs old
- ▶ Free service for residents of Montgomery County
- ▶ Hours 8:30am – 5pm on Monday & Friday
- ▶ Tues, Wed, Thurs 10:30am- 7pm extended hours

## Why SASCA



- ▶ **SASCA began as a vision** for DHHS to meet the needs of youth who often displayed symptoms of mental illness and substance use problems, which were untreated.
- ▶ Believed that an **early screening and referral to treatment** could change the negative outcomes into positive outcomes

## Why SASCA



- ▶ **Developmentally**, when children begin going through puberty and feel hormonal changes, they start feeling a need to try new things, to push the boundaries and they engage in risky behavior. At the same time the judgement center in their brain starts dropping out. So we have these two colliding factors going on and in many instances this is when they are introduced to the opportunity to use drugs and alcohol.
- ▶ This is also when they **need their parents** the most and then suddenly they decide their parents do not know anything and just became the dumbest people in the world. In some children, we start seeing a rebellious attitude forming.

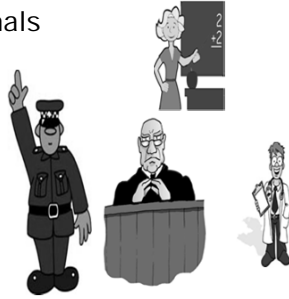
## SASCA– What We Do

- ▶ 2 part Screening conducted by a **Licensed Mental Health Therapist**
- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> Part of the screening -Drug Screen- 32 most common drugs
- ▶ 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the screening – Brief Mental Health Assessment
- ▶ Recommendations-Therapy, Drug Education Classes or Treatment and Mentoring Programs



## How are clients referred

- ▶ Montgomery County Public Schools(MCPS)
- ▶ Family Crimes Division (FCD)
- ▶ Department of Juvenile Services(DJS)
- ▶ Other Mental Health and Medical Professionals
- ▶ Parents



## Get Checked Out



## Why Parents Delay

- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Lack of information
- ▶ Busy Schedules
- ▶ Extra- curricular involvement

### Indications that a SASCA is needed:

- Falling grades
- Changes in behavior
- Depression (sadness)
- Lack of Motivation
- Loss of pleasure
- Bullying
- Mood Swings

Call 240-777-1430 to schedule an  
Assessment with SASCA