

Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Use



According to national studies, many young people experiment with or use alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Experimentation during adolescence is not uncommon, but substance use can quickly become dangerous and lead to serious problems. Effective treatment can help young people stop using, avoid relapse and recover their lives with more stability with their families, friends, schools, activities and jobs.

At Our Lady of Peace, adolescents report marijuana as their “drug of choice,” followed by alcohol and prescription painkillers. They report that the main reason for substance use is because of feeling “stressed, nervous, tense, full of worries or problems,” and many report they live with family members who use substances and/or have substance use problems as well.

- Underage drinking is a major cause of death among young people due to injuries. It can affect a young person’s body in many ways, from hangovers to death from alcohol poisoning. It also affects how well a young person judges risk and makes decisions, and teenagers often end up doing dangerous things they would not normally do. Heavier drinking can also very quickly turn good feelings into bad ones.
- Marijuana is a mind-altering drug that changes the way the brain works. Short term effects include euphoria, distorted perceptions and short term memory problems. Long term effects include lack of motivation, isolation and psychological dependence.

- Prescription pain medications, anti-anxiety medications and abuse of over the counter medications can quickly become addictive and lead to death. More than half of teens report that prescription drugs are now easier to get than illegal drugs.

Know the Signs of Underage Drinking and Drug Use

- Mood Changes
- Decreased interest in activities
- Changes in health
- Personality changes
- Increased secrecy and lying to family/friends
- Personal time that is unaccounted for
- Changes in patterns with friends

Adolescents Can and Do Lead Drug Free Lives

Children’s Peace Center at Our Lady of Peace offers treatment for adolescents struggling with substance use problems. We involve family members in family therapy and substance abuse education because we know that this improves the well being of the whole family. In addition to individualized treatment, Our Lady of Peace offers a free weekly family education program, “Families Living with Drug/Alcohol Addiction,” that is open to family members of current patients and to anyone in the community.

 **Our Lady of Peace**
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We’re here to help. If you or someone you love is experiencing symptoms of depression, please contact Our Lady of Peace for an assessment and assistance with treatment options. Call (502) 451-3333 or 1-800-451-3637.

2020 Newburg Road
Louisville, KY 40205
(502) 451-3330
www.ourladyofpeacelouisville.org