

Reducing Risk & Ways to Support

Our Youth

Ways to reduce risks to prevent substance use disorders in teens:

- Know the risk factors: changes in behavior, a lack of interest in social activities, school absences.
- Know the protective factors: regular conversations from a caregiver, good support systems, regular conversations about substance use and the negative effects they have on the brain and body.
- Support individuality & empowerment.
- Foster the child's growth in education and achievements, encourage positive values, provide leadership opportunities, create responsibility, mentor the child to develop interpersonal skills.
- Encourage the child's future and current goals.
- Seek help & methods to facilitate healthy rewards such as counseling or a treatment program.

West Virginia Day of Hope

West Virginia Day of Hope is an opportunity for houses of worship to focus on solution-oriented discussion and activities to reduce substance abuse. Our goal is for all faith organizations to participate and to continue positive action throughout the year.

All are encouraged to reach out for more information.

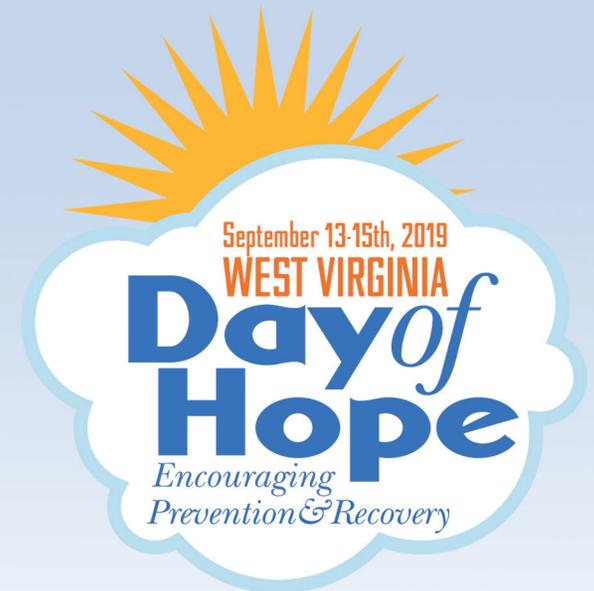
Sources
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/drug-misuse-addiction>
<https://policywise.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/40-Developmental-Assets.pdf>

For more information please contact the Day of Hope Partners:

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**Faith Community
Encouraging Prevention
& Recovery & Supporting
a Substance Free
West Virginia**



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A Sense of Hope

Dear Partners in Faith,

The West Virginia Day of Hope is an opportunity for houses of worship to focus on solution-oriented discussion and activities to reduce substance use disorder in our state. Our goal is for all faith organizations to participate and to continue positive action throughout the year.

The health development of the brain and open communication are key in the prevention of drug use. Think about growing an apple tree. You have to nourish the healthy tree for it to grow the fruits to harvest. Learning of the consequences of early substance use and substance use disorders will help our children to develop strong roots.

In this brochure we will learn what happens to the brain from the use of substances and alcohol early in a teens life. A focus in providing education and opening windows for communication for the youth, parents, and community members will help raise our youth to make good conscious choices and increase their odds for developing a health brain.

Sincerely,
2019 Day of Hope Organizers



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The Teenage Brain

Why do teens use substances or alcohol?

- Ultimately to feel good about themselves or due to a physical, emotional, or mental trauma.

What is the problem?

- Substances like alcohol or drugs makes the person need it to feel a sense of “normal” especially over time.

What is the problem with continued use?

- The individual using substances loses control of their emotions and thinking processes.
- The areas of the brain critical to judgment, decision-making, learning and memory, and behavior control become damaged.

Why do some develop substance use disorders and others do not?

- A person is at an increased risk to use substances with an increase in risk factors.
- A person who has more protective factors is less likely to use substances.

The earlier we begin routine conversations with our youth, the greater chance we have to prevent risk factors.

Dramatic Changes of the Brain During Adolescence

- The prefrontal cortex of the brain is still developing. This part of the brain controls judgment, impulses, and our emotions.
- Damaging the prefrontal cortex of the brain puts the teen at risk for poor decision making. And using alcohol or drugs will cause a teen to have impaired decision making.

What happens to the brain with substance use?

- Substance use alters the brain's ability to perform daily functions.
- Substance use will interfere with the brain signaling causing abnormalities in messages being sent.
- Substance use will override our brain's reward center, causing the reward center to be far less efficient.
- Our brains want to repeat activities that achieve a feeling of euphoria. In turn, the euphoric feeling from substance use can develop into a substance use or alcohol use disorder.

