

KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE

GUIDE

Substance Awareness Toolkit

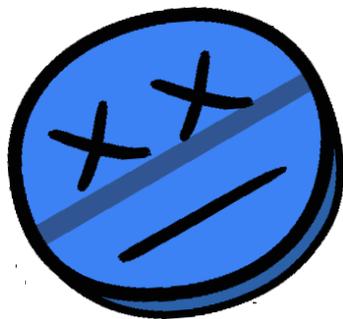
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Losing **Them** means
losing **This**.



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction: Why This Toolkit Exists

Understanding The Risks

- The Changing Substance Landscape
- Why "Just Say No" Doesn't Work
- The Overdose Crisis: What's Really Happening

How To Talk To Your Child

- Preparing for Honest Conversations
- What to Do (and What Not to Do)
- When to Get Help Immediately

Recognizing The Warning signs

- Early Indicators of Substance Use
- Behavioral and Physical Red Flags
- Understanding Tolerance, Dependence, and Addiction

Naloxone: The Life-saving Tool

- What It Is and How It Works
- How to Use It Step-by-Step
- Where to Get Naloxone Near You

INTRODUCTION



Raising kids today means navigating challenges no generation has faced before.

Teens and young adults are exposed to overwhelming pressure— online, and in their social lives.

Substances are easier to access than ever, and the risks are higher. Dangerous drugs like fentanyl are showing up in places parents don't expect, putting even first-time use in a deadly category.



www.whatsthefix.org





Substances like fentanyl can be hidden in counterfeit pills, party drugs, or even shared by friends who don't know what they're really carrying.

A single mistake can be fatal.

As a parent, it's natural to want to shield your child from danger. But simply telling them to "just say no" won't prepare them for the realities they face. They need real tools, real knowledge, and real trust.

This guide is here to help you recognize the risks your child might be exposed to, understand the warning signs of substance use or overdose, and to **start honest conversations that could save their life.**



**6 in 10 counterfeit pills with
fentanyl now contain a
potentially lethal dose.**



WE NEED TO PROTECT THEM



WHY “JUST SAY NO” ISN'T ENOUGH

It would be easy to think that keeping kids safe from drugs is just about setting clear boundaries. But in reality, young people often face choices that aren't so simple. Many aren't trying to rebel — **they might be curious, trying to fit in, or caught in a moment they didn't expect.**

Some experiment because a friend offers them something. Others are told it will help them study, sleep, or relax. In today's world, that one moment could expose them to something deadly — even if they had no idea what they were taking.

What teens need isn't just warnings. They need to know they can come to you if something happens, without fear, without shame. The more open and honest your relationship is, the more likely they are to make safer choices or reach out when they're in over their head. That trust can take time to build, but it could be the difference between life and death.

HOW TO START



THE CONVERSATION

Choose a moment when you both have time and privacy. Avoid starting the conversation when either of you is already upset or distracted. Begin by letting your child know that you care and that your goal is to understand, not to accuse or punish.

Ask questions that invite longer answers. Instead of asking "Are you using drugs?" you might say "How have you been feeling lately?" or "Is something worrying you?" After you ask, give them time to respond without interruption. Avoid the urge to immediately offer advice or solutions. Sometimes the most important first step is simply making your child feel heard.

If they are not ready to talk, do not force it. Let them know you are there when they are ready and follow up later. Your consistency and calm approach will make it easier for them to open up over time.

If you suspect your child is experimenting with substances, take a moment to breathe before reacting. Strong emotions are natural, but an intense or confrontational response can close the door to communication.

Instead, try to understand what led to the behavior. Was it peer pressure? Is your child trying to manage stress or emotional pain? Are they feeling disconnected or unsupported? Understanding the reasons will help you address the root of the problem instead of only the behavior itself.



Consider seeking guidance from professionals. This might include a counselor, pediatrician, therapist, or addiction specialist.

If there is any chance that opioids are involved, it is important to learn how to recognize the signs of an overdose and **always keep naloxone** (overdose reversal medication) **at home**.

RECOGNIZING

WHEN SOMETHING IS WRONG

The first signs that your child might be struggling are not always dramatic. Sometimes the changes are subtle and can be mistaken for typical teenage behavior. **This is why paying attention over time matters.**



- You might notice that your child is withdrawing from family activities or spending less time with friends.
- They may lose interest in hobbies or sports they once loved.
- Changes in mood can appear without an obvious reason. Irritability, sadness, or becoming unusually quiet can be indicators that something is off.
- Sleep patterns may change. Some young people start sleeping much more than usual, while others barely sleep at all.
- Appetite and weight can shift as well.
- Academically, there may be a drop in grades or a loss of motivation to complete assignments.
- They may forget responsibilities or stop caring about goals they once valued.

While these signs do not automatically mean drug use, they do mean your child is facing a challenge that requires support and open conversation.

Opioid overdose signs

Spotting an opioid overdose is urgent, but to really understand it, it helps to know the stages that can happen before things get that far.

LEVEL ● TOLERANCE ● DEPENDENCE ● ADDICTION

TOLERANCE

Occurs when a person begins to experience a reduced response, requiring more to get the same effect

- Crushing & snorting pills
- Chewing pills
- Taking more frequently or increasing dose without being advised by a doctor

DEPENDENCE

Occurs when the body adjusts its normal functioning around regular opioid use. Unpleasant physical symptoms occur when stopped

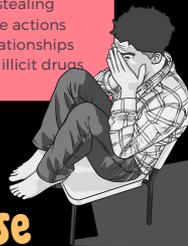
- Behavioral: Agitation, irritability, impatient
- Physiological: Shakes, chills, sweats, nausea
- Psychological: Mania, paranoia, impulse control

ADDICTION

Occurs when attempts to cut down or control use are unsuccessful or when use results in social and personal inability to fulfill normal obligations

- Severe withdrawal
- Worsening drug use
- Uncharacteristic behaviors like lying and stealing
- Self-destructive actions that severe relationships
- Seeking/using illicit drugs

[Commonly Used Terms | CDC's Response to the Opioid Overdose Epidemic | CDC](#)



signs and symptoms of Opioid Overdose

When someone has crossed into dangerous territory, these signs can mean an overdose is happening right now:



Blue Lips and/or nails



Dizziness and Confusion



Slow weak or no breathing



Choking and/or Gurgling

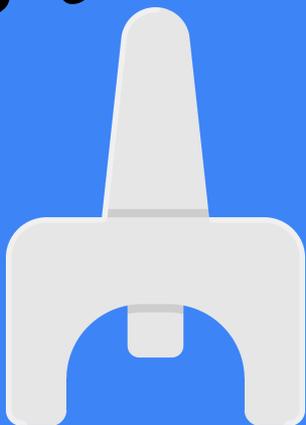


Can't be woken up



Drowsiness or lack of response

WHAT IS



MALOXONES?

What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly **reverse opioid overdose**. It binds to opioid receptors and can reverse or block the effects of other opioids, quickly restoring normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped due to overdosing with heroin or prescription opioid medications.

HOW TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE?

1



CALL FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

Dial 911 or your local emergency service first.

2



ADMINISTER THE DOSE

Insert the nozzle into one nostril and press the plunger to release the naloxone dose into the nostril. Begin chest compressions.

3



Monitor FOR RESPONSE

If there's no response within 2-3 minutes, administer a second dose in the opposite nostril and continue chest compressions.

4



AWAIT EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Stay with the person and monitor their breathing and wait for emergency responders to arrive.

WATCH FULL NALOXONE TRAINING VIDEO



Where to get



naloxone?

- **Community organizations:** Many local health departments, harm reduction groups, and nonprofits give it out for free.
- **Schools and campuses:** Some keep it in nurse's offices or health centers.
- **Online programs:** Certain websites mail free naloxone kits; check Florida's health department or local harm reduction programs for links.
- **Pharmacies:** In Florida, you can get it without a prescription. Ask the pharmacist for naloxone, NARCAN, or Kloxxado.

Find Help Now: Local Resources for Substance Use & Overdose Prevention

QUICK ACCESS HOTLINES

SAMHSA National Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (4357) – 24/7 substance use support

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Dial 988 for urgent mental health help

211 Florida / 211 Brevard

Dial 211 or visit 211Brevard.org.



**FOR LIFE-THREATENING
EMERGENCY? CALL 911
IMMEDIATELY.** If someone is
unconscious, not breathing, or
unresponsive, call 911 and stay
with them until help arrives.

COUNTY-SPECIFIC HELP LINKS

Orange County

- [My Recovery Connections \(Orange County\)](#).

Search support groups, AA/NA meetings, and treatment centers.

- [Project Opioid – Orange](#)

Request overdose data reports or schedule group naloxone training sessions.

➤ [Contact Project Opioid](#)

Seminole County

• [SCORE Program \(Opioid Response\)](#)
Community response initiative for overdose prevention

- Email: score@seminolesheriff.org
- Non-Emergency: (407) 665-6650
- [More Info](#)

• [Project Opioid – Seminole](#)
Request overdose data reports or schedule group naloxone training sessions.

➤ [Contact Project Opioid](#)

Brevard County

- [211 Brevard Website](#)
- [Search local addiction, housing, and crisis support programs.](#)

Osceola County

- [Park Place Behavioral Health Care](#)
- Offers inpatient, outpatient, and 24/7 crisis intervention services.

