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Strategizer

Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County



September 2025 Volume 5 Issue 5

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September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

—a time to raise awareness, promote hope, and normalize help-seeking. Suicide affects

millions of people every year, yet too many



We remember **September 11**, the **24th Anniversary** of the terrorist attacks on the **World Trade Center** that took the lives of nearly **3,000 people**, as **Patriot's Day**, and

had a profound impact on the United States

struggle in silence. Whether you're facing challenges, supporting a friend or loved one, or are looking to help, your voice matters. This month is **dedicated to recognizing the warning signs for suicide, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and connecting people to proven treatment and resources.** When we stand together in strength, dignity, hope, and purpose, we can make a difference—we can help save lives.

**988 Day: Compassionate Help.
Anytime. Anywhere.**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is the number to call when you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to. Our caring counselors are here for you.

and the world.

Official ceremonies will take place at the National 9/11 Memorial & Museum, community service events on the 9/11 National Day of Service, and continued commemoration at national parks like the Flight 93 National Memorial. The day will honor the victims, first responders, and heroes of the attacks while acknowledging the profound and lasting impact on individuals, communities, and the nation, including young people who were born after the events and are learning about them as history, not lived experience.

Local events include:

8th Annual 9-11 Stair Climb at West Forsyth High School, Sunday, September 14, 7:30 a.m.

Never Forget 9.11



NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH



FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



September is **National Recovery Month**. Starting in 1989, the nation's strong and proud recovery community has promoted and supported new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, as well as the dedication of service providers and communities that make recovery possible. **Recovery is REAL (Restoring Every Aspect of Life)** is the theme of this year's campaign, emphasizing a holistic approach with the right treatment, support, and resources.

As you know, FCDAC exists to help our

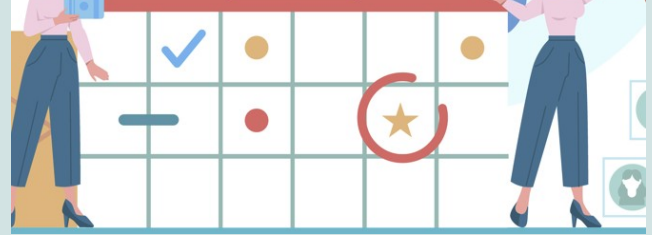
Please, wherever you go, let your family, friends, and the clerks behind the counters know about FCDAC. You never know who needs this information. Thank you for all you do!

Having honest conversations makes a difference. **Please check out our FYI section** and learn about easy ways to initiate frank discussions with the youth you know.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



community find the right treatment, support, and resources needed to live their healthiest lives. We are constantly renewing and updating our lists of resources and doing our best to get this organization out in front of the public so they know where to come. From assisting in getting drug prevention coaches into schools, to hosting informational summits, to encouraging parental resources availability in schools and civic clubs, FCDAC is a resource hub.



**Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on
Wednesday, October 1
8 a.m.
United Way Offices**

Council Meeting Highlights

Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting on the road at Live Life Counseling by welcoming everyone and thanking Maureen Bixler, a licensed clinical social worker at Live Life Counseling and FCDAC member, for hosting the council meeting. Since 2014, Live Life Counseling has proudly served the Cumming, GA community with compassionate counseling and addiction recovery services. Their licensed therapists specialize in a holistic, client-centered approach that supports mental health, substance use recovery, and emotional wellness.

Next, the attendees introduced themselves and made announcements.

Announcements:

- Dr. Katie Lamberson announced the **Let's Be Clear Data Collecting Project** (See story and info below).
- Kayla Bergeron, The Connection, reminded everyone about the **September 7th Recovery Month Celebration at Fowler Park Large Pavilion**, 4110 Carolene Way, Cumming 4-7 p.m.
- Mental Health Monthly Meeting, September 10, the ODAT Club (One Day at a Time) from East Forsyth High School will be presenting.



This month's guest speaker is **Adam Miller**, a man who wears many hats! He is the Senior Business Development Representative for Blue Ridge Mountain Recovery Center, Vice President of the Board of Directors for Most High Ministries, Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council board member, Counselor at Pathlight Counseling, and Counselor at The Wings of Dragonfly. Today, Adam will share his journey to freedom from addiction.

Adam Miller's story is a raw testament to the grip of addiction and the transformative power of faith and recovery. Growing up in a low-income Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago, Adam faced bullying and isolation as a young white boy, sparking feelings of rejection and insecurity. "We are guided by a value system and by emotional events and trauma. The formation of our value system begins early in life. Many times, these values are not valid or are skewed because of our immature

emotional development. It takes a lot of work to dismantle the false values we place on ourselves. We all seek love, acceptance, autonomy, and safety," Adam told those gathered at FCDAC's monthly meeting.

meeting.

At 12, he turned to alcohol and marijuana to cope, seeking acceptance and comfort. His addiction escalated in St. Augustine, Florida, after a car accident left him in chronic pain. Prescribed painkillers led to dependency, compounded by financial strain and a crumbling marriage, pushing him deeper into substance abuse.

Adam's life spiraled into desperation—selling drugs, stealing, and eventually robbing dealers at gunpoint to sustain his habit. On Valentine's Day 2017, battling self-loathing and hopelessness, he overdosed on heroin, intending to end his life. Revived in a hospital, he awoke to 13 felony charges and his mother reading his arrest report, marking the lowest point of his existence. Detox in jail was grueling, but a judge offered a choice: prison or a year at No Longer Bound, a Christian recovery program. Fearing prison, Adam chose treatment, though skeptical of recovery.

At No Longer Bound, Adam expected religious dogma but found a focus on a personal relationship with God through daily journaling. This form of journaling lets you pour out your heart, but also has you ask God a question. You sit with the question and listen for God's answer. And he does answer. This practice helped him discern a loving divine voice, offering comfort amid emotional challenges. However, nine months in, his resistance to the program's structure led to his dismissal with a 30-day window to return. His mother, guided by the program's family recovery insights, refused to enable him, leaving Adam stranded in Georgia. This tough love forced him to confront his reality.

Boarding a train to Atlanta's Mission Homeless Shelter, Adam journaled and felt divine guidance to pursue faith. An encounter with a blind pianist playing "Amazing Grace" moved him to tears, offering hope. At the shelter, Adam's journaling revealed an internal shift: God urged him to seek similarities, not differences, in others. Connecting with John, a deaf and mute man abandoned by the foster system, Adam experienced genuine empathy, learning gratitude and resilience from John's radiant faith.

Returning to No Longer Bound, Adam recommitted to his recovery. After completing the program, he chose to stay in Georgia, trusting God's call to "grow where you are planted." A sober living home and a job opportunity followed, where his honesty about his past earned him a managerial role. Later, No Longer Bound offered him a position, and despite lower pay, Adam accepted, guided by "purpose over profit." He became a counselor and worked to rescue addicts, driven by a mission to share the freedom he found through faith.

Adam's story underscores the power of tough love, personal growth, and a relationship with God in overcoming addiction.

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

School News



Emily Ennis, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor



Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.

"It's been an eventful start to the school year! Ainsely and I scheduled health talks for the semester at **South Forsyth Middle**

and **North Forsyth High School**. We will

Ainsley and I will be "All in" for the

and North Forsyth High School. We'll be visiting classrooms to share our recovery journeys and discuss prevention tools with students.

Our goal is to help prevent students from experimenting with drugs or alcohol and to establish connections, letting them know that help is available if needed."

"All my **Forsyth Academy and Gateway Academy** small groups are underway as of September 1. I'm happy to report that we have returning students who formed a group last year and desire to continue learning and living sober. It's truly refreshing to see young people seeking direction and willing to help themselves and others, she said.

"We'll be planning some fun events for the group sessions soon, so stay tuned for updates.

Our first **Parent Informational Night at Gateway** is on September 16, and we'll discuss current THC information, give resources, and provide prevention tools," Emily said.

"We're also excited to announce that **Lauren Hairston** has joined us as a new substance prevention coach in the schools. She'll be expanding our reach to a couple more schools in the county, and we're thrilled about this expansion. Currently, **Lauren is training at Gateway and North Forsyth High School. Lauren will work at East Forsyth High School** a couple of days a week and possibly at another school," she said.

Ainsley reports, "All groups have been started at North Forsyth High School, and we are planning our first sober recreational activity for **September 17th**. I am planning to do Jeopardy with them. Stay tuned for the outcomes of the game!

"I have a solid group of teenagers committed to sobriety and learning. We are slowly accumulating more students to participate in the group sessions and individual sessions, which is absolutely amazing. Last year's dedicated students are continuing to meet with me this year. Additionally, I have met with nine new students this year who have been introduced to me and are willing to try to maintain consecutive sobriety. As Emily stated, it is truly refreshing!

"We are all thrilled and excited to have **Lauren Hairston** as an addition to the school community prevention team. She will be able to reach even more students who might need the help.

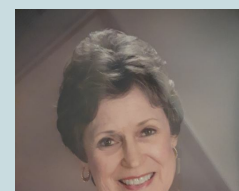
"**North Forsyth High School has started the ODAT club, and the first meeting was last Wednesday, September 3rd**. We had six students show up for the first meeting, and we hope to grow and expand over the year as it becomes established. The goal is to meet every two weeks to offer that extra support for any student affected by addiction."

Members teaching Members

How Important Is Screen-free Sleep?

By Dana Bryan

Mental health professionals, pediatricians, educators, and parents are becoming increasingly concerned about the sleep deprivation associated with screens in the bedroom. **Lack of sleep has more serious consequences than merely causing a person to feel tired the following day; it negatively affects our cognitive, physical, and mental health. Lack of sleep is linked to reduced attention span, low academic performance, and increased anxiety and**



**Dana
Bryan**

Dana is a retired middle school teacher.

span, low academic performance, and increased anxiety and depression. Therefore, it is important for us to adopt any habit that will improve the quality of our sleep, and having access to screens, especially mobile phones, will never benefit the goal of experiencing the quality of sleep our bodies require.

Professionals who study the effect of screens on sleep emphatically state that **"The best technology at bedtime is removing technology from bedtime."** If your goal is to go to sleep, there is no need for your phone to be nearby or even in the bedroom. If the phone is in the bedroom, it can be particularly tempting for adolescents and teens to check social media, communicate with friends, or play video games when they wake up during the night. Many families have a charging station outside of the bedroom where all phones are to be left at bedtime. I read about a family that went so far as to disconnect their wi-fi at a specific time each night. When this becomes the expected norm for one's family, it benefits the family's physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional health. It also provides the structure from which all youth benefit.

Another advantage of sound, uninterrupted sleep is the fact that sleep helps our bodies get rid of toxic proteins in our brains. The cleansing of these toxins only occurs during sleep, not during rest or meditation. Some doctors wonder if a build-up of these toxins could be a factor that leads to Alzheimer's. This information definitely emphasizes the importance of sleep over engaging in screen time when our body and mind need sleep.

You will probably start hearing about **Screen-Free Sleep Campaigns**. This is the result of the dedication of health professionals, educators, and parents to raise awareness about the damage caused by interrupting our sleep with screen time. There is a campaign to help parents organize and get involved with this practice. When parents band together and support each other on the important practice of screen-free sleep, it emphasizes to their children the importance of their health and being prepared for academic success. It is much easier for a parent to stand firm on this when the parents of their child's peers have the same policy about screen-free sleep.

Information about organizing or joining this campaign can be found by googling the following sources: screenfreesleep.org; [iSleep Pro: A Revolutionary Breakthrough for Kids' Sleep](#); delaney@screenagersmovie.com.



school teacher and member of FCDAC.

Through her personal loss of her daughter to drug experimentation, Dana devotes her time reaching out to youth through presentations about the real consequences and high risk of experimenting with addictive substances and how it affects them, their futures, and their families. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*. Thanks, Dana!

Screenagers Podcast

"Acing Screen Time Conflicts with Lisa Damour"

aired Sep 1, 2025



Our Partners in Prevention

More Great Community Events and Resources ...



Registration is now open for In-person & Virtual



ROSC/CARES Workshops!

Join the CARES Team as they present the ROSC/CARES Workshop.

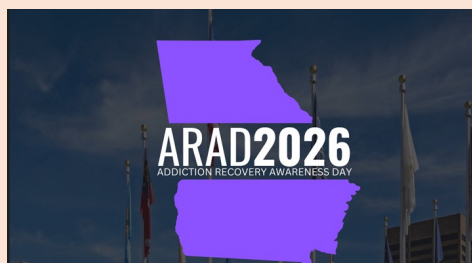
During the ROSC CARES Workshops, the facilitators present an overview of Georgia's Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) and its role in uplifting those new to recovery. An understanding of a ROSC is foundational for the CARES Academy and the way that peer support services are provided in Georgia.

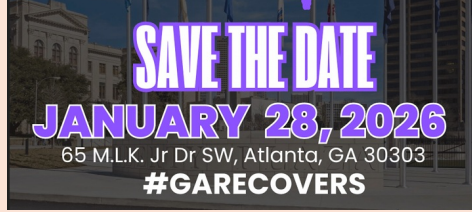
Register Below for a Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop	Register Below for a In-Person ROSC CARES Workshop
Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop on Tuesday, October 14th, 2025 from 10am - 2pm	In-Person ROSC Workshop on Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025 from 10am - 2pm at the Wecovery Peer Recovery Center
Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop on Monday, November 3rd, 2025 from 10am - 2pm	In-Person ROSC Workshop on Friday, October 24th, 2025 from 10am - 2pm at the Gateway CSB
Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop on Friday, December 5th, 2025 from 10am - 2pm	In-Person ROSC Workshop on Monday, November 17th, 2025 from 10am - 2pm at the Serenity Behavioral Health Systems
	In-Person ROSC Workshop on Friday, December 19th, 2025 from 10am - 2pm at the Highland Rivers Behavioral Health

Following the introduction to a ROSC, the facilitators will provide detailed information about the ways that CARES Academy applications are evaluated. Each person will be given examples of both writing and reference samples. This workshop ends with a mock group interview to assist those attending to understand this part of the CARES Application process.

All peers including those who use Medication-assisted treatment are welcome to attend the workshop!

Connect With Us
Dwayne Ellis, CARES Outreach & Training
Coordinator
at dwayne@gc4recovery.org
or
A Member of the CARES Team
678-306-7035





News For You

State News



Let's Be Clear Data Collection Project Needs You!

Let's Be Clear, GA is leading a statewide data collection project looking at how hemp-derived THC products are marketed as well as the potency of the products. They have partnered with Counter Tools to conduct environmental scans across the state and need volunteers to serve as data collectors. Data collectors will be entered into the system by name and email address, and this is how you will access the survey. Surveys can be completed by phone or on paper.

A training is scheduled for **September 4, 2025, at 4:00 p.m., that will walk you through the steps. Data collection will begin on Sept. 5th and close on October 20th.

****If someone cannot attend the training live, it will be recorded for later viewing.****





We are conducting retail assessments to evaluate the availability of hemp-derived THC intoxicants in Georgia communities. This assessment will show how products are packaged, priced, and marketed. We need your help completing assessments across Georgia!

September 4th | 4:00pm-5:30pm
Virtual Training

Scan to sign up!



NAMI recognizes Suicide Prevention Month

Each September, NAMI recognizes Suicide Prevention Month. This month, NAMI encourages us to "**Start a Conversation. Be the Difference**"

With one conversation, asking someone how they're really doing — and being ready to listen truly — can save lives. Because here's what we know: **No one has to face this alone. Help exists. Healing is possible. And all it can take is for one person to start a conversation.**

NAMI has created a toolkit to support NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates, partners, and mental health advocates across the country in raising awareness during Suicide Prevention Month. Use this kit to start conversations that make a difference. Download our toolkit and use these resources in your own promotion and awareness efforts.

[Download Toolkit](#)

For More from NAMI/Georgia, [Click Here](#)

National News



Press Release

August 18, 2025

DEA Launches Bold Bilateral Initiative to Dismantle Cartel Gatekeepers and Combat Synthetic Drug Trafficking

WASHINGTON – The Drug Enforcement Administration announces a significant new initiative to strengthen collaboration between the United States and Mexico in the fight against cartels, whose trafficking networks are responsible for flooding American communities with deadly synthetic drugs. At the core of this effort is **Project Portero, DEA's flagship operation** aimed at dismantling cartel "gatekeepers", operatives who control the smuggling corridors along the Southwest Border. Gatekeepers are essential to cartel operations, directing the flow of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine into the United States while ensuring the movement of firearms and bulk cash back into Mexico. By specifically targeting them, DEA and its partners are striking at the heart of cartel command-and-control.

To advance this effort, DEA has launched a multi-week training and collaboration program at one of its intelligence centers on the Southwest Border. The program brings together Mexican investigators with U.S. law enforcement, prosecutors, defense officials, and members of the intelligence community. Over the course of several weeks, participants will identify joint targets, develop coordinated enforcement strategies, and strengthen the exchange of intelligence.

Project Portero is also coordinated with the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF), ensuring a whole-of-government approach. HSTF integration brings together law enforcement, intelligence, defense, and prosecutorial elements, aligning priorities and operations so the United States can apply its full capabilities against cartel networks.

"DEA is taking decisive action to confront the cartels that are killing Americans with fentanyl and other poisons," said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. "Project Portero and this new training program show how we will fight - by planning and operating side by side with our Mexican partners, and by bringing the full strength of the U.S. government to bear. This is a bold first step in a new era of cross-border enforcement, and we will pursue it relentlessly until these violent organizations are dismantled." This initiative reflects Administrator Cole's broader priorities: **recommitting DEA to enforcement, dismantling cartels designated as terrorist organizations, and strengthening collaboration with foreign counterparts**. While fentanyl is the most urgent threat, Project Portero addresses all aspects of cartel criminal activity—from drug smuggling to weapons trafficking to illicit finance—that cross the border and endanger American communities.

Call for Advocacy

Update on the Hemp Loopholes in the 2026 Agriculture Appropriations Bill

Here is an update from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) dated August 28, 2025, on proposed changes to the definition of hemp in the FY2026 Agriculture appropriations bills.

Remember, **hemp has been a hot topic since the 2018 Farm Bill legalized it by defining it as *Cannabis sativa* L. with no more than 0.3% delta-9 THC on a dry weight basis**. This pulled it out from under the Controlled Substances Act, shifting oversight from the DEA to the USDA's Domestic Hemp Production Program. In prevention work, we have seen the dangerous consequences, namely the flood of **unregulated, intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoid products hitting shelves in gas station convenience stores and grocery stores**.

So, what exactly are these proposed changes? At their core, they'd amend 7 U.S.C. §§1639o-s to clarify what's "lawful" hemp. The **bills introduce two new terms: "industrial hemp" and "hemp-derived cannabinoid product."**

- **Industrial hemp** would cover non-cannabinoid uses like fiber, grain/seed (think oils, cakes, nuts, hulls) immature plants (e.g., microgreens), research, or seeds for producing more industrial

hulls), immature plants (e.g., microgreens), research, or seeds for producing more industrial hemp. This keeps the door open for traditional, non-psychoactive applications.

Hemp-derived cannabinoid product is defined as any intermediate or final product from hemp (excluding industrial hemp) that contains cannabinoids in any form and is meant for human or animal use—via inhalation, ingestion, or topical application.

The big exclusions? Non-naturally occurring cannabinoids (synthesized or manufactured ones) get booted from the hemp umbrella. Viable seeds exceeding 0.3% total THC (including THCA, the acidic precursor to THC) are out too. And here's a shift: THC limits would be based on total THC, not just delta-9, aligning with USDA's 2021 regs but codifying it in law. In essence, this redefines hemp to embrace industrial uses fully but limits cannabinoid products to those that are naturally occurring, non-synthetic, and non-intoxicating. It's a bid to draw a brighter line between hemp and marijuana, both from the same plant but worlds apart in THC content and effects. There are calls from the Cannabis Regulators Association (CANNRA) and state attorneys general who've flagged three key loopholes:

1. The 0.3% loophole: Products testing under 0.3% delta-9 but still intoxicating via other means.
2. The THCA loophole: THCA converts to THC when heated, skirting limits.
3. The derivatives loophole: Synthetic tweaks creating intoxicating compounds from legal hemp.

By mandating total THC testing and excluding intoxicating derivatives, these provisions would push such products back under DEA control as controlled substances. CANNRA argues this protects public health from unregulated, risky items—think edibles or vapes that mimic marijuana highs without the oversight.

But there has been pushback. Industry groups are sounding alarms, warning this could "dismantle" the U.S. hemp sector. Farmers who've pivoted to cannabinoid crops might see markets dry up, jobs lost, and innovation stifled. The FY2026 Agriculture appropriations bills, House (H.R. 4121) and Senate (S. 2256) committees have approved versions that tweak this definition to clamp down on those products. **The Senate has already passed its bill (H.R. 3944) with an amendment (S.Amdt. 3070) that strips out the hemp provision entirely.** On the House side, action is still pending.

Looking ahead, with the Senate already eliminating its provision and House efforts underway, the final FY2026 package may omit this altogether. Or it could stick, forcing a reckoning for the industry.

Either way, it underscores broader tensions: Balancing new hemp intoxicating-based businesses against safety concerns, especially as the FDA maintains that many cannabis-derived consumer products are "unlawful" under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

For newsletter subscribers tracking this, here are the key points to jot down or share:

- Proposed Redefinition: Bills aim to expand hemp to include industrial products but exclude intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoids, focusing on natural, non-synthetic ones with minimal THC.
- Loophole Closures: Addresses 0.3%, THCA, and derivatives issues by using total THC metrics and excluding synthetics, potentially subjecting violators to DEA enforcement.
- Agency Roles: USDA oversees production; FDA/HHS to set THC thresholds and guidance via task forces/reports for safety and market clarity.
- Pushback and Status: The Senate has removed the provision; the House is likely to follow suit amid industry opposition. Reflects state regulators' concerns but risks harming hemp's growth.
- Historical Context: Builds on 2018 Farm Bill but seeks to "fix" unintended intoxicating product boom; similar failed attempts in prior Congress.
- Implications: Could protect our youngest consumers from unregulated intoxicating products.

Take Action!

Please send a message to your Georgia Senators and Representative and to the leaders of the

SAMPLE MESSAGE

I am writing to encourage you to keep the language that bans intoxicating hemp-derived cannabis products. Please protect young Americans who are targeted by these unregulated, intoxicating, and addictive products.

Contact GA Senators He

FYI

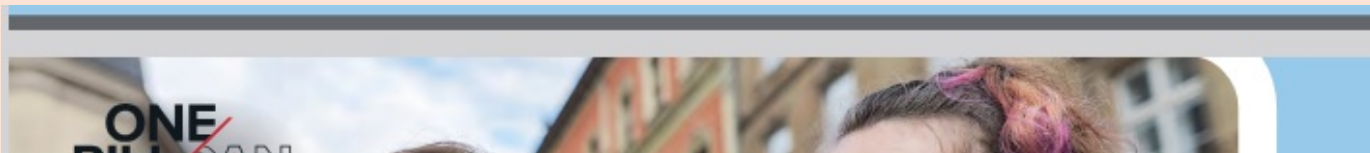
"No thanks, it's not my thing." A Phrase Every Middle Schooler Needs



TIPS FOR TALKING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (11-14 YEARS OLD)

- Starting middle school (or junior high) is a big step. If you began talking with your children about alcohol or other drugs at a young age, they probably know how you feel and have a good foundation of information. If you haven't started already, now is a great time to begin.
- As with children at earlier ages, encourage your middle school-aged children to **share their dreams**. Ask what activities they enjoy and help them nurture those interests in positive ways, such as participating in art, music, sports, community service, and academic clubs.
- At this age, young teens start to care more about how they look. **Find ways to help boost their confidence and manage stress and talk about how drugs can harm them.**
- Friends become very influential at this age, so **get to know your children's friends**. If you drive them somewhere or carpool, for example, you can listen in to learn current issues and trends, as well as learn how your child interacts with others.
- When you meet your child's friends, let them know your rules about underage drinking, smoking/e-cigarettes, and other drug use. **Get to know their parents** and share with them your desire to raise a child who understands the risks of substance use.
- Discuss what they would do or say if they saw alcohol or other substance use at a party. Work with them to come up with phrases they could say if someone offered alcohol or other drugs to them, such as **"No thanks, it's not my thing."**
- **Tell your children often that you will come get them any time if they need to leave a place where alcohol or other drugs are being used**—even if it's the middle of the night. You can also decide on a "code word" that they can text you if they need your help, and calling is not an option.
- Your child may be on social media by this point. **Emphasize the dangers of buying pills or any medicine through social media**, which is where criminal drug networks are advertising deadly fake pills. You might have to assume the role of a teacher. For example, your child may think it is okay if they only drink alcohol but stay away from other drugs. **Discuss with them the risks of using all kinds of substances, including alcohol.**

For more information, see Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention, [Click Here](#).





HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT DRUGS? – CONVERSATION STARTERS

Some parents find it difficult to talk with their children about alcohol and other drugs. But it is important to teach them about these substances and about your expectations if they are offered drugs.

These conversations are not a one-time event. Start talking with your children when they are young; continue as they grow older and their level of interest and understanding changes. Your willingness to talk (and listen) tells them you care about what they are interested in, and it provides you with insight into their world.

DO	DON'T
Explain the dangers using language they understand.	React in anger —even if your child makes statements that shock you.
Explain why you do not want them to use the substance(s). For example, explain that substances can mess up their concentration, memory, and motor skills and can lead to poor grades.	Expect all conversations with your children to be perfect. They won't be.
Be there when your child wants to talk, no matter the time of day or night or other demands on your time.	Assume your children know how to handle temptation. Instead, educate them about risks and alternatives so they can make healthy decisions. Encourage them to practice saying no ahead of time so they're prepared.
Believe in your own power to help your child grow up without using drugs, including alcohol.	Talk without listening.
Praise your children when they deserve it. This builds their self-esteem and makes them feel good without using drugs, including alcohol.	Make stuff up. If your child asks a question you can't answer, promise to find the answer so you can learn together. Then follow up.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs does not have to be hard. The following opportunities can serve as teaching moments:



If you see a young person smoking, talk about the negative effects of tobacco.



If you see an interesting news story, discuss it with your child. Ask how your child feels about situations and the potential consequences.



While watching a movie or TV show with your children, ask if they think it makes using drugs, including alcohol, look fun. Talk about what happens to those characters, or what happens in reality.



If you read, hear about, or know someone affected by substance use, remind your child almost anyone can develop a substance use disorder. Discuss the importance of treatment and supporting people in recovery from their substance use disorder.

www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

On the Calendar



September

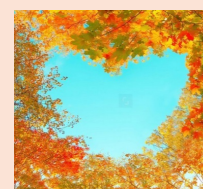
- National Recovery Month
- Suicide Awareness

Month



October

- National



Substance Abuse Prevention Month
Mental Illness

- Labor Day, September 1, 2025
- FCDAC Meeting, Wednesday, 8 a.m. September 3, 2025 at Live Life.
- Mental Health Meeting, September 10, 8 a.m. United Way
- **Never forget 9.11 Patriot's Day September 11**



SCAN ME

- Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 5-11
- Red Ribbon Week October 23-31
- Trunk or Treat Tuesday, October 28, North Forsyth High at 5pm
- Halloween, October 31

Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council | 240 Elm Street | Cumming, GA 30040 US

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