



DSM foundation

The drug education charity

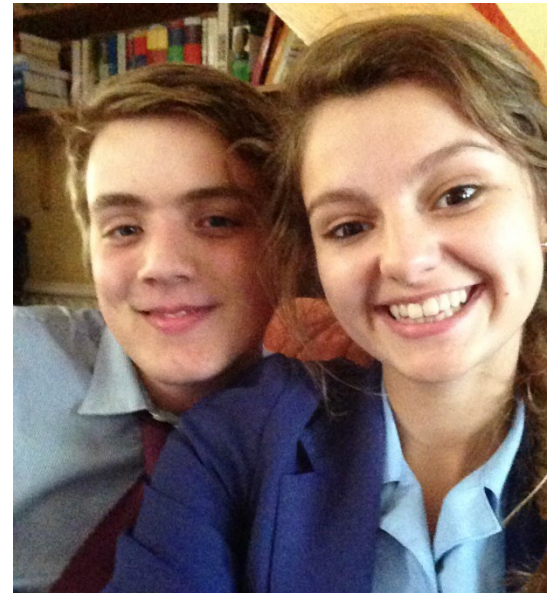
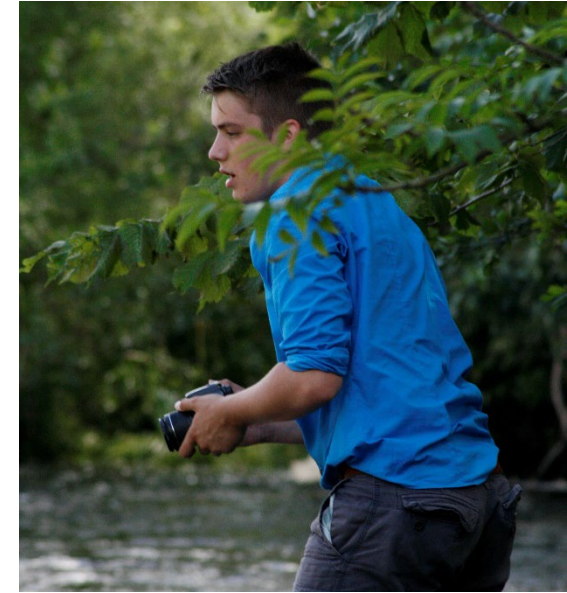
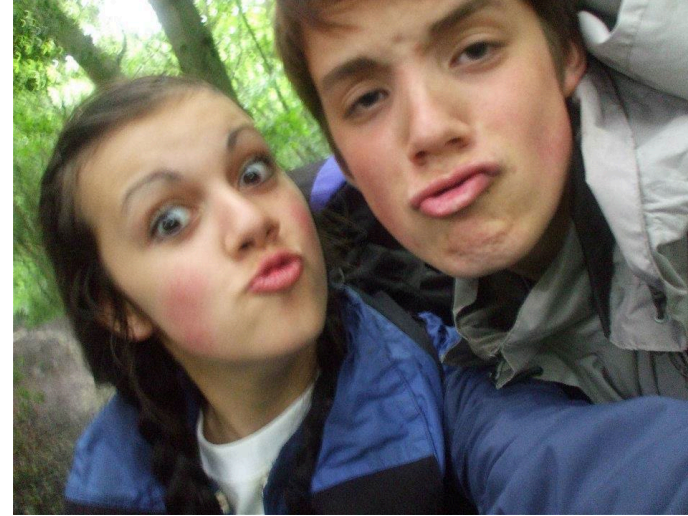
'Supporting young people
to make safe choices about drugs'

Making Safer Choices

Find out more about...

- Dan and the Foundation
- what young people and parents need to know about the risks of drugs and alcohol
- factors that affect young people's decisions about drugs and alcohol
- conversations and strategies for staying safe
- what to do if you have concerns
- where to go for more information and support





Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

Sources of helpful information?

Alcohol

Parents 77%

Teachers 62%

Internet 57%

TV 53%

Other relatives 49%

Social media 48%

Friends 40%



Drugs

Parents 67%

Teachers 64%

Internet 54%

TV 49%

Social media 47%

Other relatives 40%

Friends 39%

NHS Digital: Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England 2021

What are drugs?

Psychoactive substances interfere with the brain's communication networks.

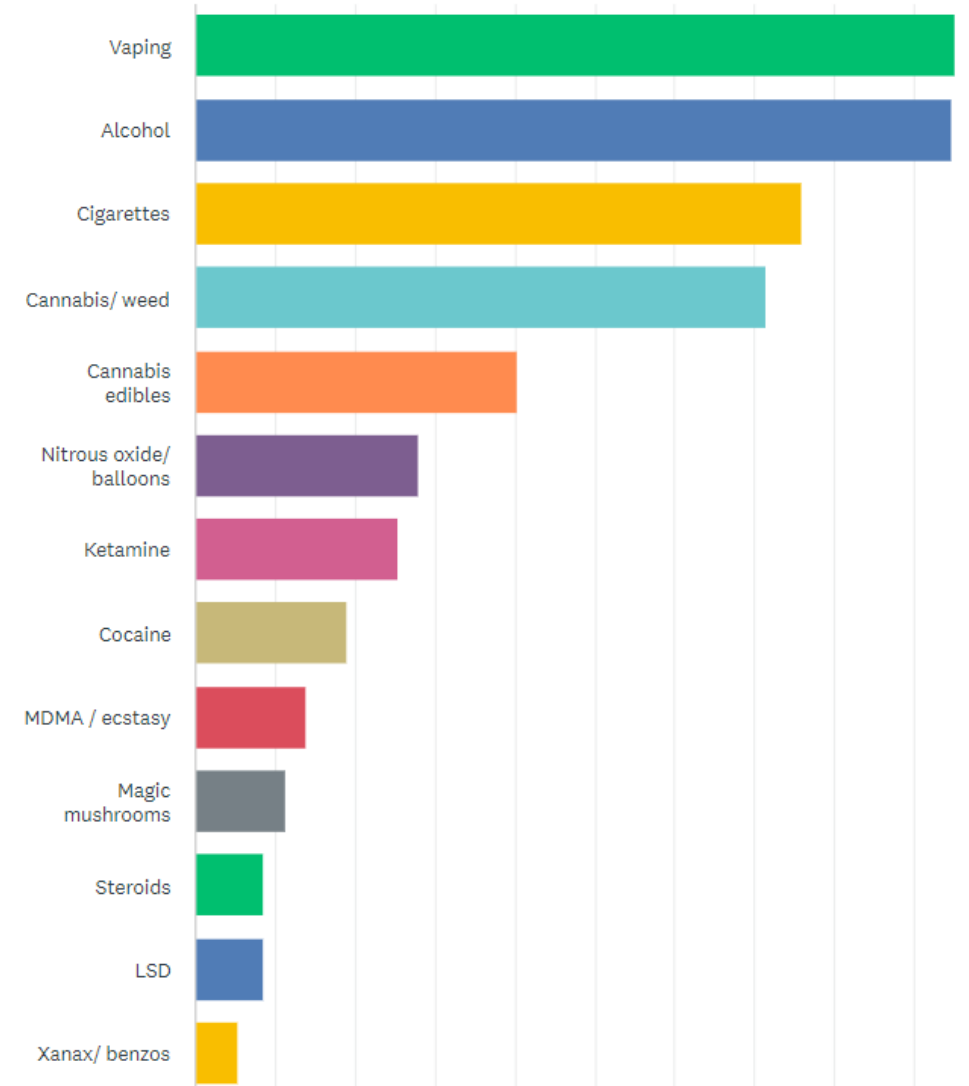
They might stimulate or inhibit communication, or alter what messages do in some way.



This affects feelings, perceptions, thought processes and/or behaviour.

What are the main substances people in your year group use, if they do?
(3,673 responses since Sept 2022)

Substance	%
Vaping	95.2%
Alcohol	94.7%
Cigarettes	76%
Cannabis	74%
Cannabis edibles	40%
Nitrous oxide	28%
Ketamine	25%
Cocaine	19%
MDMA	14%
Magic mushrooms	11%
Steroids	9%
LSD	8%
Xanax	5%

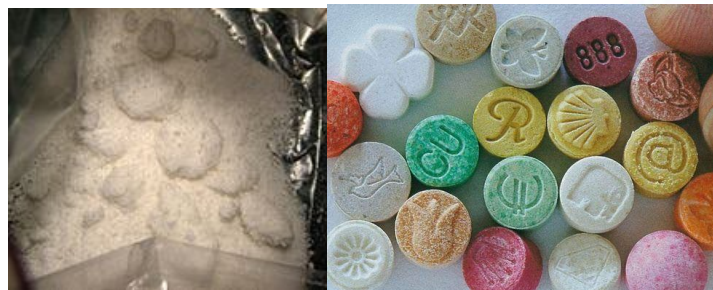


How do drugs work?

Stimulants



Nicotine



MDMA/ecstasy

Depressants



Alcohol



Xanax/ benzos



Cocaine



Steroids

Cannabis



Psychedelics



LSD/acid



Magic mushrooms



Ketamine

Dissociatives



Nitrous oxide





Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs



What's in it? How can you tell?



ALERT: Chloroquine tested at Boomtown 2022

Chloroquine in powder form tested by TICTAC, missold onsite as ketamine, causing significant adverse effects for users. More commonly missold as cocaine due to visual like

Chloroquine is a medication typically used to treat malaria. Common side effects include **diarrhoea, skin rash & loss of appetite.**

Symptoms of chloroquine overdose include **seizure & palpitations.** May have negative interactions with prescription medications.

If you think you have taken chloroquine please seek medical help



ALERT: 4-Chloromethcathinone (4-CMC) found in circulation at Lost Village 2022

4-CMC crystals and powder have been identified on-site, and are visually similar to MDMA.

It is **1.5-2x as strong** as MDMA with similar duration & effects, but less euphoria & more stimulation reported.

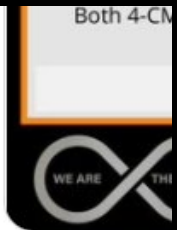
Evidence on the **long-term effects** of 4-CMC is still emerging - it is structurally similar to a drug which is damaging to the brain.



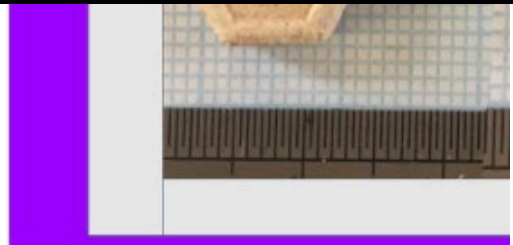
Seek medical help if you experience any of the following: *significantly raised temperature, excessive sweating, muscle rigidity, non-responsiveness, agitation or seizure.*



@WeAreTheLoopUK
@WeAreThe



@WeAreTheLoopUK @TheLoop_UK
@WeAreTheLoopUK



Fiona Measham, Jon Drape, Chill Welfare and Lost V

DIMS and 9 others

7:50 PM · Sep 12, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

64 Retweets 9 Quote Tweets 87 Likes

Which substances do you think cause people in your year group most problems (if anyone has problems)?



Vaping – what are the risks?

Vaping has become one of the most popular ways for adults to stop smoking in the UK.

Vape liquids contain flavours and a wide variety of other **chemicals**, and most contain **nicotine**.

Nicotine is a psychoactive substance, which is especially addictive in adolescence.

One 600 puff Elf or Geek Bar contains nicotine equivalent to 20 cigarettes, and is half the price.

Vaping devices vary in strength, however, with some being very much stronger, especially those produced outside regulation.

Where are influences coming from?
What about the environment?



Nottingham: Super-strength vaping products seized in crackdown



“E-cigarettes are not risk-free. We don't yet know their long-term effects.”



Alcohol safety tips:



Children under 15 years of age shouldn't drink alcohol at all, due to clear evidence of harm to the developing brain, bones and hormones (UK Chief Medical Officers', Jan 2016)

- Understand units (one per hour...)
- Know your limits
- Know it's OK to stop or not to drink at all!

Remember that parents are role models...

Almost one in four 18-24 year olds don't drink alcohol

What about weed?



DSM Foundation
The drug education charity



Germany's move to legalise cannabis expected to create 'domino effect'

Coalition government consults health experts, economists and growers in race to clear legal hurdles within two years



Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

What about weed?

Cannabinoids in cannabis copy the effects of the natural **endocannabinoids** on the brain. This is why cannabis affects **appetite, learning and memory, mood and motivation.**

THC levels in 'street' cannabis have risen by 14-24% since 1970

(University of Bath 2020)

One in 6 teenagers who smoke cannabis become **dependent** and **25-50% of daily smokers**

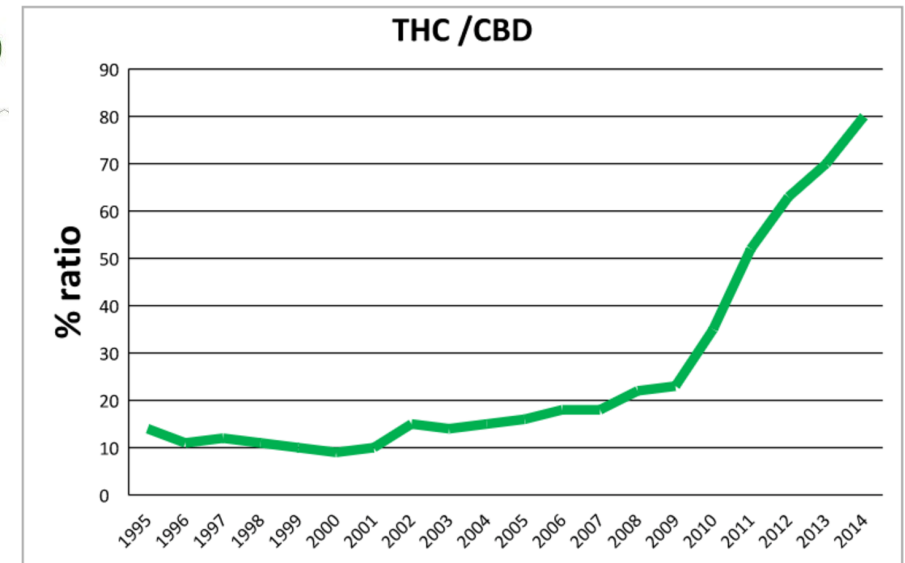
(US National Institute for Drug Abuse 2019)

89% of young people in specialist services are there because of cannabis

(Public Health England 2022)

Cannabis has two main chemicals –

- **CBD** – non-intoxicating; can reduce pain and anxiety; mitigates some of harm of...
- **THC** – causes 'high' and can cause anxiety, paranoia, panic attacks etc.



What about weed?

People who use cannabis are three times as likely to develop common mental health disorders as those who don't including anxiety and depression.

(University of Birmingham 2021)

...and twice as likely to report psychotic experiences.

(Kings College, London, 2021)

1 in 5 of all new cases of psychosis are associated with daily cannabis use, and 1 in 10 with the use of high potency cannabis

(Kings College, London, 2019)

What about edibles?

- Illegally produced edibles contain unpredictable levels of THC/ synthetic THC ('Spice')
- Effects of edible cannabis take up to two hours to be felt – by which time it's too late to reduce intake.



Drugs, alcohol and the law

Possession

If you take drugs from your child, you must either promptly destroy them or hand them to the police, otherwise the possession offence becomes yours.

It is also an offence to allow drug use in your home.

Other criminal offences include drink and drug driving, breach of the peace...

Long-term consequences: travel, university, employment?

Supply?

Graduate who supplied friend with the ecstasy that killed her is jailed



Jane Wharton Saturday 13 Oct 2018 9:40 am



461
SHARES

A graduate has been jailed for supplying the ecstasy that killed her friend as they celebrated the end of their time at university.

Any questions?





There are reasons for everything we do, whether they be small reasons or large reasons, there is always a reason for the things we do.

- Unknown



- **What % of 15 year-olds said they'd been offered illegal drugs?**
- **What % said they'd tried them?**



Be aware...

Who did they get them from?

49% got drugs from a friend (57% in 2018)

16% from a dealer (11% in 2018)

Where did they get them?

45% in the park, street etc

18% at someone else's house

15% at home (8% in 2018)

12% at a party, club, rave, disco

5% at school (12% in 2018)



One in three 15 year-olds had seen drugs for sale on social media

One in three who'd bought drugs had bought them from social media

DSMF 2021



Tik Tok

Young people, drugs and decisions

12% of 11-year-olds had been offered illegal drugs and 6% had tried them.

51% of 15 year-olds had been offered illegal drugs and 32% had tried them.

Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England, 2021 (NHS Digital, 2022)

15-year-olds	Offered	Tried
2014	49%	24%
2016	55%	37%
2018	59%	38%
2021	51%	32%

What do young people state as the reason for using drugs on the first occasion they did so?



Worryingly, there has been a big increase in young people who use substances to escape from problems in their life; from 12% in 2021 to 21% in 2022.

THE MIX
Essential support for under 25s



Choice, risk and the teenage brain



DSM Foundation
The drug education charity

Critical period of change from 10 to 25 years

‘Developmental mismatch’ between ‘feeling and reacting brain’ (limbic system) and ‘thinking brain’ (pre-frontal cortex)

Limbic system – early to develop

- hypersensitive to social and emotional variables
- increased release of – and sensitivity to - dopamine (pleasure and reward)
- risk and reward closely linked in structure of the brain



Choice, risk and the teenage brain



DSM Foundation
The drug education charity



Pre-frontal cortex – last to connect (mid-20s)

Higher level cognitive functions:

- **planning, organising, decision-making, problem-solving, acting with consequences in mind**

Also:

- **self-regulation, moderating social behaviour, social interactions, self-awareness**

Mismatch means...

- **It takes longer to think through consequences**
- **It's harder to manage impulses and responses**

Choice, risk and the teenage brain

Role of peers:

- Developmental need for independence from care-givers
- More time spent with peers
- Heightened sensitivity to social reward and social exclusion
- Adolescents gauge risk the same as adults, but take more risks when with peers...

...or when emotions are running high

...or you're feeling under pressure.

Risk taking peaks between 13-16 years, then decreases into adulthood



Safer social decision making

Can you plan a reason ahead?

Think about your motivation – and that of the people you're with (can you tell?)

Would you make the same decision if you were on your own?

Can you buy yourself time to access your pre-frontal cortex? Prepare excuses, plan some stalling tactics?

How can you avoid pressured situations or groups?



How much would your friends really mind if you made different decisions to them?

Can you be a positive peer influence?

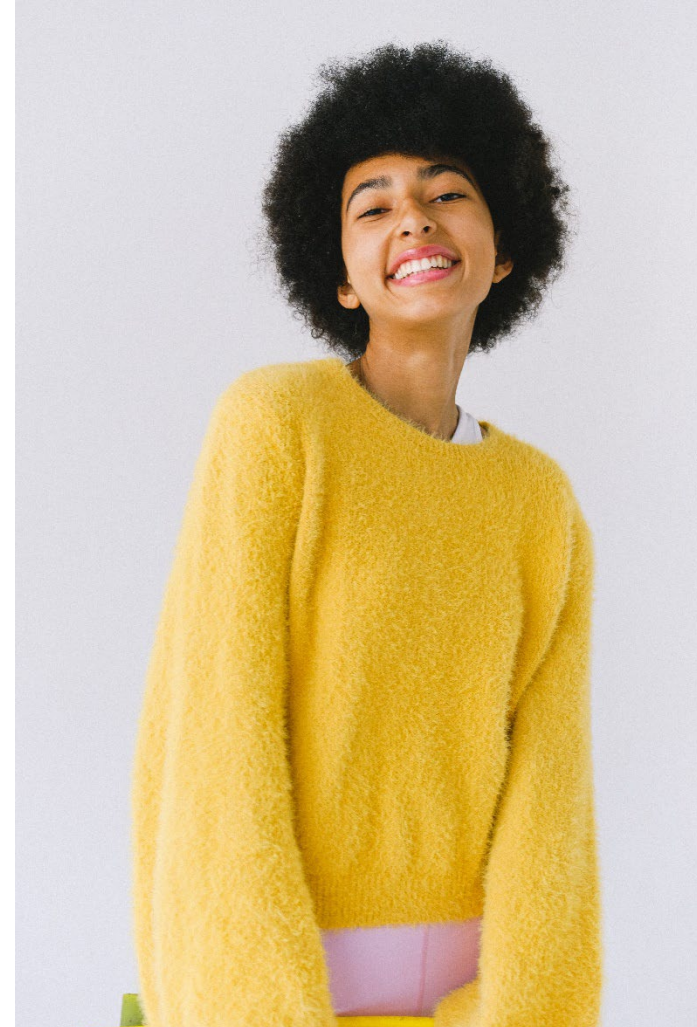
Remember - most young people DON'T take drugs or drink too

Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

Protective factors

Individual

- Positive physical development
- Emotional self-regulation
- High self-esteem
- Good coping skills and problem-solving skills
- Engagement and connections with school, sports, employment, religion or culture



Protective factors



Family

- Supportive relationships with family members
- Strong parent-child connectedness
- Positive parent-child communication
- Family provides structure, limits, rules, monitoring, and predictability – with negotiation and flexibility
- Clear expectations for behaviour and values

The drug conversation...

Preventative/general:

- Start early (10-11yrs) – but it's never too late
- You don't have to be an expert – but keep your knowledge as up to date as you can
- Take and make opportunities
- Think about when and where works best
- Listen!
- Emphasise social norms
- Repetition and reinforcement helps
- Be prepared for tricky questions!

If it all goes wrong, don't give up!

Top tips from teens...

- *“Try to make talking about drugs a comfortable conversation in your family”*
- *“Try to avoid negativity. It can make someone shut down and go into defensive mode.”*
- *“Don't catastrophise and say the worst that'll happen but give solutions instead, so then you feel more prepared for that situation.”*
- *“Let me say everything I need to say, let me tell you what I'm thinking, don't jump to conclusions.”*

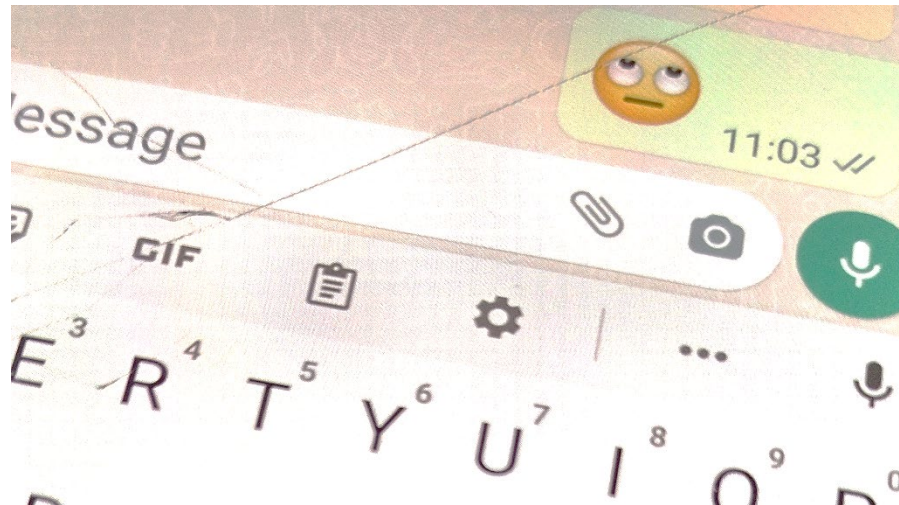
Phone-related safety strategies



Set up In Case of
Emergency details

Have an escape plan!

1. Decide the code
2. Agree the response
3. Plan the excuse
4. Parents have to promise not to ask any questions



St John
Ambulance 
**FIRST
AID**



what3words:
Never get lost
again



Staying safe...



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

If you are with a friend using drugs:

- **Know stuff including harm reduction.**
- **Stay together (and check in)**
- **Don't mix**
- **Get it tested**
- **Start low, go slow – more isn't better**
- **Think about food and water**
- **Remember number of risk factors**
- **Be aware of mental state**
- **Don't forget the law**



**Remember - the only way to reduce drug related risk to zero is not to use drugs...
... and most people aren't**

Any questions?



How can you tell if your child is using drugs?

- They tell you
- Someone else tells you
- You see the effects or after effects
- You find drugs or paraphernalia



Types of drug use



1. **Occasional/experimental use:** one amongst many recreational activities
2. **Regular use:** use becomes more frequent and the principal recreational activity; social and personal functioning starts to decrease, though can still fulfil most roles and responsibilities
3. **Addiction:** substance-related activities are now the principal focus, and stopping or reducing use becomes difficult

Signs to look out for

Social changes

- Social isolation &/or sudden change in friendship group
- Associating with people who use drugs
- Too much/little money
- Talking about drugs on social media
- Drug paraphernalia evident
- Drug-related conversations
- Multiple phones and/or short calls

Physical changes

- Changes in appearance, self care &/or mood
- Unexpected changes to weight or build
- Unusual smells on breath, body &/or clothing
- Change in pupil dilation &/or red eyes

Behavioural changes

- Significant unexplained drop in school performance
- Lethargic &/or increasingly disruptive in class, particularly after weekends
- Persistent lateness, truancy & /or poor attendance
- Unpredictable behaviour/ self harm

How do you know it's a problem?



Some questions to ask:

1. **Do they use it daily?** *It could be a sign they need to, or feel they do.*
2. **How anxious does the thought of running out make them?**
3. **Do they get experience withdrawal symptoms if they go a day without it?**
4. **How important has it become in their life?** *Are they bothering less with other activities or friends?*

The drug conversation...

If you suspect or know your child is using drugs:

- Check the basis of your suspicions
- Act as a team
- Ask your child about it
- Talk harm reduction if they're continuing to use substances
- Look at online self-help resources
- Talk to others

[smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov)

[withyou](https://www.withyou.org)

Top tips from teens...

- *“Listen without interrupting and then ask questions about it or empathise.”*
- *“Understand and don’t judge.”*
- *“Don’t force them to open up. It might be they’re not ready to talk about it, so just give them a place they know they can go to.”*



If it all goes wrong, don't give up!

The drug conversation...

To find support for families:



Get professional help if needed:

- GP
- Find local young people's services via Talk to Frank or the NHS websites' postcode search



Supporting young people to make safer choices about drugs

YOUNGMINDS

FRANK

Friendly, confidential drugs advice



drinkaware.co.uk
for the facts

TEEN TIPS



So Every Child Can Thrive

Alcohol
Education
Trust

HOPELINEUK



[danielpargomabbsfoundation](#) 

[dangeneration](#) 

[@dsmfoundation](#) 

[@foundationdsm](#) 

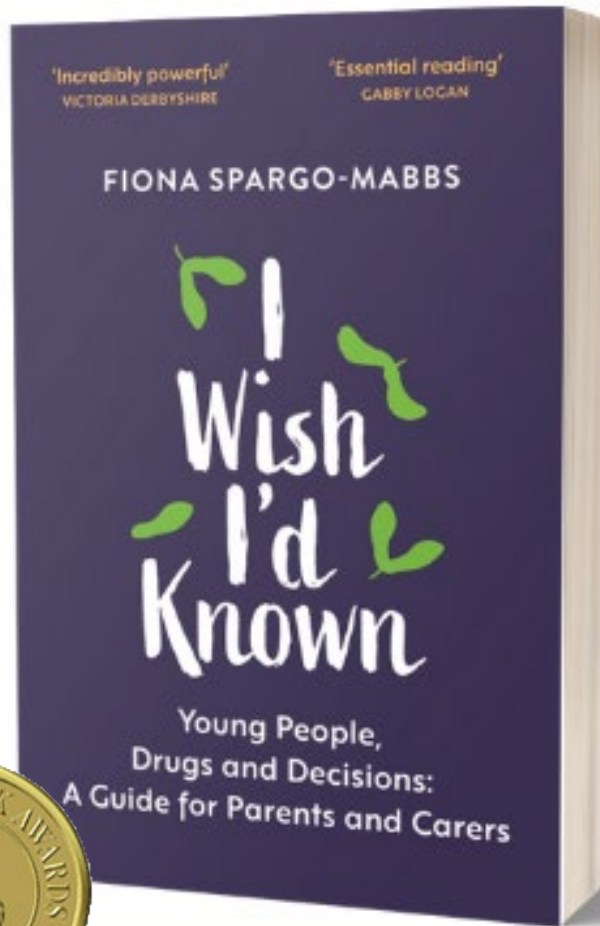
www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

THE MIX

Essential support for under 25s

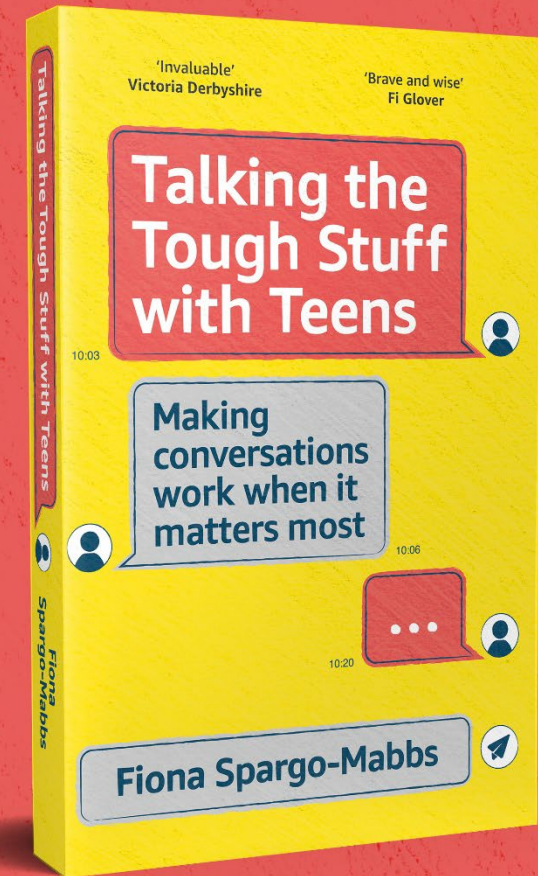
Support for you

sheldon ^{PRESS}



'If you think you need this book, you do. If you think you don't need it then you really, really do'

JEREMY VINE



Any questions?



Support for you ...and us?



Use the QR code or link to complete our feedback survey, and access:

- the information leaflet
- Fiona's books for parents to buy
- all our parents' information pages and videos



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NFYL9PP>

We are a small but growing charity, committed to making sure cost is never a barrier to young people getting effective drug education.

Can you help by:

- making a one-off or regular donation
- accessing grants or trust funds
- securing corporate workplace donations
- finding out more from us about philanthropy and corporate giving?

To donate now text 70085:

- 20PARENTS to donate £20
- 15PARENTS to donate £15
- 10PARENTS to donate £10

<https://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk/donate/>