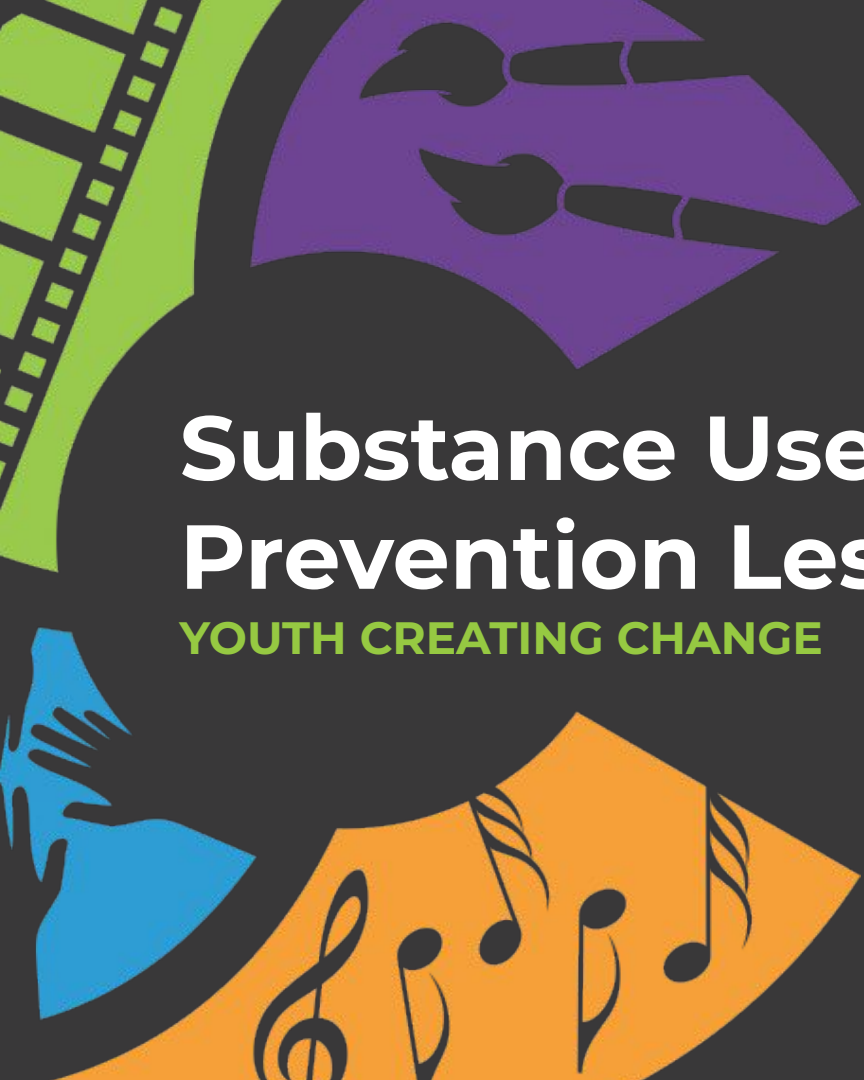




Substance Use Prevention Lesson Plan

YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

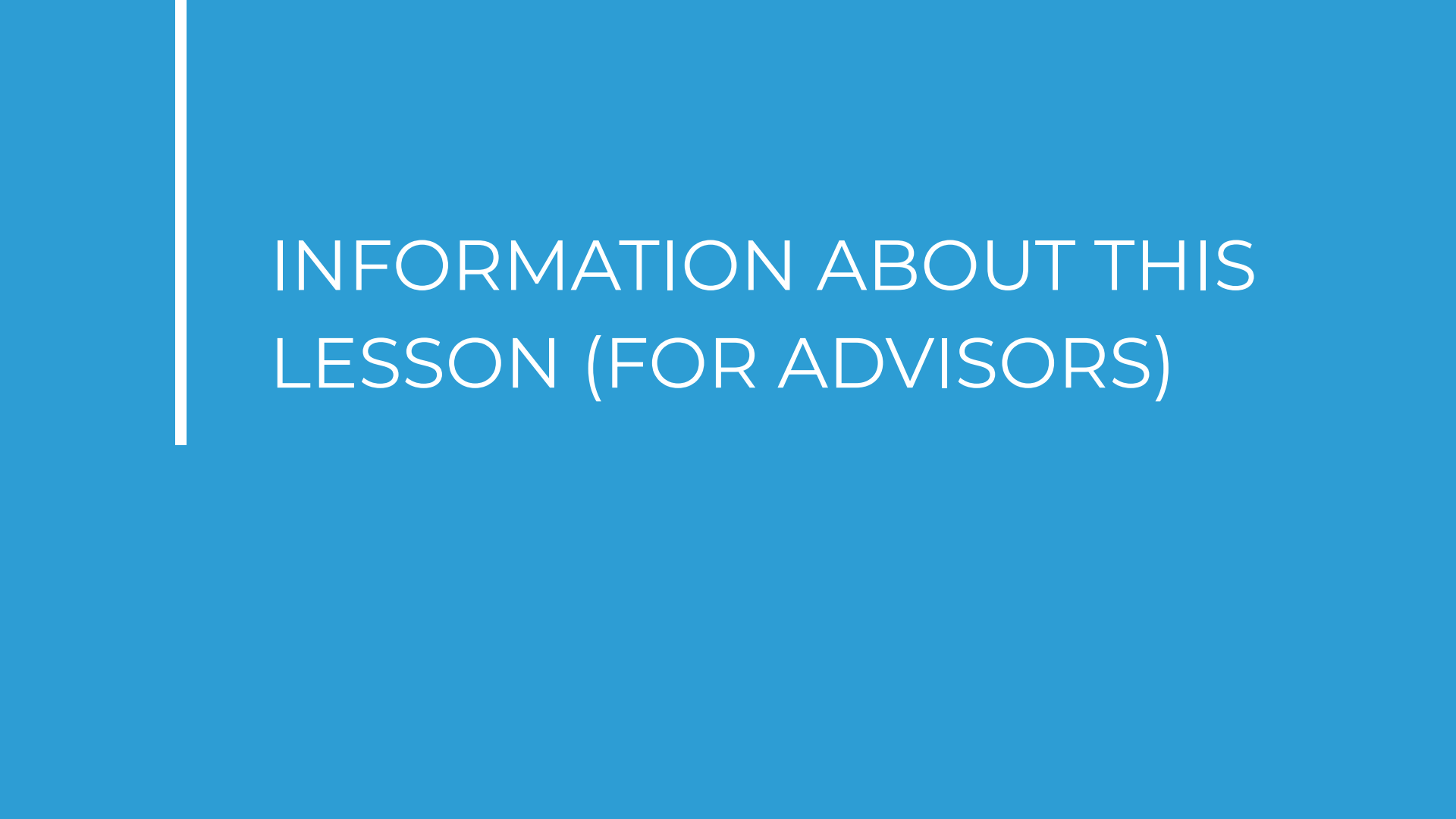


YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



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INFORMATION ABOUT THIS LESSON (FOR ADVISORS)



Dear Advisors,

As you work through the lesson, be aware that some students may already have seen or known someone who experienced an overdose or, more broadly, someone who has a substance use disorder and may find it difficult to learn about the content of this lesson. It is appropriate to preface the lesson with a compassionate message about the content and a brief description of how students may seek support if they need it.

Talking points, as well as additional resources and lesson plans can be found throughout the presentation and in the “notes” section of slides.

We recommend pairing this with additional lesson plans on substance use, healthy coping, mental health and suicide prevention.

Find educational resources at youthcreatingchange.org/learning-lab.

LESSON PLAN OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate age- and developmentally appropriate health and safety practices that prevent or reduce the risk of disease and injury and improve quality of life by knowing the signs of an overdose and how to respond to help save a life.

Student Skills:

Analyzing and interpreting information, data, and/or evidence

Critical thinking

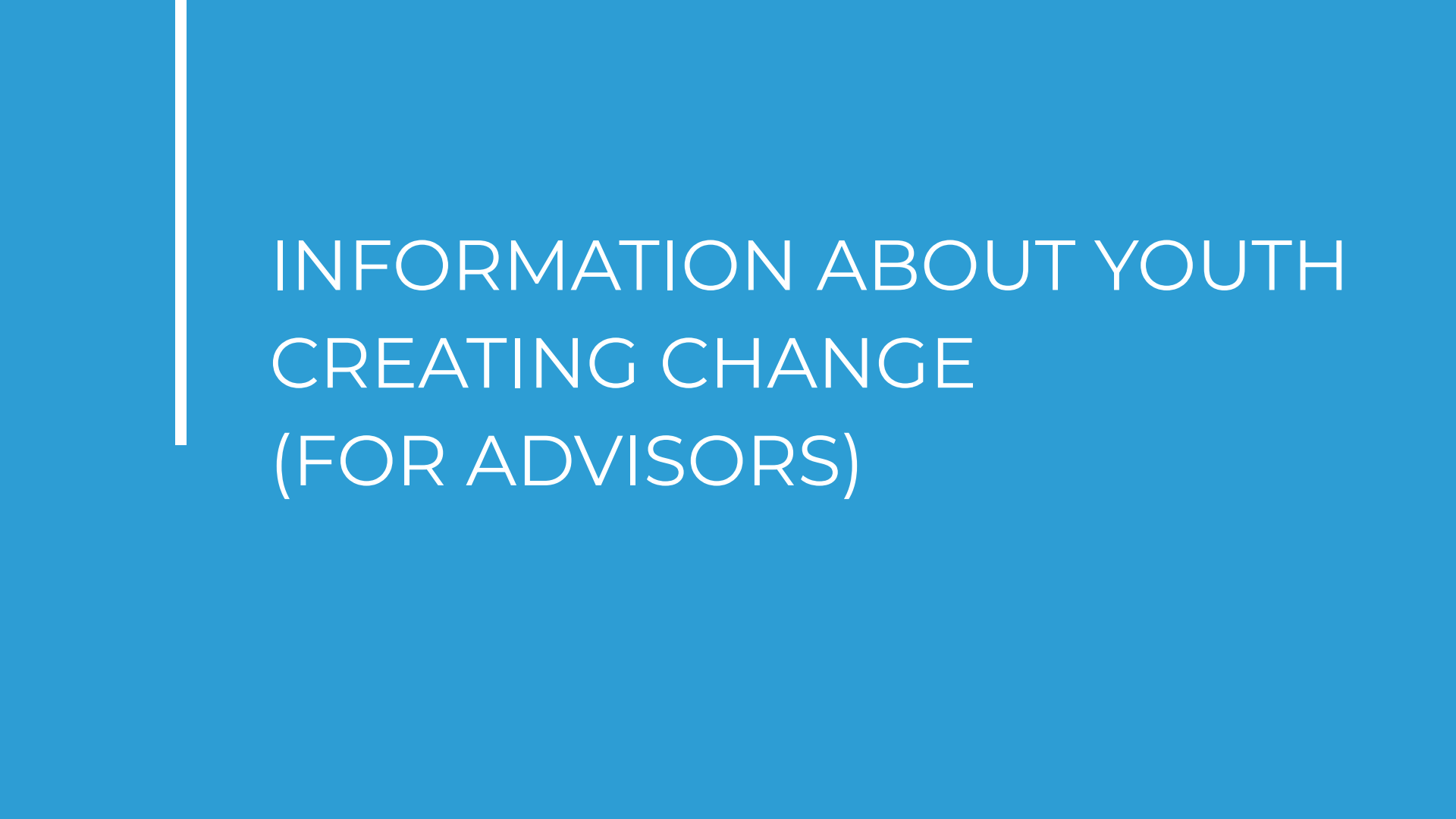
Health and life skills

Understanding health effects and risks

- Analyze reasons for why a young person may choose to use or not use substances
- List 3 signs of problematic substance use
- Discuss how young people can support other people they are concerned have a substance use problem.
- List signs of an opioid overdose and describe steps to respond to an opioid overdose
- List one substance use or mental health resource
- Understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



INFORMATION ABOUT YOUTH CREATING CHANGE (FOR ADVISORS)

YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

Youth Creating Change is a non-profit organization (501(c3)) dedicated to placing young people's voices and creativity at the center of suicide prevention and mental health programming.

Core Initiatives:

- **Mental Health, Suicide and Substance Use Prevention Curriculum delivered through film and art contests**
- Mental Health Thrival Kits
- Awareness & Education
- Youth Development
- District and School Trainings
- Support After Youth Suicide Death
- Parent Engagement

LEARN

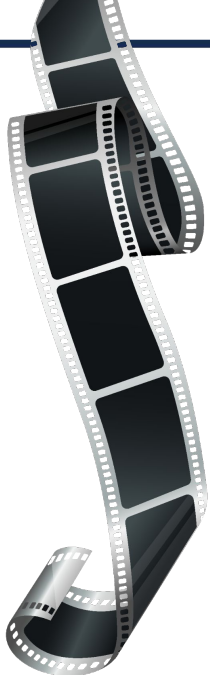
APPLY

SHARE



Directing Change
Program & Film Contest



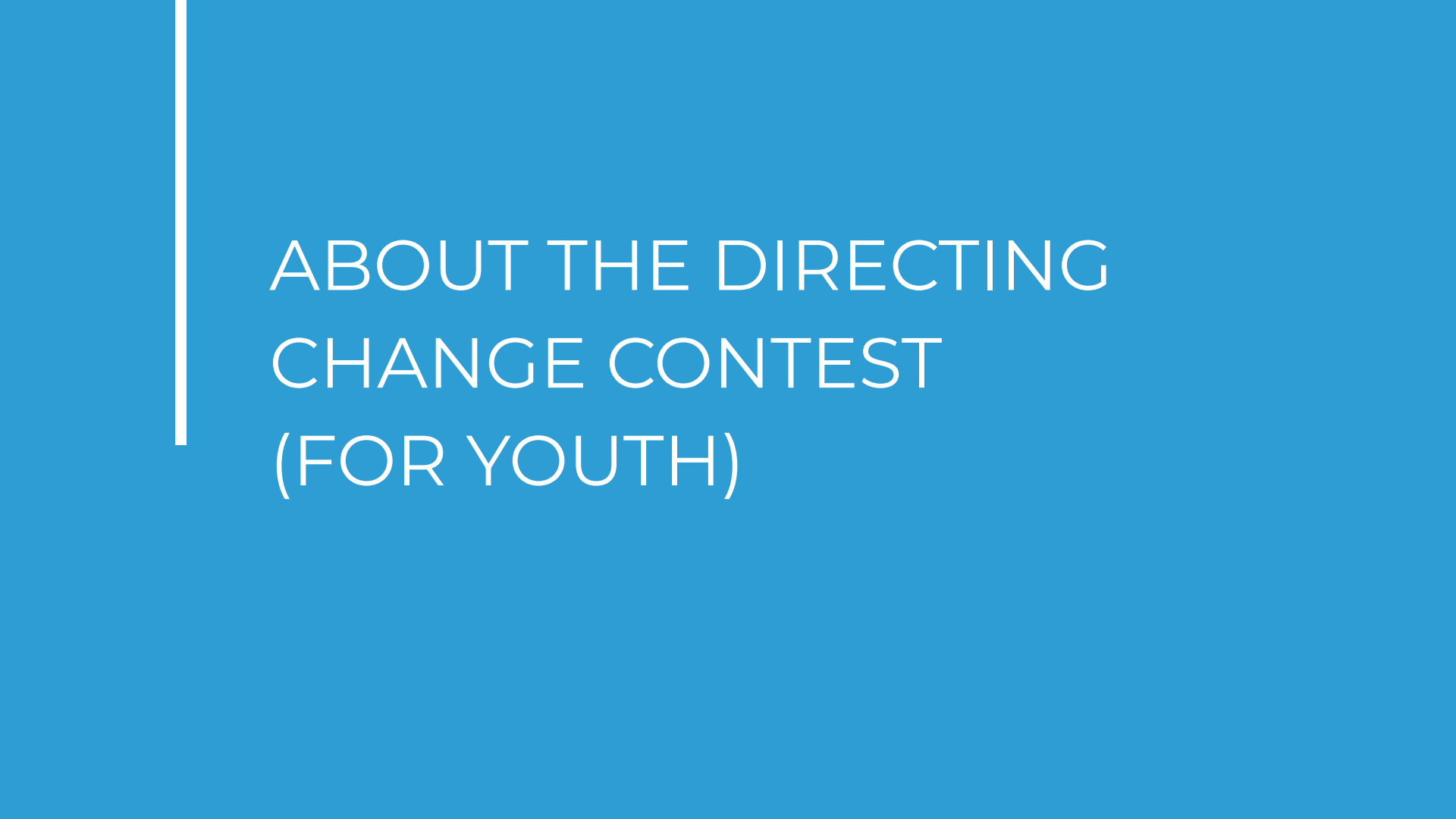


YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

[LINK](#)



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

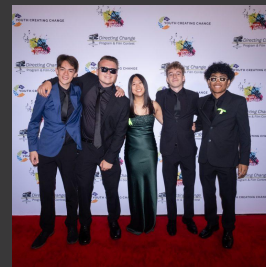
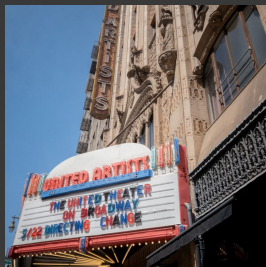


ABOUT THE DIRECTING CHANGE CONTEST (FOR YOUTH)

WIN UP TO \$1,000

Get recognized at the
annual red carpet award
ceremony.

Make a difference.



SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

(30-second and 60-second PSAs accepted)



**Suicide
Prevention**



**Mental
Health**



**Through the
Lens of Culture**



**Walk in Our
Shoes**



**Substance
Use**

LEARN - APPLY - SHARE

Entering a film in this category provides you with an opportunity to explore the reasons behind why young people may choose to use substances, talk about how to spot and respond to an overdose, and share healthy ways to cope with tough times and stress.

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE:

Many young people start using substances because friends or siblings introduce them to it. But what if friends and siblings used their power to influence those who look up to them towards the decision not to use substances? Create a PSA with a message to a friend, sibling, or even your younger self with the things you want them to think about before they make the choice to drink alcohol, vape, or use other substances.

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND:

Your PSA can encourage friends to watch out for signs that someone is struggling and offer tips for how to offer support.

GET THE FACTS, SAVE A LIFE:

You may have heard of fentanyl, but do you know enough to stay safe and protect your friends? Whether it's pills, powder, or something shared at a party, fentanyl could be in it. Your film can share information about the dangers of fentanyl, how to spot and respond to an opioid overdose, and encourage young people to look out for their friends.

THE TRUTH UNFILTERED:

Interview young people in your school or community about their thoughts on substance use, such as alcohol, vaping, opioids, cannabis, and other drugs. What do they believe? What do they wish they knew? Use real voices to uncover the "why" and "why not" young people choose to use substances such as alcohol, vapes, cannabis or others.

COPING MY WAY:

Create a film that creatively tells a story about stress or adversity young people experience and how they cope. What barriers might be preventing a young person from using a healthy coping strategy instead of an unhealthy one such as substance use? Creatively explore what "coping my way" can look like.



**Substance
Use**

CATEGORY QUICK FACTS

**Live-action films need to be 60 seconds long.
Animated films can be 30 seconds long.**

Statewide Judging
Films in this category compete during one round of judging on a statewide level.

**First Place \$1000
(Second Place \$500, Third Place \$250,
Honorable Mention \$100)**

Films cannot contain alcohol or other drug use, show an overdose, and will lose points for showing items, especially close-ups, of alcohol, pills, vape pens and more.

TIPS FOR A WINNING SUBMISSION

TIPS!

All films should be educational, hopeful, and include information about what someone can do to help themselves or help a friend.

Do

- **Think of telling a story** (small nuggets of a story) — on your experiences, feelings, choices, or messages of hope.
- **Share messages** that are credible and relevant for other young people. Instead of projects that simply say: “It’s bad for you, don’t do it”, we want you to dig deeper, to unfilter the truth. Without judgment and shame.
- **Be sure that all information is accurate**, cite your sources!
- **Model the behaviors you want to see:** Reaching out to a friend, navigating peer pressure, etc)
- **Focus on peer support, resilience, or alternatives** — rather than re-creating scenes of use
- **Review your film** through the lens of someone who has lost a loved one to an overdose.

Don't

- **Do not show an overdose.** Instead, make your story about how a friend might spot the warning signs of an overdose and take action to prevent the overdose instead of focusing on the overdose as the overcome.
- **Your film cannot show drug use.** We are challenging you to tell a story about substance use, but without showing young people engaging in alcohol or drug use.
- **Do not glorify or promote substance use**
- **Limit or don't use photos or videos of pills, alcohol, aape pens, and other drugs as “props”** Instead, try using metaphors, illustrations, or symbolism (animations, graphics, blurred props) rather than literal depictions of substances
- **Don't use AI**
- **Don't use brand names or copyrighted images and music**
- **Avoid exaggeration and shaming**



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

GET STARTED

To get started, youth need to select an adult advisor, create a profile, and upload their release form.

STEP 1:

Select adult advisor

STEP 2:

Sign Release Forms

STEP 3:

Complete a Profile

STEP 4:

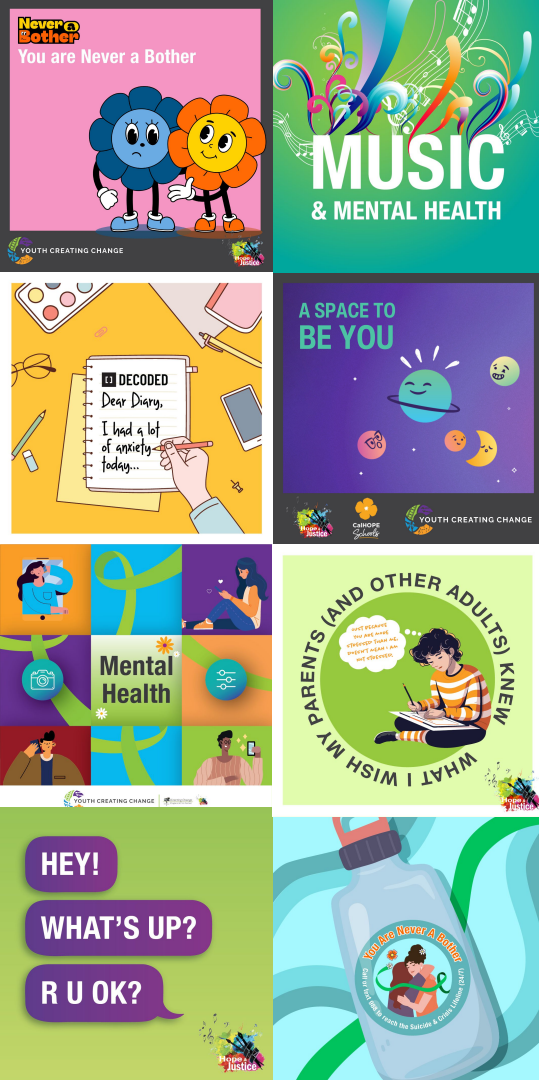
Select Submission
Category

STEP 5:

Submit Entry

STEP 6:

Cross Fingers -
Judging in Progress



HOPE & JUSTICE FILM & ART CONTEST

The Hope & Justice Art and Film Contest centers topics youth are grappling with in their day to day lives – mental health, racism, economic uncertainty, climate change, health disparities – with prompts that ask them to process their feelings and build healthy coping skills through creative expression.

- Open to young people 12-25 in California
- Offered throughout the school year
- All art forms accepted (including visual art, poetry, narrative works, short films/PSAs, original music, dance, TikToks, and more!)
 - All 60-second films entered into Directing Change Film Contest!
- Win up to \$300 in Amazon gift cards

www.HopeandJustice.art





Directing Change

Program & Film Contest

DirectingChangeCA.org

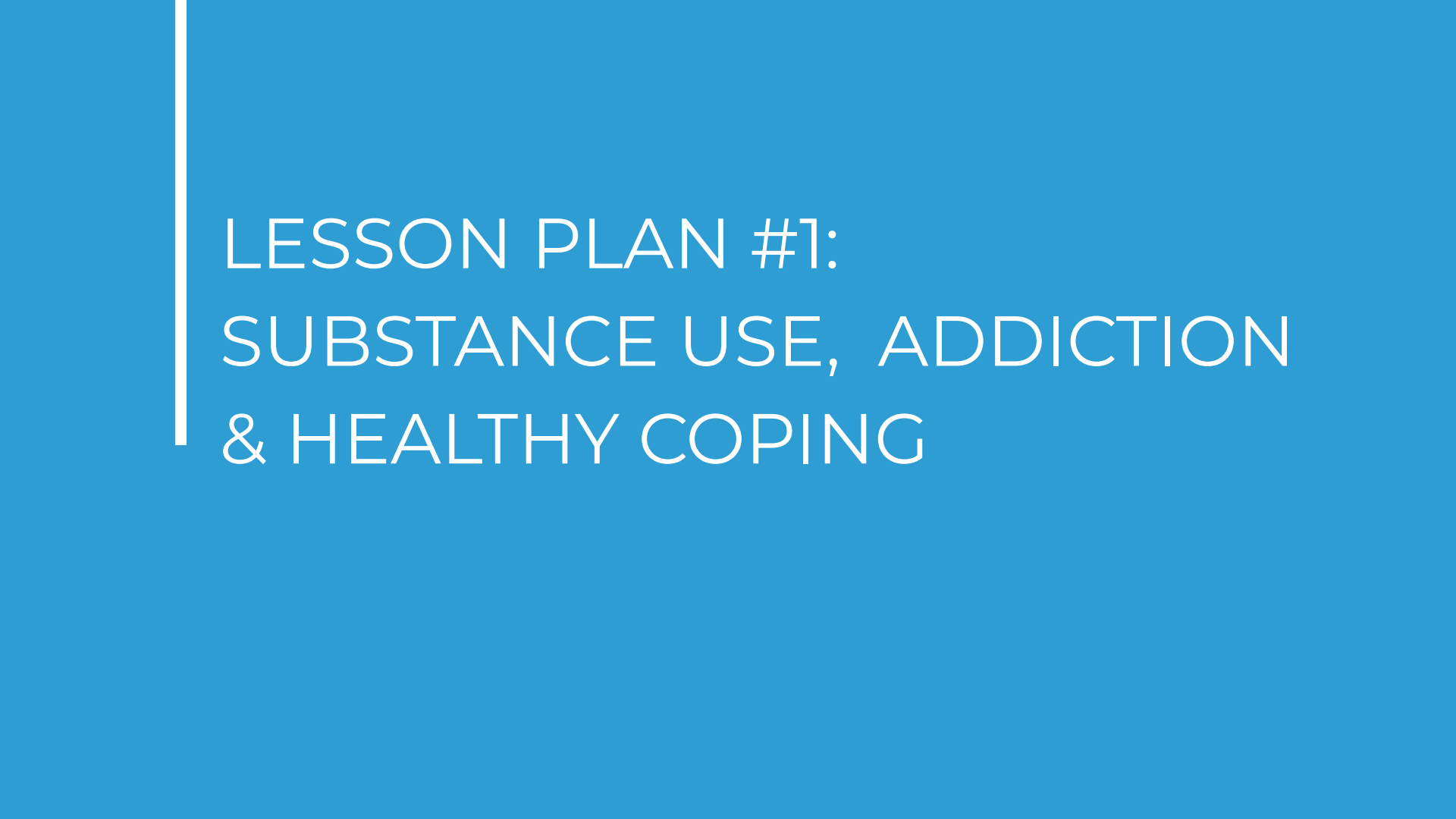


HopeandJustice.art



SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION LESSON PLANS

1. Substance Use, Addiction and Healthy Coping
2. Spotting and Responding to an Opioid Overdose

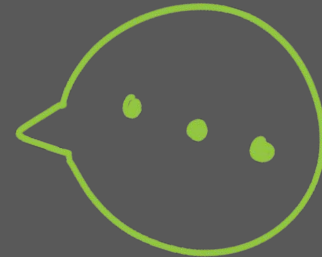


LESSON PLAN #1: SUBSTANCE USE, ADDICTION & HEALTHY COPING



DISCUSSION QUESTION

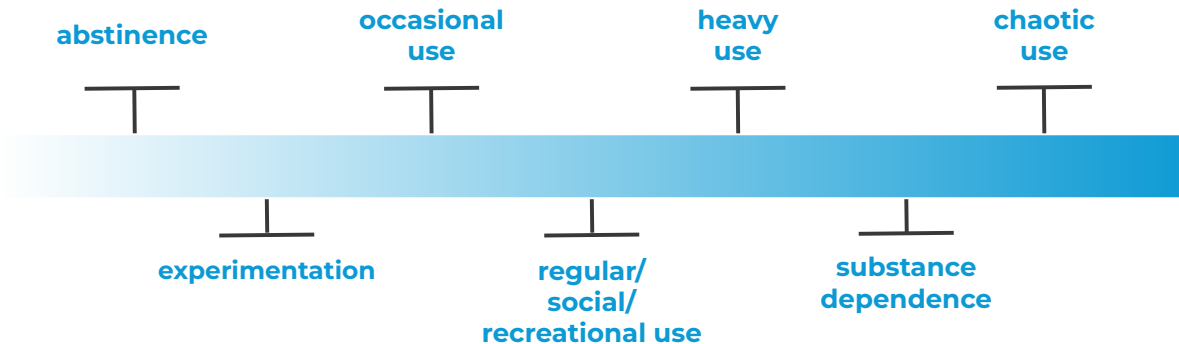
What are some reasons a young person might drink alcohol, vape, or use substances like cannabis or prescription drugs? What are some reasons why not?



SUBSTANCE USE

Substance used can be viewed on a **spectrum**.

- There are many different degrees of use.
- The effects of use vary from person to person.



Addiction = compulsive drug-seeking and use despite negative consequences (among other signs and symptoms)



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SIGNS OF ADDICTION

Addiction or substance use disorders exert a long and powerful influence on the brain that manifests in 3 distinct ways:



**Craving for the
Substance**



**Loss of Control
Over its Use**



**Continuing Use
Despite Negative
Consequences**



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



“Choosing Wisely: Navigating the World of Natural and Artificial Highs”

[youtube.com/watch?v=wjpJRuMNqA0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjpJRuMNqA0)

Video courtesy of [NaturalHigh.Org](https://www.naturalhigh.org)

What are some consequences of using drugs? How might these consequences impact a person's future?

How would you respond to a situation where drugs are offered to you or your friends? What strategies could you use to make healthy choices instead of giving in to peer pressure?



ALLY BURNETT — SINGER SONGWRITER

[Read More](#)



ROB MACHADO — PRO SURFER

[Read More](#)



CASADEE POPE — SINGER/SONGWRITER

[Read More](#)



**JORDAN ROMERO — WORLD RECORD
SETTING MOUNTAIN CLIMBER**

[Read More](#)



**LAUREN CONRAD — FASHION DESIGNER &
AUTHOR**

[Read More](#)



TIM HOWARD — PRO SOCCER PLAYER

[Read More](#)

Find stories at: www.naturalhigh.org/storyteller/

ACTIVITY

Drugs can push the natural things that make you happy way down your list. What are some things you'd never want to lose?

1. Make a list of some of the things you'd never want to lose.
2. Pick one of the stories from this website. What mattered to them?

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND



Learn the Warning Signs

- Hostility or irritability
- Breaking rules, missing curfews, and/or skipping school
- Slipping grades
- Changes in relationships with family and friends
- A new circle of friends
- Indications that money is tight
- Interest in hobbies or sports has changed
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Sleeping too much or too little



Start the Conversation

- Use “I” statements such as “I’m worried about you because I care about your safety.”
- Listen more than you talk; sometimes just feeling heard makes a big difference.
- Avoid pressuring them to stop.



Practical Support

- Don’t promise to keep secrets if their safety is at risk.
- Share resources and encourage reaching out for help.
- Stay connected. Check in regularly, even with a simple text or message.



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WORDS MATTER

Instead of...	Use...	Because...
• Addict • User • Substance abuser • Drug abuser • Alcoholic • Drunk • Former addict	• Person with substance use disorder • Person with opioid use disorder • Person with alcohol use disorder • Person who misuses alcohol • Person who engages in unhealthy alcohol use • Person in recovery/long-term recovery • Person who previously used drugs	• Person-first language • These changes convey that a person “has” a problem (rather than that they “are” the problem) • These terms avoid eliciting negative associations, punitive attitudes, and individual blame



DISCUSSION QUESTION



What are some ways that you cope with stress?



HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

DAILY GRATITUDE

Commit to answering these daily journaling prompts:

- Morning:
 - What are three things I am grateful for today?
- Night:
 - What's something that made my day?

BOX BREATHING

Breathe in for 4 seconds

Hold for 4 seconds

This breathing technique can reduce stress and improve mood

Hold for 4 seconds

Breathe out for 4 seconds

MUSIC MEDITATION

- Find a space where you won't be interrupted.
- Pick one of your favorite songs or create a playlist.
- Relax into a comfortable position and ask yourself:
 - How does my body feel?
 - What are some sounds I might not have noticed before?
 - How does the song make me feel emotionally?

For more strategies, view our playbooks for stress.

OFFICE OF THE CALIFORNIA SURGEON GENERAL

- Practicing mindfulness and deep breathing
- Eating well
- Moving your body
- Getting enough sleep
- Finding supportive relationships
- Spending time outside
- Caring for your mental health

Download at: <https://osg.ca.gov/dearstresstoolkit/>



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

Build your Pause Plan

- 🔑 Free, personalized tool
- ⌚ Takes 3 minutes
- 🧠 Activate your calming system
- 😌 Offload stress

Start your plan



Get started at: www.takespacetopause.org

ACTIVITY

Drugs can push the natural things that make you happy way down your list. What are some things you'd never want to lose?

1. Visit the Take Space to Pause website and complete the 3-minute "build Your Pause" activity.

LESSON PLAN #2:
SPOTTING AND RESPONDING
TO AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Prescription Opioids

Prescription opioids are prescribed by doctors to treat severe pain such as a sports injury, dental work, or cancer. When taken as prescribed, opioids are relatively safe and can reduce someone's pain for the short term.

Heroin

An illegal drug made from poppy plants that is very addictive. It is sold as white or brownish powder or as 'black tar.'

Fentanyl

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, meaning it is made in a lab. It is 50 to 100 times stronger than other opioids and is now one of the most common drugs involved in drug overdose deaths in the United States.



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“

We often assume that someone who dies from drugs is different from us. They must have had big problems or an addiction or mental health issues. But that's not true in Charlie's case, nor in thousands of recent cases. In fact, the fastest growing category of 'drug overdose' victims is the occasional, recreational user of prescription pills.

– Ed and Mary Ternan, Founders, Song for Charlie

”

DEADLY

POTENT

LETHAL DOSE OF
FENTANYL



FAKE
PILLS

WHAT MAKES
FENTANYL SO
DANGEROUS?

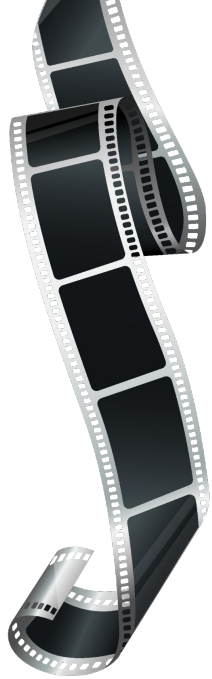
Counterfeit Pills - You Need to Know

"Counterfeit Pills - You Need to Know"

Video Courtesy of Song for Charlie

youtu.be/hJme4Vmdg9o

SYNTHETIC



HOW TO SPOT AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

What do you already know about how to recognize if someone is experiencing an opioid overdose?



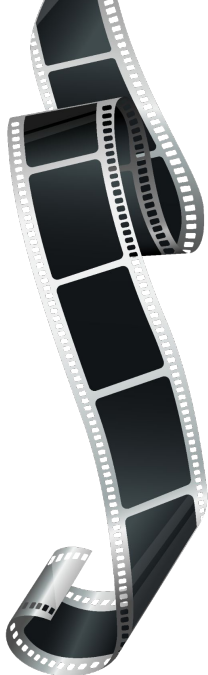
Warning: This PSA depicts a possible drug overdose.

“No Drama No Help”

Video Courtesy of the [Over the Dose Campaign](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt03BjCvHo8)
[youtu.be/Xt03BjCvHo8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt03BjCvHo8)



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HOW TO SPOT AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

When someone experiences an overdose, you may notice the following symptoms:



"Signs of an Overdose"
Video Courtesy of Song for Charlie
youtu.be/RDBf18b8BKU

Source of graphic:

<https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/communication-resources/overdose-graphics.html#cc-widget-3d09>



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HOW TO RESPOND

Do...

- Call 9-1-1 right away. All you have to say is “I think someone may have overdosed” and provide your location
- Give naloxone if you have it
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing
- Lay the person on their side
- Stay with them until emergency workers arrive

Don't...

- Don't hit or try to forcefully wake or move the person. (If you are unable to wake the person by shouting or lightly pinching them, they are likely unconscious).
- Don't put the person in a cold bath or shower (this increases the risk of falling, drowning, or going into shock).
- Don't try to make the person throw up (this increases the risk of choking).



THE GOOD SAMARITAN LAW

Many overdose deaths can be prevented, but people often fear arrest if they call 9-1-1. The Good Samaritan Fatal Overdose Law provides protection from arrest, charge, or prosecution for anyone who seeks emergency medical help at the scene of a suspected drug overdose.

- ❖ This means you won't get into trouble even if you are under the influence, or have a small amount of drugs in your possession.





RESOURCES & SUPPORT

SUPPORT AND CRISIS RESOURCES



**Call or text 9-8-8 to reach the
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 24/7**



Teen Line – English Only
Text TEEN to 839863
(6 PM–9 PM PT)



The Trevor Project
Created for but not limited to 2SLGBTQ+
young people ages 13–24.
Call 1-866-488-7386
Text START to 678-678



SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



**Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Treatment Services**
Call 1-800-662-HELP(4357)



**Free and confidential mental health
support for 13-to-25 year-olds in California**
Visit: www.solunaapp.com

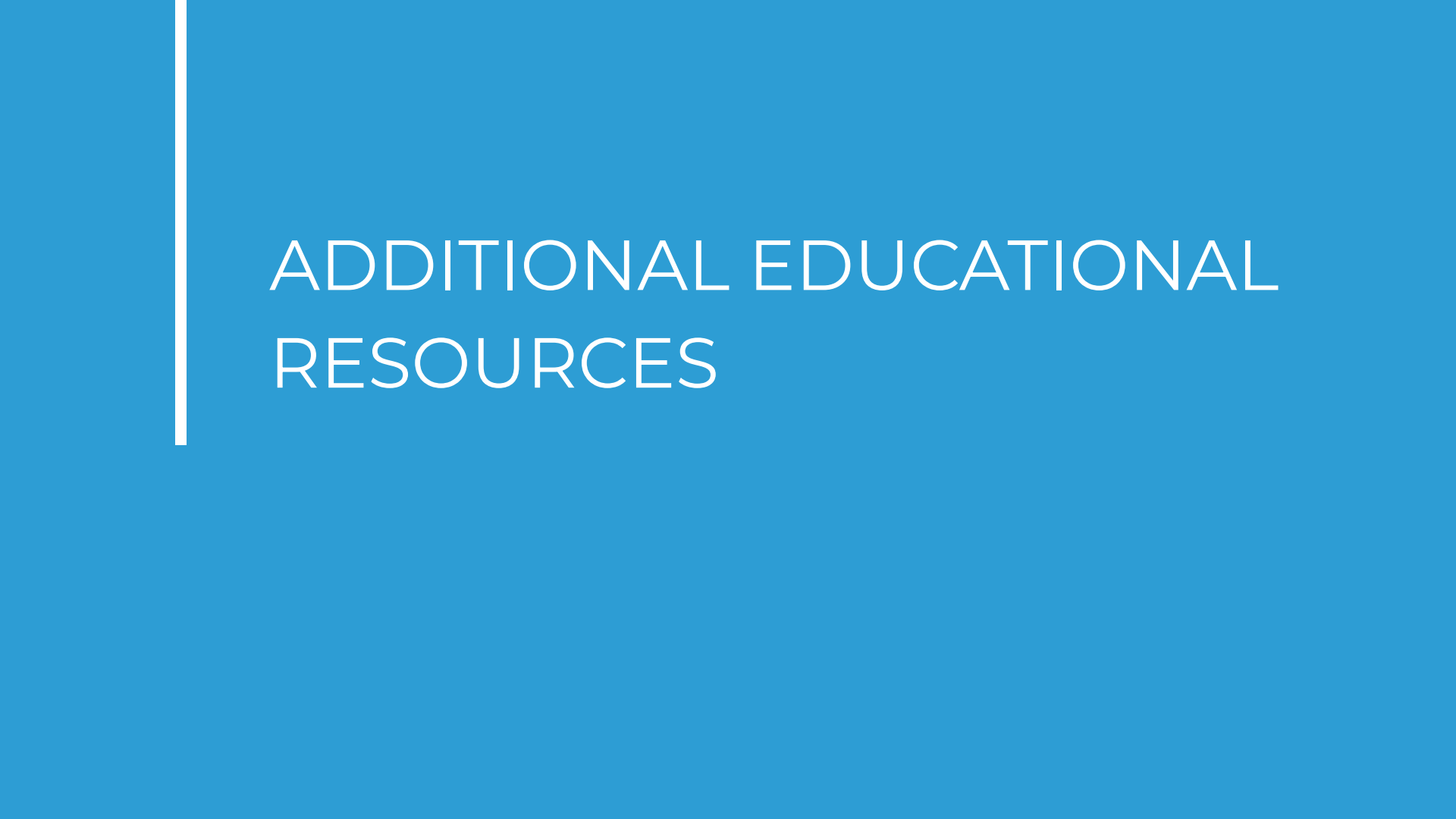


Narcotics Anonymous:
Visit: na.org/meetingsearch

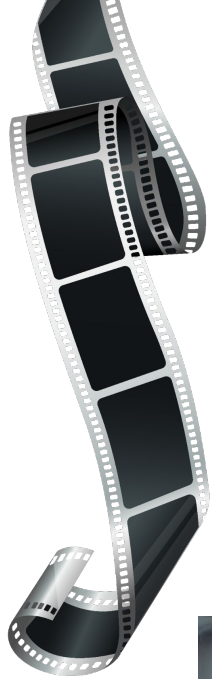


Alcoholics Anonymous:
Call 510-430-8900





ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



Example PSAs and Personal Stories

Use these PSAs and stories to infuse into your lesson as appropriate.



"Numb"

vimeo.com/1061498616



"It's Up to Us"

vimeo.com/801047205



"Pain Never Lasts"

vimeo.com/92756717



"Danyelle Wolf"

naturalhigh.org/storyteller/danyelle-wolf/



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



“Understanding an Overdose and How to Respond to One” - Lesson Plan from the NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse

Designed for grades 9-12, this lesson on “recognizing and responding to overdoses” can be completed in about 25 minutes. The primary objective of the lesson is “to empower students with the ability to demonstrate practices and behaviors that support individual and collective health and well-being, specifically by recognizing the signs of an overdose.” The lesson also includes helpful links to additional websites/resources.

- [Online Lesson Plan](#)
- [Activity Worksheet](#)
- [How to Use Naloxone Nasal Spray \(video tutorial\)](#)
- [Naloxone Education for School Nurses Toolkit](#)



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



“Understanding Polysubstance Use and How to Make Health-Enhancing Choices” - Lesson Plan from the NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse

Designed for grades 9-12, this lesson “teaches the DECIDE model of decision making, which is a tool that can help teens feel equipped and empowered to make decisions that maintain or improve their health and well-being.” By completing this lesson, “students will develop the skills to make health-enhancing choices in challenging situations, as well as understand the risks of polysubstance use.”

- [Online Lesson Plan](#)
- [Activity Worksheet](#)
- [What Happens when Drugs are Combined? \(video\)](#)



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

CAMPAIGNS AND RESOURCES

A number of different campaigns and program have been developed to address various substance use topics. Here is a small selection:

- Natural High (drug prevention and life skills): www.naturalhigh.org
- Song for Charlie (fake prescription pills made with fentanyl): www.songforcharlie.org
- The Truth Initiative: www.truthinitiative.org
- Decoded (facts without filter): www.decodedca.org
- The Undo Campaign: www.undo.org
- The Real Cost Campaign: www.therealcost.betobaccofree.hhs.gov
- Behind the Haze (vaping): www.behindthehaze.com
- Live Beyond (ACEs and “stress busters”): www.livebeyondCA.org

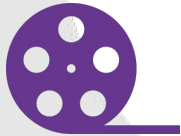
Real Talk About Fake Pills: A Must-Watch for Teens

Fentanyl and fake pills pose a deadly risk, but awareness can save lives. The 20-minute film, Real Talk About Fake Pills, shares real stories and expert insights to help teens make safe, informed choices. It’s a valuable resource for schools, community groups, and peer-led efforts, sparking meaningful conversations about safety and prevention. Watch trailer and request access here at www.songforcharlie.org/page/youth-assembly-film.



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OTHER NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON HEALTH (NIH) LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES



[NIDA.NIH.GOV](https://nida.nih.gov) offers a wide range of other lesson plans, activities, videos, and quizzes to help teach youth about overdose, addiction, stress management, alcohol and tobacco, and more. These accessible, science-based resources for educators and community organizers can be found [here](#).

- [Understanding and Responding to an Overdose](#)
- [Teaching Youth about Addiction](#)
- [Dealing with Stress](#)
- [All About Alcohol and Nicotine](#)
- [Additional Resources for Teachers and Community Organizers](#)



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



“The Science of Joy” and “The Dark Side of Highs” - Lesson Plans from Natural High

Complete with videos, discussion questions, and activities, these lessons from [NaturalHigh.org](https://www.naturalhigh.org) teach students “about dopamine’s role in their brains and how it influences their choices,” “the connection between everyday enjoyable activities and the release of dopamine,” and “the risks of artificial highs and their impact on the brain’s reward center.”

- [The Science of Joy - Exploring Dopamine and Natural Highs Video #1](#)
- [Video #1 Discussion Questions](#)
- Video #1 Activities: [Draw Your Natural High](#), [Research Your Natural High](#), [Express Your Natural High](#)
- [The Dark Side of Highs - Unmasking Artificial Rewards: Video #2](#)
- [Video #2 Discussion Questions](#)
- Video #2 Activities: [Designing Your Future](#), [Peer Pressure Bag of Tricks](#)



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE

RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

A number of resources are available to educate parents/caregivers about substance youth and mental health – and to guide them through the process of talking about these subjects with youth. Here is a small selection:

- [Raising Healthy Teens Parent Guide \(Tips for Talking to Teens about Substance Use\)](#)
- [Raising Healthy Teens Middle School Parent Handbook](#)
- [Raising Healthy Teens High School Parent Handbook](#)
- [Raising Healthy Teens Spanish Language Parent Handbook \(Guia de Recursos para Padres\)](#)
- [The Natural High Blog: Trusted Support for Parents and Educators](#)
- [Youth Creating Change Parent Education and Resources](#)
- [Song for Charlie's The New Drug Talk: Conversation Tips](#)



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: MENTAL HEALTH THRIVAL KITS

Download a copy of the Mental Health Thrival Kit from the [Youth Creating Change](#) website.

Kits are currently available in English and Spanish, as well as for Korean American youth and Filipino American youth.



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



Thank you!



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE