

# TIME TO ACT!

How to Take Action if  
you Think or Know your  
Child is using Drugs or  
Alcohol



# Today's Presentation

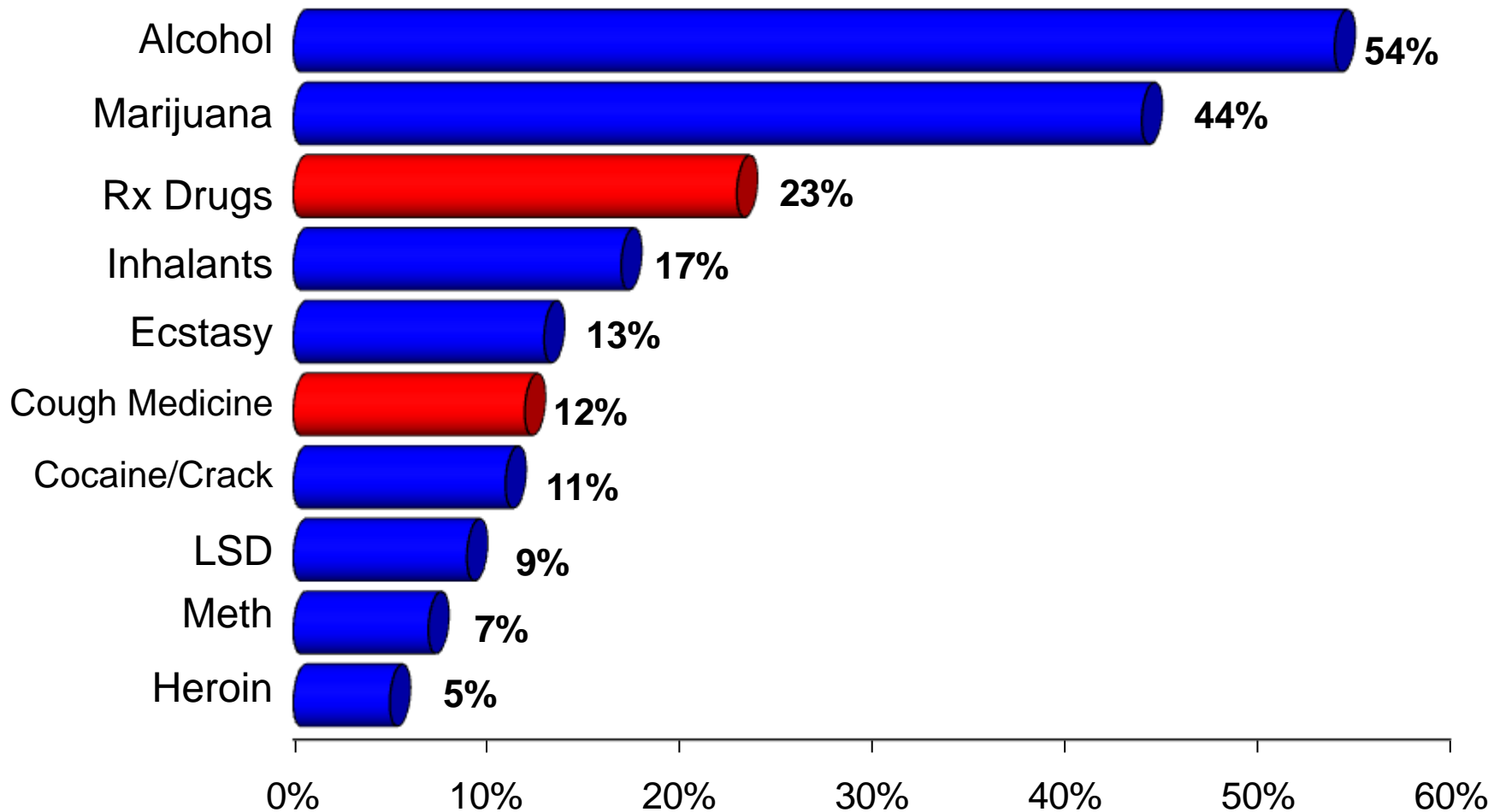
- Discuss the drug & alcohol scene in our community – highlight Rx/OTC abuse
- Introduce the Partnership for a Drug-Free America's Time To Act website:  
[www.drugfree.org/timetoact](http://www.drugfree.org/timetoact)
- Discuss how parents can take action if you
  - Think your child is using alcohol or other drugs or
  - Know your child is using

# Parents

- Moms and dads
- Grandparents
- Aunts and uncles
- Close family friends
- Mentors
- Other caregivers

**The presence of a caring adult in a child's life**

# National Drug & Alcohol Scene



# **Real Danger**

**“Abusing prescription (RX)  
and over-the-counter (OTC)  
drugs can be just as  
dangerous, addictive and  
even deadly as using ‘street’  
drugs”**

# Rx/OTC Medicines Being Abused

- Rx pain relievers (Vicodin, OxyContin)
- Rx stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin)
- Rx tranquilizers/sedatives (Xanax, Valium)
- OTC cough/cold with 'DXM' (Robitussin, Coricidin)

# Troubling Indicators of Medicine Abuse

- Unintentional drug poisoning now second leading cause of accidental death in US, after car crashes
- Emergency room visits related to Rx/OTC abuse now almost equal to ER visits due to all “street drugs”
- Rx drugs are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12-13 year olds

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Three Leading Causes of Injury Mortality in the United States, 1999-2005, 2008; Drug Abuse Warning Network; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Study on Drug Use and Health, 2007

[drugfree.org/timetoact](http://drugfree.org/timetoact)

# Key Factors Driving Teen Medicine Abuse

- **Misperceptions** that abusing medicine is not dangerous (safer than “street drugs”)
- **Ease of access** via medicine cabinets at home or friend’s house, own or other person’s prescriptions



# Teen perceptions of safety



## **Sanitized**

Created in a medical laboratory for healing purposes



## **Sanctioned**

Accepted by society as a “positive”



## **Safe**

Certified by FDA

# Rx New Step in Drug Ladder

heroin,  
meth, crack



cocaine



shrooms,  
ecstasy



Prescription / over-the-counter drugs  
(Rx/OTC)



liquor,  
marijuana



cigarettes,  
beer/wine



Rx abusers are more likely to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> rung in the progression

[drugfree.org/timetoact](http://drugfree.org/timetoact)

# What about parents' perceptions?

- Street drugs are generally considered more dangerous
- Parents are less familiar with “pills” – they often have no frame of reference since these types of drugs of abuse didn't exist in their youth
- There's a lack of urgency around Rx/OTC

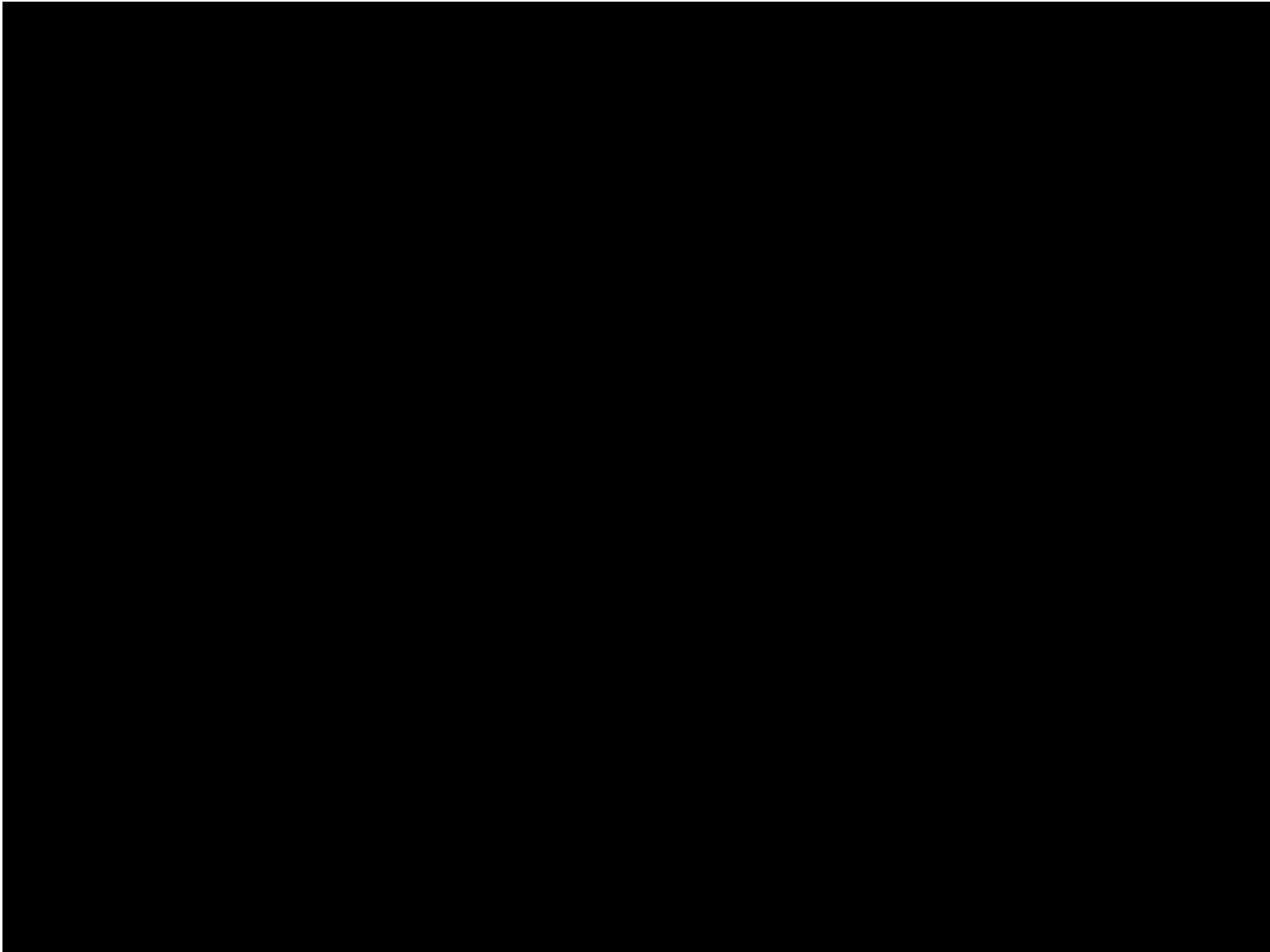
# Local Drug & Alcohol Scene

- Insert text here
  - Primary drugs of abuse, stats, news stories, etc.

# Time To Act Website

- [www.drugfree.org/timetoact](http://www.drugfree.org/timetoact)
- Dynamic, interactive site that allows parents to follow one of two tracks – What to do if:
  - *I think my child is using*
  - *I know my child is using*





# TIME TO ACT!

How to Tell if Your Teen is Using and Taking Action to Intervene

## Don't panic. You can do this.

If you suspect or know your child is using drugs or alcohol, it is important to take action right away. You have already taken an important step by visiting this website to learn more. So don't give up. **We're here to help. Let's get started.**

**I THINK my child is using.**

**I KNOW my child is using.**



[Teen Drug and Alcohol Intervention](#): A step-by-step guide for parents who suspect their teens are drinking or using drugs.

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Scientific Partner: Treatment Research Institute



I think my child is using

I know my child is using

1. First Step: Ask

2. Look for Signs

3. Learn Risk Factors

4. Why Teens Use

5. Need to Know

# “I think my child is using”

1. First Step: Ask
2. Look for Signs
3. Learn Risk Factors
4. Why Teens Use
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# “1. First Step: Ask”

## 1. Plan your conversation

- Role play with spouse / friends
- Call teacher / coach if others notice issues
- Communicate concern & support, not “gotcha”

## 2. Know what you are going to ask

- It can be easier to start by talking about friends
- Learn what they know / think they know

## 3. Find the right time to ask

- When you can really talk, not “on the run”

\*

*“Communicate with concern”*





## “2. Look for Signs & Symptoms”

- Signs of use / abuse
  - Behavioral issues
  - Personal appearance
  - Personal habits
  - Home, car related issues
  - Health issues
  - School or work related issues
- Hard to tell difference between signs of use & “normal” teen behavior

# Clue In to Behavioral Issues

The signs of substance abuse aren't all physical. Be aware of these behavioral indicators that may be a sign that your teen has been drinking or is using drugs, especially if you've noticed an abrupt change in one of these behaviors.

- Change in relationships with family members or friends +
- Loss of inhibitions
- Mood changes or emotional instability
- Loud, obnoxious behavior
- Laughing at nothing
- Unusually clumsy, stumbling, lack of coordination, poor balance
- Sullen, withdrawn, depressed
- Unusually tired
- Silent, uncommunicative
- Hostile, angry, uncooperative
- Deceitful or secretive
- Makes endless excuses
- Decreased Motivation +
- Lethargic
- Unable to speak intelligibly, slurred speech, or rapid-fire speech +
- Inability to focus
- Hyperactive
- Unusually elated +
- Periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long periods of "catch up" sleep +

HOME OR CAR  
RELATED ISSUES

HEALTH ISSUES

SCHOOL OR  
WORK ISSUES

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1. First Step: Ask

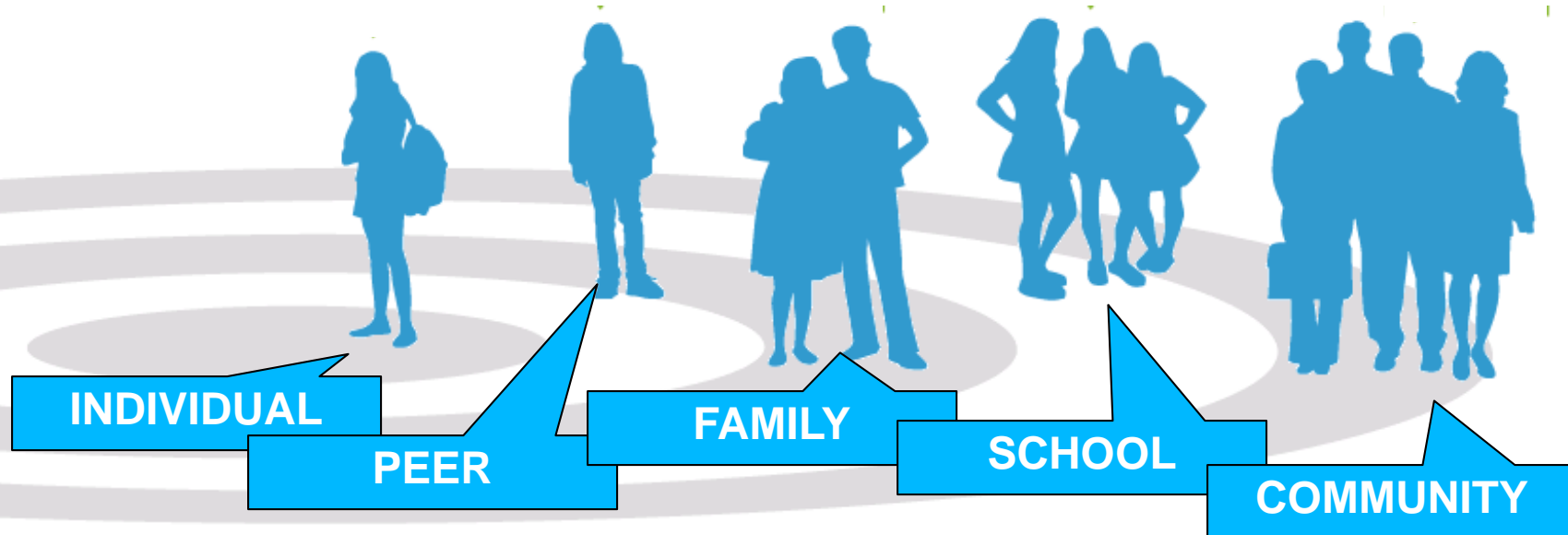
2. Look for Signs

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# “3. Learn Risk Factors”



1. **First Step: Ask**

I think my child is using

2. **Look for Signs**

I know my child is using

3. **Learn Risk Factors**

4. **Why Teens Use**

5. **Need to Know**

- Begins drinking or using drugs at an early age (10-12 years old)
- Teen's thinking that drinking and/or drug use isn't that harmful
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and conduct disorders
- Rebelliousness; frequent breaking of rules
- Unable to control impulses

### What Parents Can Do

- If your child is on medication for any mental health disorder, it is important that you
- Make sure your child knows that you and other adults in his life support him and care

## What Parents Can Do

- Through modeling, teach your child how to get along and have positive interactions with other kids and adults.
- Help develop problem-solving skills: Allow your child to figure out how to accomplish a task on her own - even if it means feeling frustrated along the way.





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## “4. Why Teens Use”

- Many factors and situations affect teen’s choice whether or not to use
  - Fitting In
  - Sex
  - Socializing
  - Emotional Pain
  - Transitions

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## Emotional and Psychological Pain

Some teens use alcohol or drugs to dull the pain in their lives. When they're given a chance to take something to make them temporarily feel better, many can't resist

**Teens drink or use drugs to check out from family problems or issues with school/grades**

Poor grades may lead to family problems, and vice-versa, in an unfortunate cycle that leads many teens to turn to drugs or alcohol.

**Loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorder and other mental health issues lead many teens to drugs**

Furthermore, many of these issues occur in combinations, each compounding the intensity of the others.

**Teens turn to drugs to deal with the pressures of everyday teen drama**

Jealousy. Infighting. Gossip. These common features of teenage life can become too much for kids who haven't learned how to cope with difficult social situations.



CARS

FITTING IN

SEX

SOCIALIZING

EMOTIONAL  
PAIN

TRANSITIONS

### What Parents Can Do

- If you notice extreme and lasting changes in mood, behavior, grades, attention span, etc., take your teen for a professional health assessment to find out what's causing the problem
- Don't tell yourself it's "just a phase." If your teenager seems depressed or not herself, take him to a doctor or therapist

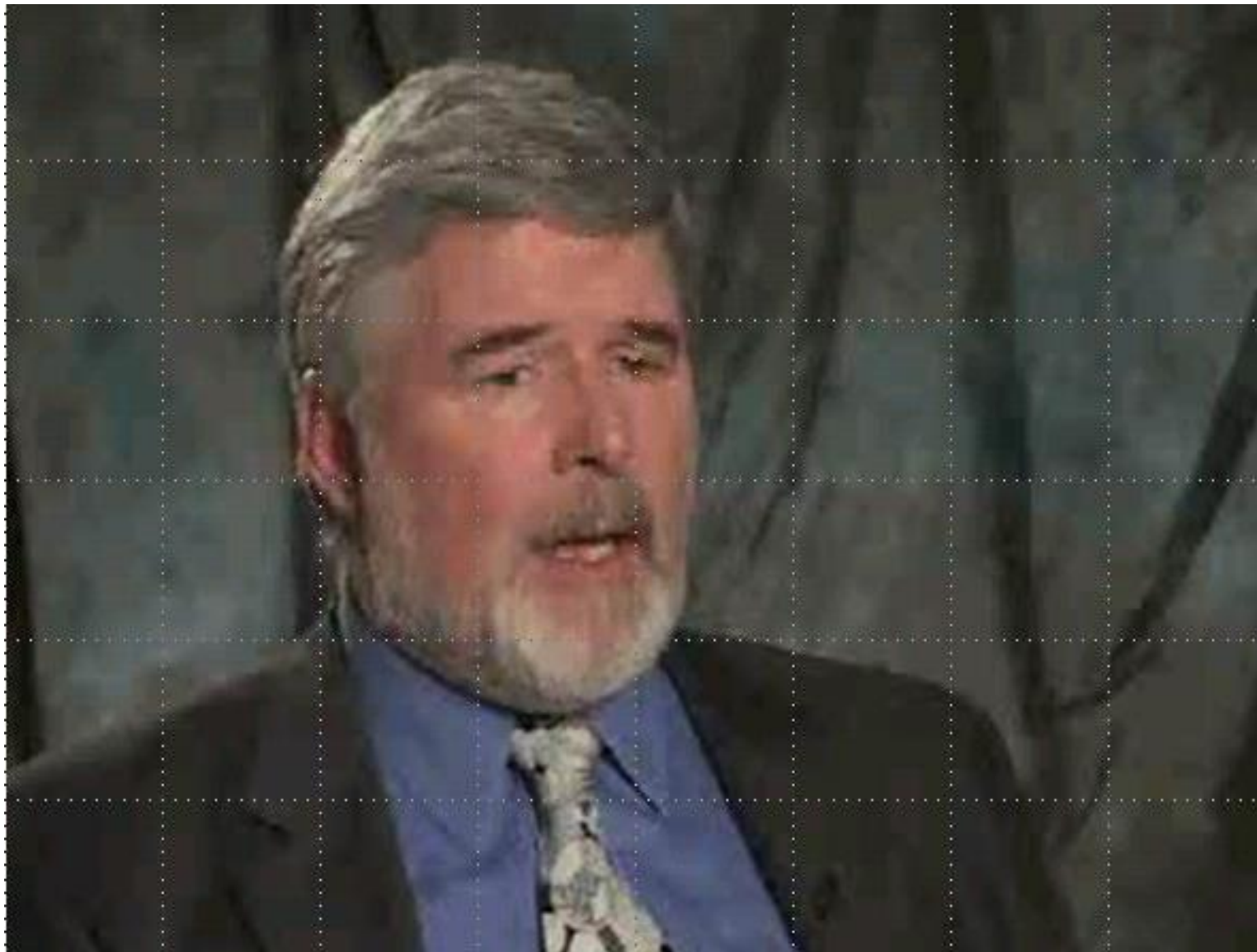
#### VIDEO TIPS

See what the experts have to say about the roles of emotional and psychological pain in substance abuse.

 **Watch now**



## *“Changes in behavior”*





## **“5. Need to Know”**

- Dispels myths and misperceptions some parents have about teen drug and alcohol abuse, such as:
  - “Teen drinking is no big deal”
  - “They’re just experimenting.”
  - “I would know if my kids are using.”

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1. Get Focused

2. Start Talking

3. Set Limits

4. Monitor

5. Get Outside Help

# **“I know my child is using”**

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2. Start Talking

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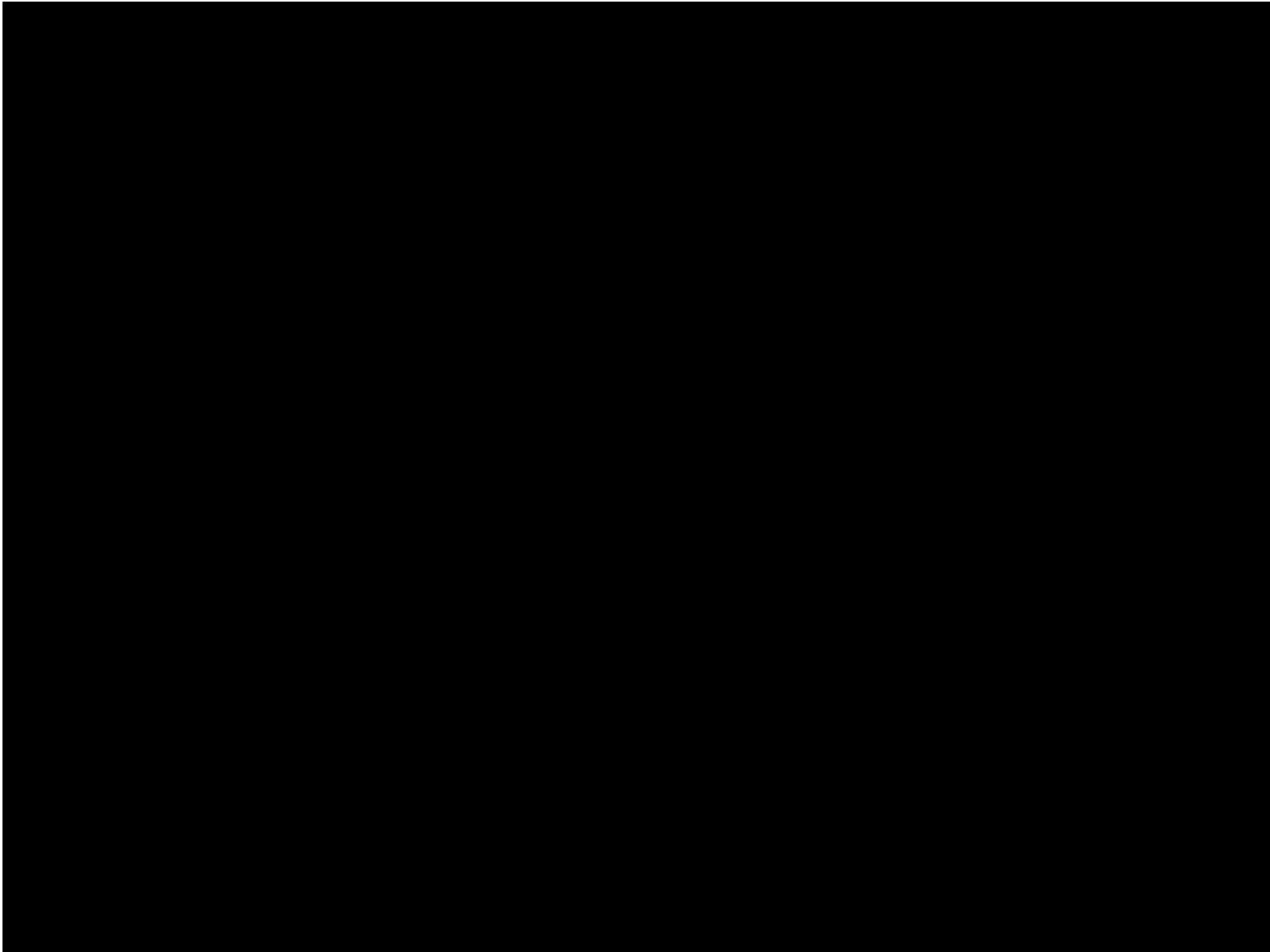
# “1. Get Focused”

- Sit down, relax, and take time to breathe, then:
  - ✓ Talk with your spouse/partner
  - ✓ Prepare to be called a hypocrite
  - ✓ Gather any evidence
  - ✓ Expect denial and possible anger
  - ✓ Set an expected outcome
  - ✓ Spell out rules and consequences
  - ✓ Remind your teen of your support



*“We need to deal with this”*





## “2. Start Talking”

- Starting a conversation with your child about his or her drug use is the most important step you can take in helping your child.
  - Prepare yourself
  - Have a conversation not a confrontation
  - Don't just talk, listen
  - Find the best way to break through your teen's barriers

I think my child is using

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5. **Get Outside Help**

## How to Break Through Barriers

It can be difficult to get past a flat-out denial of drug or alcohol use from your teen. Some kids can't bear to take responsibility for their behavior and want to look good at all costs.

### HOW TO HANDLE THE CONVERSATION

CONFRONTATION

RIERS

Here are some

- Be firm and loving.
- Don't yell. Remain calm. It's harder to fight with – or storm off from – a calm person than it is from somebody who is yelling at you.
- Insist that your teen acknowledges and understands the value of truth telling. Tell her that people trust you more when you are honest; that honesty is a highly-respected trait that requires courage and independent thought; and usually liars get caught in their lies.
- Think before you speak. If your teen says she won't tell her you may check on the
- If you have evidence of lying, bring it up in a calm way or contest. It's proving your point that your child says
- Focus on the problem. Don't make it about the bad person or the alcohol.
- If your teen flirts

### Here are some ways to get past roadblocks:

- **Be firm and loving.**
- **Don't yell. Remain calm.** It's harder to fight with – or storm off from – a calm person than it is from somebody who is yelling at you.
- **Insist that your teen acknowledges and understands the value of truth telling.** Tell her that people trust you more when you are honest; that honesty is a highly-respected trait that requires courage and independent thought; and usually liars get caught in their lies.



## “3. Set Limits”

- **Kids want freedom.** You don't want to be a nag. But when you've discovered drug or alcohol use, all bets are off.
- **Lay Down Rules:** Rules provide a concrete way to help your kids understand what you expect and learn self-control.
- **Set Firm Consequences:** Setting firm consequences for when your rules are broken is actually a help to your teenager, making it clear what they are to do and not to do.

I think my

1. Get Focus

# Set Li

Kids want free  
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## Lay Dow

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Teen Drug a  
parents who  
drugs.

Drugfree.org

## Create a Contract

Set clear rules about drinking and drug use for your teen - and provide guidelines for open communications for both of you.

Your Name

Your Child's Name

[Child's Name] agrees:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will not to drink or take drugs   | <input type="checkbox"/> If I feel unsafe or uncomfortable, I will call you, my parent or guardian, for a ride home                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will not drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol            | <input type="checkbox"/> I will be honest   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will not get in a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> I will talk to you when I am upset, scared, or confused - even if I'm afraid you'll be angry or disappointed |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> I will be accountable for my actions   |

[Parent] agrees:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will make myself available to you whenever you need me              | <input type="checkbox"/> I will listen  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will provide a comfortable, safe, respectful place to talk honestly | <input type="checkbox"/> I will not overreact or judge you for things that don't make sense to me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will keep an open mind  | <input type="checkbox"/> I will love you for who you are  |

CONTINUE

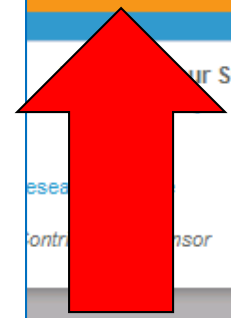
## a Contract for Kids

Teenagers are more likely to follow guidelines they help create. Get together to create rules and consequences that work for you both. Then put the details in writing. Make sure you're on the same page (now and in the future). Use the sample contract as a guide to establish rules about drugs and alcohol.

CREATE A CONTRACT

Get Support

Research  
Contract Sponsor



## “4. Monitor”

- **Collect Evidence:** Parents decide whether or not to look through their child's room and belongings. If you do, remember: it's your house, and your primary responsibility is to the well-being of your child.
- **Keep Track:** Knowing what did or didn't happen can prevent “he said / she said” conversations.
- **Start Your Monitoring ...**

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## Ways to Monitor Your Teen:

- Be around your teen — spend time with your child to observe, talk, check in with, etc.
- Manage your teen's activities — so you know her whereabouts and who she's spending time with
- Reach out to other parents in your community so that you can all help keep an eye on one another's kids.

**Monitoring**

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## “5. Get Outside Help”

- **“Outside help” doesn’t equal “rehab.”** There are many actions and approaches you can take that have nothing to do with rehab.
- **When seeking outside help:**
  - Find out the extent of the problem
  - Why does my child need help?
  - Who can help my teen?
  - Get help for the rest of your family

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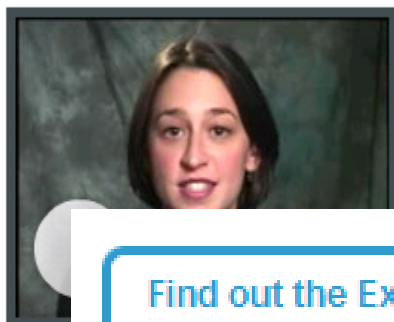
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## Get Outside Help and Support



### "Outside help" is not rehab.

Don't be put off by the term "get help." Outside help includes school counselors, your family doctor, and even your child's sports team coach. All of them can be great resources and sources of support for you and your teen during this time. There are many actions and approaches you can take that have nothing to do with rehab.

### Intervene

Visit our [new community of parents](#) concerned about their teen's alcohol and drug use.

### Find a Treatment Program

[Find a drug and alcohol abuse](#)

### Find out the Extent of the Problem

### Why does my child need help?

### Who can help my teen?

Your child's drug use can be an act of teenage rebellion, a sign of full-fledged addiction, or anything in between. Professionals can use methods to help you pinpoint the issue you're dealing with. Here are some steps of action for your child:

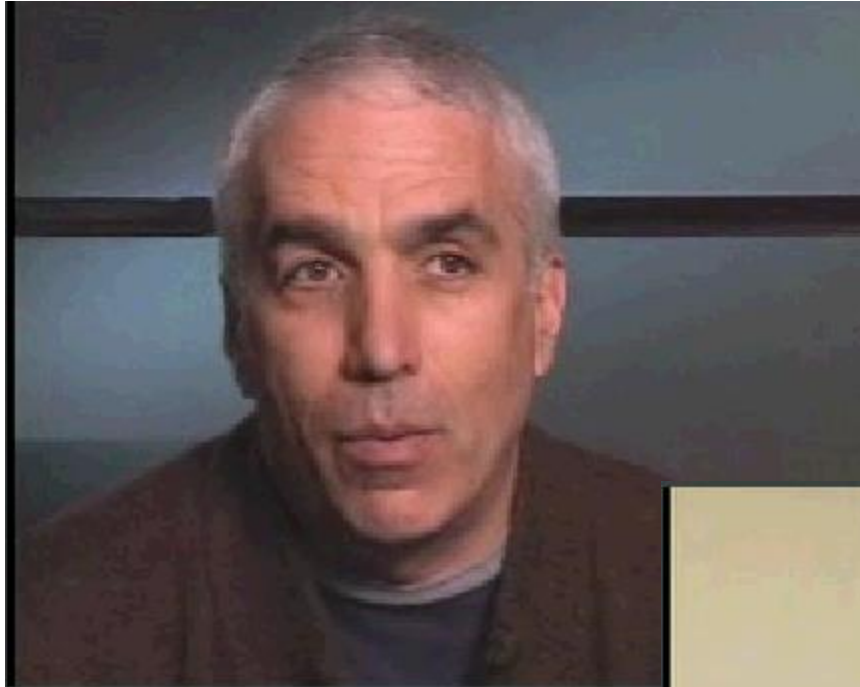
- **Drug and Alcohol Assessment**

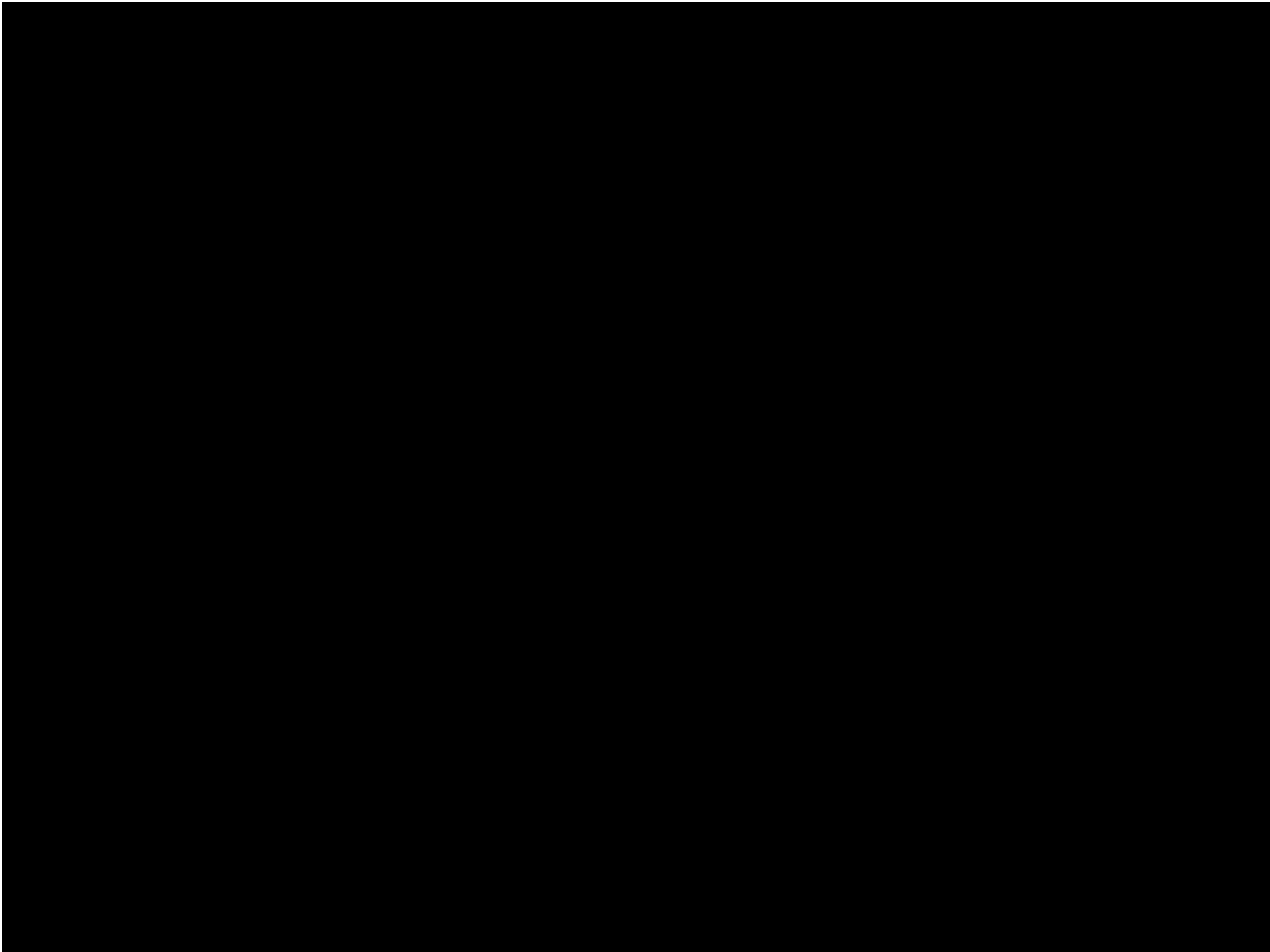
This is a phone interview or face-to-face meeting between the user and a doctor or counselor. It is usually conducted at or by a treatment facility.

- **Evaluation**

This is an extensive assessment in which a user stays at a treatment center for a few days to be observed by experts. He or she also takes part in a series of tests during this time.

*“Don’t imagine you can do this all by yourself”*





# Getting Outside Help in Our Community

- Add local information
  - Local treatment centers, phone numbers, web sites, emergency numbers, support groups and other resources

# **Next Steps – Prepare your home and family**

- Safeguard prescription and over-the-counter drugs and alcohol
  - 39% of teens who abuse prescription drugs obtain them from friends, or their family's medicine cabinet
- Dispose of medicines properly
- Ask family (especially grandparents)/friends to be alert and also safeguard drugs and alcohol

# Next Steps -- Talk

- Talk to your teen about alcohol and other drugs: kids who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50% less likely to use.
- Talk to other parents / caring adults about what you've learned today.
- Share this presentation with others.

# Next Steps – Get more information

- Partnership Intervene Blog: [intervene.drugfree.org](http://intervene.drugfree.org) -- *A community of experts, parents and caring adults have come together to share our insights, inspiration, guidance and help*
- Time to Talk: [timetotalk.org](http://timetotalk.org) -- *TimeToTalk provides easy-to-use guides and tips to help you have ongoing conversations with your kids to keep them healthy and drug-free*
- At [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org), learn more, sign up for our newsletters, become a fan at Facebook, or follow us on Twitter



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*Time To Act* and this presentation were made possible  
by an unrestricted grant from Purdue Pharma

[drugfree.org/timetoact](http://drugfree.org/timetoact)