



## The FCDAC STRATEGIZER

Leading the way to a  
healthier Forsyth County



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March 2022 Volume 1 Issue 11

## March is Vaping Prevention Awareness Month



### TEENS ASK

According to NIDA, National Institute on Drug Abuse, two most often asked vaping questions among teens are:

1.
  - Is vaping bad for you, even if it's just flavoring?

2.
  - Which is more habit-forming – smoking cigarettes or vaping nicotine?

**First, vaping can be bad** for your health because research shows that many teens and young adults don't realize that the **flavors they use actually can contain nicotine, an addictive compound found in tobacco**. Many vapes also contain **propylene glycol, glycerin, chemical flavorings, and other compounds with unknown health effects**. As a result, people who vape—even just flavoring—may inhale and ingest potentially harmful chemicals.



Studies also link students who used e-cigs by 9th grade were likely to be smoking other smokeable products within the following year.

In 2020, thousands of people got sick, and dozens died from an illness called EVALI, which stands for e-cigarette or vaping-use associated lung injury. Vitamin E acetate, an additive in some THC-containing vaping products, is strongly linked to EVALI. When heated and inhaled, vitamin E acetate can damage the lungs.

**Second, nicotine in any form is highly addictive**, and many who start using one form of nicotine transition to another.

**NIDA's 2020 Monitoring the Future survey** showed that the number of teens who say they vape nicotine has leveled off but remains high. **The number of teens who say they smoked cigarettes in the past month declined significantly since the mid-1990s and is now at or near the lowest it ever has been.**

Clearly, teens have heard and heeded the messages about cigarette smoking and nicotine addiction, but have they been duped into thinking vaping was less risky and have become addicted to nicotine anyway?

### **Vitamin E Acetate is the Real Cause of Vaping Deaths - Dangers of E-Cigarettes by Dr. Mike Hansen**

Mike Hansen, MD, is a medical doctor who is an internist, an intensivist, and a pulmonologist. In other words, he specializes in (and is board certified in) internal medicine, critical care medicine, and pulmonary disease. His mission is to impact people's health and lives by providing people with the most accurate and up-to-date health content available.



In this video, Jeff Jordan of the Rescue Agency,\*\* discusses which subgroups of teens are vaping as well as what is motivating their behavior. It compares the psychographics from teen vapers in 2015 to those in 2017 to understand whether they are part of the same trend or the consequence of two different trends.

(Note: At **12:23**, the slide title should be "Any Tobacco Use" rather than "Vaping")

\*\* The Rescue Agency is a for-profit behavior change marketer. 100% of revenue comes from positive social change campaigns.

## MITCH'S MEMO



**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!**

**FCDAC'S NEXT MEETING IS**

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 6  
8-9 A.M.**

**UNITED WAY BUILDING  
240 ELM STREET, CUMMING**

The March 2nd Council Meeting/Youth Substance Education event was awesome! I want to say a big Thank you to everyone who came out for this "on the road at FullCircle" joint event and to everyone who worked to make it happen. Some 75-85 people attended the event, many council members, and other interested people from our community. A panel of six FullCircle young adults presented, each telling their story. Their moving accounts of what initially caused their spiral into drugs/alcohol use differed from each other, but because they chose to get help, each panelist radiated hope for their futures.



The Youth Substance Abuse Education Event was a huge step toward meeting a council goal to take an active community role to foster greater awareness, empathy, and understanding about addiction as a disease. And, more importantly, how FCDAC can provide resources to assist people looking for help to overcome addiction and thrive. I am so grateful for everyone participating in this collaborative event, and we hope to work jointly with many other organizations on similar events in the future.

## Council Meeting and Committee/Partner Updates



**Council Meeting on the Road at FullCircle  
Program  
March 2, 2022**



## Youth Substance Abuse Education Event





The March 2 FCDAC Meeting was a smashing success. Our photos show the standing-room-only crowd who came out to the meeting at FullCircle.

FCDAC Director Mitch facilitated the meeting and introduced the six young adult presenters who brought the reality of their world and the results of entering into risky behavior to those in attendance.

Hope and recovery are possible which the young adults' stories highlighted.

FCDAC is committed to providing Forsyth County with every resource possible for living healthy, drug-free lifestyles.





## Council Meeting Notes and On-Going Program Updates

### FCDAC Youth Outreach Committee:

**North Forsyth High School-** FCDAC launched a Drug and Alcohol Education Group led by FCDAC TEAM, including Mitch Durdle, Matt Meyer, Kevin Kayden, and Mike Cowan, who presented to students and who will lead a small group on a rotating basis. Each holds certificates in drug and alcohol counseling. According to Amy Dykes, Student Support Coordinator at North Forsyth High School, "On February 16, the FCDAC Team presented to 68 of our students. The presentations focused on the long-term negative effects of choosing alcohol and drugs and how those choices can greatly change the path of their lives. Several students in attendance shared with me that they were thankful to hear someone speak who understood their current situation and how life can take many different turns. They were able to connect to the stories and information shared and were grateful for the opportunity to hear the presentation that day."

Since the February presentation, FCDAC Team has offered small group sessions to 12 students. They will be meeting with those students every Wednesday for an hour. "The first meeting was a great success! The students were excited and attentive, and each participated in the discussion. We know our students need this opportunity, and we are thrilled to offer this to them during the school day. Providing the sessions during school hours removes the barriers of time and transportation, so we are grateful that Mitch, Matt, Mike, and Kevin can provide their services and expertise for our students," said Ms. Dykes.

**Forsyth Central High School-**On February 7 Mitch Durdle, Gabby Breiten, and Mike Cowan presented a Drug and Alcohol Awareness Program to a Freshman Class of about 200 students.

Other area High Schools are being contacted to offer and establish similar programs.

### Community Outreach Committee

Pictured below at the FCDAC table:  
Mike Cowen, Susan Tanner, and Alex Martinez



### NOTE from

**John Bringuel**, Prevention /  
Intervention Program Manager



at The Council on Alcohol and  
Drugs.

John said, "If you missed the  
**Georgia Council on Substance  
Abuse's Virtual Town**



## FCDAC AT SURF AND SUN 5K EVENT



The Surf and Sun 5 K, sponsored by Five Star was held Saturday, February 5 at WEST BANK PARK, 1050 West Bank Park, Cumming by beautiful Lake Lanier.

Councilmember Susan Tanner participated in running the 5 K. She said, "I was proud to have Councilmembers Alex Martinez and Mike Cowan there representing our Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council. They provided water to runners along with stretchy bands and drug council flyers to those who stopped by our table!"



Abuse's Virtual Town Hall meeting, you can view it in its entirety by [CLICKING HERE.](#)

You will hear a significant update on the Mental Health Parity Act and other legislation regarding mental and physical health."

THANKS FOR THIS RESOURCE, JOHN!

## NOTE FROM COUNCILMEMBER SUSAN TANNER



**WHAT?**  
ALEC'S PIZZA PARTY  
Family Friendly  
crafts, games, music,  
and inflatables.

**WHEN?**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 27 NOON TO 4 PM**

**WHERE?**

The Green at Crabapple Market, 12650 Crabapple Road, Milton, GA

**WHY?**

**TO REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF ALEC DURHAM AND REJOICE IN HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN RECOVERY. THE EVENT WILL "ALLOW THE WORLD TO SEE ADDICTION RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE WITH THE RIGHT COMMUNITY," Amy Durham.**



**Dallas Gay, 80, died  
Monday, February 21, 2022**

## REMEMBERING FCDAC FRIEND AND SUPPORTER DALLAS GAY

Friend of FCDAC, Dallas Gay has died. Dallas was a person that gave advice when FCDAC was formed. He was an advisory member for the first few years and sat on some of our past committees too.

Dallas Gay began his involvement and advocacy to fight prescription drug

abuse when he saw his grandson, Jeffrey Dallas Gay Jr., become addicted to opioids. After the devastating overdose death of his grandson in 2012, Dallas worked tirelessly researching and creating resources to stop overdoses. Dallas's son, Jeff Gay, said of him, "I promise you, he woke up for that reason (every day). He didn't want to see somebody else's kid go through it. That's how Jeffrey impacted Dallas."

Gay initiated the Partnership for a Drug-Free Hall, a collaborative effort in Gainesville that provides

Gay initiated the Partnership for a Drug-Free Hall, a collaborative effort in Gainesville that provides seminars and other information on addiction and recovery resources. In 2017, the Jeffrey Dallas Gay Jr. Act, Senate Bill 121, which took the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone off the dangerous drug list and made it available at pharmacies, was signed by then-Gov. Nathan Deal.

Dallas Gay and family championed support for recovery of those suffering from substance abuse disorder, establishing J's Place, the Jeffrey Dallas Gay Jr. Recovery Center. J's Place helps people seeking recovery and those in long-term recovery build relationships and skills that help them thrive, succeed, and have fun without using substances.

Dallas was a good friend to our council. We remember him fondly, and we extend sympathy to his family.

## Welcome New Councilmember



### Meet Sasha Jones, Interim CEO of Supporting Adoption & Foster Families Together

"I am thrilled to join the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council! I have a passion and a love for those who suffer from substance abuse and believe in the ability to help and work with those suffering, rather than shame and cast judgment," Sasha Jones, Interim CEO of SAFFT (Supporting Adoption & Foster Families Together), told the *Strategizer*. "I think that with what we do at

SAFFT, I can not only grow my mind but also find better ways to help our families by being part of FCDAC."



*Supporting Adoption & Foster Families Together*

### What is SAFFT?

Sasha says, "The mission of SAFFT is to protect children, rebuild families, and empower caregivers. I truly love what we do and love working with our biological parents to reunify with their kiddos. We offer supervised visitations, counseling, parent coaching, transportation, drug screening, and even parenting classes for parents with kids in the Foster Care system. Reunification is generally the best outcome for children; however, when it is not, we will fight to ensure that every child has permanency and a family to call their own. We also offer DFCS (Division of Family and Children Services) and foster parents services. We host events where the kiddos can play, and the foster parents can get a night off! As well as hosting a large resource closet for our partners. DFCS has 24-hour access to come in and grab a "Go-bag" for those immediate removals. These ensure that every kiddo will have a few outfits, PJs, hygiene products, a blanket, and even a book. These bags help children settle in that day because there is nothing harder for these kiddos than having to leave. We genuinely believe that everyone deserves love and family. Anything we can do to help break the cycle of generational trauma, we are 100% there!"

Sasha graduated with a degree in Human Development and Aging with a minor in Religious Studies at the beginning of COVID. "I started working for SAFFT as a Family Success Manager before becoming the Program Manager, and now I'm the Interim CEO. As I worked my way up, I've seen the struggles at each level, and now I am beyond excited to get my feet wet in this new role as I continue to advocate, change

level, and now I am beyond excited to get my feet wet in this new role as I continue to advocate, change, and grow! Helping families in our community is essential to me," Sasha said.

"I am also the mother of 5 fur babies! I have two dogs and three cats that I love. When I have free time, I am usually cuddled up with them, watching Netflix, taking hikes, or kickboxing the stress away!" she said.

## Youth News

### CADCA YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDED TO VINAYAK MENON AT CADCA LEADERSHIP FORUM



**Vinayak Menon** was presented with the CADCA's **Outstanding Youth Leader 2022 award**. Vinayak is the youngest recipient ever selected. The 32nd Annual National Leadership Forum and SAMHSA'S 18th Prevention Day were held in National Harbor, MD, on February 3. During his acceptance speech, Vinayak spoke about the ripple effect youth advocates have in their communities when invited to the table. When youth leaders become part of the solution, "...using the right amount of passion

and effort, our ideas can inspire, our voices can reverberate, and our actions can improve the lives of millions. It's these ideas, voices, and actions that can turn mere ripples into tidal waves of change." Actual change can occur when youth become advocates embedded in the prevention campaign. "Youth advocates are a force who can speak the truth, take action and organize efforts to give back to the community," he said.

Vinayak called on those in attendance, saying, "Advocates, change-makers, and leaders of coalitions empower youth in your community drug coalitions. These young leaders can act as the bridge between the coalition and the folks you want to educate, reaching new audiences and building new momentum."

CADCA's National Leadership Forum is a four-day conference packed with multiple adults and youth-oriented opportunities to learn the latest strategies to fight substance misuse and hear from nationally-known experts and policymakers with a full day dedicated to Capitol Hill events.

**Vinayak Menon** is the Youth Sector Leader for the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council and a junior at Lambert High School in Georgia. He has been actively involved with the coalition for the past four years and represented his district at multiple CADCA national conventions. He is also a community contributor for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and advocated for substance prevention on behalf of youth. Outside of prevention work, Vinayak is an officer on his school's speech and debate team and in the

Georgia Future Business Leaders of America. In 2021 he was the only GA student selected for the US Debate Team.



Listen to Vinayak's acceptance speech at the CADCA National Leadership Forum.

## CONGRATULATIONS VINAYAK!

# Billboards Coming to Cumming!



IT'S NOT COOL TO JUUL  
**BE SMART  
DON'T START**



Thinking of Quitting? You are not alone.  
Text **VAPEFREEGA** to 88709



MAKE A PLEDGE

**PUT IT DOWN BEFORE  
IT PUTS YOU DOWN**



**NEED HELP QUITTING?  
TEXT **VAPEFREEGA** TO 88709**



## Have you seen these Billboards in Cumming?

These two billboards are the outcome of the **Truth Behind E-Cigarettes: An Educational Youth Summit** held on January 22 at the United Way building. The Summit, initiated by FCDAC Youth Council President, **Saasha Kapoor**, was a collaborative effort between FCDAC, the Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Georgia Prevention Project. Students came together to learn about the health repercussions of vaping and strategies to counter the misinformation some youth have received from e-cig advertisers and others.

As a component of the Summit, the students created posters that were then reproduced professionally. The signs were distributed to different organizations and several county Health Departments for use during March's Vaping Prevention Awareness Month.



The above billboards will be seen in some of our district's counties, including Forsyth, Franklin, Banks, and Lumpkin. The billboards will run from middle March to middle April.

We are grateful for our collaboration with Erika Lopez, GA Public Health District 2, and Rachel Morris, GA Prevention Project. We are proud of our Youth Council President Saesha's leadership and its efforts to raise awareness of the health risks involved with vaping and get their message out to their peers.

Be on the lookout for these awesome billboards!

**Saesha Kapoor**, FCDAC Youth Council President, is a junior at South Forsyth High School and has worked on drug prevention for five years. She is also the co-president of *Be Smart Don't Start*, a drug awareness club at South Forsyth High School.

## Members Teaching Members



### Profound Meeting, Uplifting HOPE

by Dana Bryan

I thought I knew what I would write this month until I attended FCDAC's monthly meeting at FullCircle, but it has changed my life dramatically, and I decided to share it with you. I can't stop thinking about the program presented by the young adults who spoke. FullCircle is a youth-at-risk ministry. They serve youths with substance abuse, mental health concerns, eating disorders, self-harm, and other compulsive behaviors.

Six members of FullCircle courageously shared their personal and moving stories very openly. Their destructive behaviors started with either alcohol, drugs, or self-harm. One traced her use of alcohol back to the time she began at only ten years of age. Each speaker may have started with a different substance or behavior, and each may have started experimenting for a different reason. Still, they have one crucial thing in common: they are now in recovery and living a clean and sober life and remain involved with the FullCircle program. I was impressed with the happiness and contentment that shone on their faces. They have their whole lives ahead of them, and they are now heading positively into the future. Each recovery journey revealed an understanding of the reasons that led to their destructive behaviors, and they all expressed gratitude for the changes they made to improve the quality of their lives.

There are presently only four FullCircle program locations in the United States, and we are fortunate to have one of them here in Cumming, Georgia. I couldn't help but wish that this program had been available when my teenage daughter was involved with drugs. Although she participated in several programs, she could not overcome her addiction and died due to a heroin overdose two weeks before her sixteenth birthday.

I left the meeting with uplifting hope for the future of the six youths who spoke and their families. I also am hopeful for those who will be influenced positively by these teens and those troubled youth who will be helped in the future by the FullCircle program. Their changes will lead them to purposeful and fulfilling lives to develop their unique potential.

Dana Bryan is a retired middle 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. Dana is a regular contributor to the *Strategizer*. Thanks, Dana!



## Local News

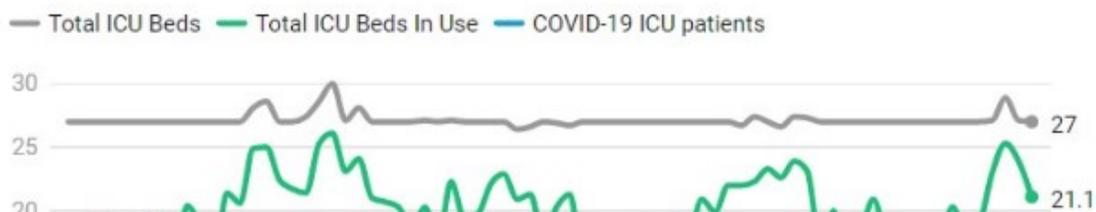
### Covid News in Forsyth\*\*\*

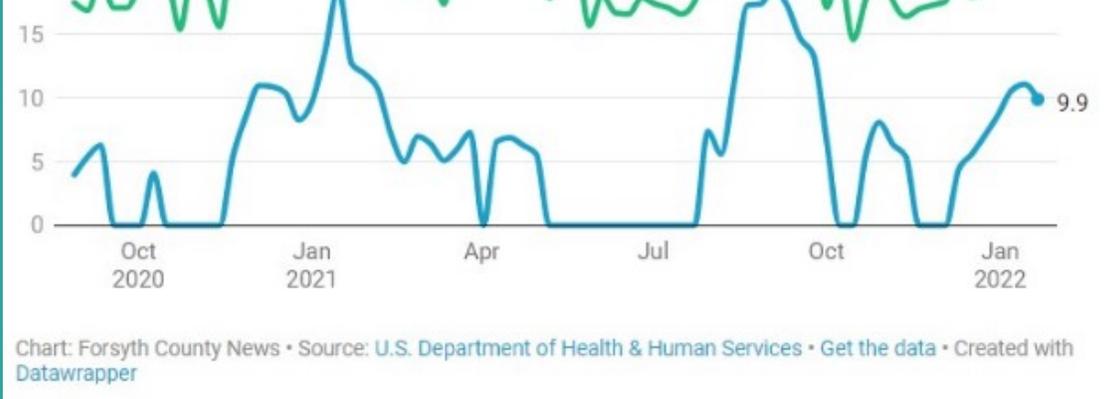
Northside Hospital Forsyth admitted 62 Covid-19 patients the week of January 28, 2022, according to data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The seven-day average bed occupancy for the hospital breaks down as follows:

- Of the 320 beds in the facility, 256 were in use, 86 were in use by Covid patients.
- 20 of 27 ICU beds were in use.
- 62 patients in the hospital were Covid positive, all were adults
- 1,008 people visited the emergency room. 187 of those were Covid positive

### Forsyth County COVID-19 hospital ICU usage

Weekly average of total ICU beds, total ICU beds in use and COVID-19 ICU patients at Northside Hospital Forsyth





The HHS data is updated Mondays weekly with hospital utilization data from the previous Friday through Thursday.

\*\*\*Courtesy of Forsyth County News 2-8-2022

## State News

# The Triangle: AS HEROIN OD DEATHS SKYROCKET AG CARR JOINS Multi-State Coalition Urging State Department to Fight Fentanyl Spike





The heroin triangle is an area where heroin overdose deaths have increased at alarming rates, and the expanding lines where these deaths are occurring now include Forsyth County.

According to a January 21, 2022 press release from the office of Georgia State Attorney General Chris Carr, Carr has joined a coalition of 16 attorneys general in urging the U.S. Department of State to strengthen its efforts to fight back against the influx of deadly **fentanyl** into their states and the nation as a whole.

“It has been proven time, and again that illegal fentanyl is flowing across our border from Mexico, and this must stop,” said Carr. “We will leave no stone unturned in our fight against the opioid epidemic, and we call on our federal partners to do the same.”

In a letter sent to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the attorneys general outlined their concerns regarding the production and distribution of fentanyl, including the trafficking of **fentanyl from Mexico and China**.

Historically, fentanyl was made in China and shipped directly to the United States. Following pressure from the federal government, China began taking action against illicit fentanyl manufacturing within its borders in 2019. However, **Chinese labs** then diverted precursor chemicals for fentanyl manufacturing to other countries, including Mexico.

Alarming quantities of fentanyl are smuggled across the southern border into the United States. According to the U.S. Department of State, seizures of fentanyl directly shipped from China to the United States decreased dramatically from over 128 kilograms seized in 2017 to less than half a kilogram in 2020. **Today, most fentanyl available in the United States is trafficked from Mexico across the U.S. Southwest border. Seizures of fentanyl at the border increased from approximately 1,187 kilograms in 2019 to about 2,939 kilograms in 2020.**

**Fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses** have increased both in Georgia and nationally throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

For access to services and immediate crisis help, Georgians are encouraged to call the 24/7 Georgia Crisis & Access Line (GCAL) at 1-800-715-4225.

In addition to Georgia, the following states joined in signing the letter: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and West Virginia.

Read the letter [HERE](#).

National News

Operation Overdrive





**Launched on February 1, DEA Operation Overdrive** uses a data-driven, intelligence-led approach to identify and dismantle criminal drug networks operating in areas with the highest rates of violence and overdoses, according to the DEA News Release on Monday, February 7, 2022. The DEA, working in partnership with its fellow federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, has mapped the threats and initiated enforcement operations against those networks in 34 locations across 23 states in the initial phase of Operation Overdrive.

Today, the United States faces an unprecedented overdose epidemic claiming 275 lives every day.



**DEA Administrator Anne Milgram appears on CNN's "At This Hour with Kate Bolduan" to discuss Operation Overdrive**

Violence, often associated with drug-related activity, is also rising sharply nationwide: in 2020, homicides increased a record 30 percent, and 77 percent of the murders in the United States were committed with a firearm. In 2021, DEA and its law enforcement partners seized more than 8,700 firearms connected to investigations of drug trafficking organizations.

Operation Overdrive revealed alarming trends about the networks that DEA has mapped. The vast majority of identified criminal drug networks are engaged in gun violence. A majority of identified criminal drug networks sell fentanyl or methamphetamine. And almost all of the identified criminal drug networks that sell those deadly synthetic drugs (fentanyl or methamphetamine) are also engaged in violent gun crimes.

"DEA's objective is clear," said DEA Administrator Anne Milgram. "DEA will bring all it has to bear to make our communities safer and healthier, and to reverse the devastating trends of drug-related violence and overdoses plaguing our Nation. The gravity of these threats requires a data-driven approach to pinpoint the most dangerous networks threatening our communities, and leveraging our strongest levers across federal, state, and local partners to bring them down."

## FYI

### NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK 2022 March 20-26

The American Association of Poison Control Centers represents the nation's 55 poison centers that provide the country with expert, 24/7, free services through the Poison Help line 1-800-222-1222 and



## Kratom-Related Poisonings Are Soaring, Study Finds

**DEA has listed kratom as a Drug and Chemical of Concern.** The substance is known to be associated with unproven claims for treatment of opioid addiction and withdrawal. While some people use it to treat pain, anxiety, and depression, others use it recreationally because it can provide a euphoric high. Its unregulated status and being plant-based, a natural substance, often confuse people and the safety of consuming it.

### WHAT IS KRATOM?

According to *Get Smart About Drugs* Kratom Fact Sheet, "Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. Consumption of its leaves produces both stimulant effects (in low doses) and sedative effects (in high doses) and can lead to psychotic symptoms and psychological and physiological dependence. Kratom leaves contain two major psychoactive ingredients (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine). These leaves are crushed and then smoked, brewed with tea, or placed into gel capsules."

In 2011, poison centers received about one call a month regarding someone who'd taken too much kratom, a plant purported to produce mild opioid-like effects. Researcher Henry Spiller, director of the Central Ohio Poison Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, noted that kratom reports underwent a "relatively big spike" sometime between 2015 and 2016. We're now getting literally hundreds of cases a year versus 10 or 20," he said.

Read the entire article and get the [Fact Sheet Here](#).

## Does My Child or Teen Need Mental Health Support?\*

"She's just so moody." "It's just a phase they're going through."

**How many times have you heard this?** Often it is what parents hear and say when coping with their teens. Right now, the pandemic has taken an enormous toll on everyone, with a particularly hard impact on mental health, especially that of young people. Mental health insurance claims for US teens roughly doubled early in the COVID-19 pandemic over the same period in 2019.

Whether it's the loss of connection to friends or the new 24/7 living in close quarters with family – it all adds to the normal stressors that simply go along with growing up. "There is a role for every one of us in supporting youth mental health.

At different ages, your child, teen, or young adult can demonstrate different symptoms that could indicate they may need help. Below, we've outlined some signs to look for, but remember that everything doesn't fit neatly into a list. Trust your gut.

### RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS...

#### Teenagers (12-18) and/or Young Adults

- Has an issue in overlapping areas of life,
- Talks about or engages in any kind of self-

such as family relationships, school performance, sports, recreational activities, or friendships.

- Withdraws from family, friends, or activities they used to enjoy. (NOTE: Given the current restrictions on social gatherings and school, this may be hard to determine.)
- Feels bad about themselves, less confident, or less effective.
- Decreased ability to concentrate.
- Excessive worry about the future or hopelessness.

harm.

- Makes comments like "I wish I weren't here," or "Nobody would care if I ran away."
- Has a significant increase OR decrease in sleep habits or appetite
- Engaging in repetitive behaviors or doing things a certain way.
- Repetitive, self-destructive behaviors such as hair-pulling or skin-picking.
- Talks explicitly about suicide self-harm, or makes other threats.
- Any issue that interferes with their daily lives, their daily functioning, or is persistent.

## Younger Children (5-12)

- Health complaints can include frequent stomach aches, headaches, and unexplained muscle aches and pains.
- Changes in eating, sleeping, energy, or physical complaints of headaches or stomach aches.
- Anger, irritability, or frequent meltdowns.
- Sadness: including clingy behavior, frequent crying, or feeling overwhelmed.
- Repeated questions about their own safety, or that of family or friends.
- Any issue that interferes with their daily lives, their daily functioning, or is persistent.

## Lessons Learned: 5 Things to Remember

- Prepare and Listen: Check out our Lessons Learned on how to prepare to talk to your teen, and how to listen.
- Pick the Right Time, not when they are dealing with schoolwork or when either or both of you are tense.
- Easy Conversation Starters: "I see you've been struggling lately" or "I see this is hard for you."
- Don't ask, "What's wrong?" It can make kids of all ages freeze up, so the likely response will be, "Nothing." That builds a wall.
- Don't be the Fixer: it's common for parents to want to jump in and fix the problem – especially with teens. Don't try to tell them how to fix what's bothering them unless they specifically ask you for advice.

\*Excerpts from Safe Project, Lessons Learned Resource. To Read the entire article [Click Here.](#)

## Social Media: Look Behind the Curtain

*Get Smart About Drugs* is a DEA resource for parents, educators, and caregivers. A recent article, **Social Media: Understanding a Teen's World**, explores how Social Media can play a role in teen exposure to drug misuse in our culture.

Popular social media apps like Snapchat, Instagram, Tik Tok, Tumblr, Twitch, and Youtube are free to download, and through different hashtags (#s), teens can be exposed to offers from dealers to buy drugs.

Did you know teens spend more than 7 hours a day in front of a screen (outside of schoolwork) on average? Parents, it is never too late to acquaint yourself with apps, slang terms, and emojis people use when communicating about drugs while texting.

To view the slide show of these emojis and read the entire article, [CLICK HERE](#)

## ON THE CALENDAR

### MARCH

- Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- Brain Injury Awareness Month
- National Poison Prevention Week March 14-20
- St. Patrick's Day, March 17
- Alec's Pizza Party March 27, 12-4 pm The Green at Crabapple Market, 12650 Crabapple Road, Milton, GA
- National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week March 21-27, 2022
- Suicide Prevention Advocacy Day, GA State Capitol, March 30

### APRIL

- FCDAC Monthly Meeting April 6, 8-9 am United Way Building 240 Elm Street Cumming
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- Child Abuse Prevention Month
- National Public Health Week April 4-10
- Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit April 18-21 Atlanta
- National Youth Violence Prevention Week, April 25-29