



Parent-Focused TTHY Media Campaign

CAMPAIGN FACT SHEET

The Montgomery County Department of Human Services' Office of Drug and Alcohol, Family Services, prevention-focused coalitions, providers, and school districts throughout Montgomery County are partnering to educate parents and caregivers about the "Talk. They Hear You."® Campaign (TTHY).

The goal of TTHY is to provide parents and caregivers with the resources they need to address the issue of alcohol and other drugs with their children under the age of 21.

The Campaign seeks to:

- Increase parents' awareness of the prevalence and risks of underage drinking and substance use
- Equip parents with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to prevent underage drinking and substance use
- Increase actions by parents to prevent underage drinking and substance use.

Adolescents Are Engaging in Underage Drinking and Substance Use

According to the 2019 PA Youth Survey, alcohol continues to be the most widely used substance among Montgomery County's youth, with 20.7% of 10th graders and 35.2% of 12th graders reporting

alcohol use in the past 30-days. Marijuana is also prevalent among adolescents with one quarter (25.1%) of our 12th graders reporting use in the past 30-days. Vaping of Nicotine and marijuana products has greatly increased from 2017 to 2019 from 31.6% to 55.5% in 2019 for Nicotine and from 20.0% to 37.2% for Marijuana/Hash Oil.

Underage Drinking and Substance Use Are Serious Problems

Underage Drinking

Some kids start drinking at a young age. Many young people start drinking before the age of 15. Thirty percent of eighth graders in Montgomery County said they tried alcohol at some time in their lives, and 7.3% percent of 8th graders reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

Alcohol can affect brain function. Alcohol use can permanently impair brain function by affecting actual physical development of the brain structure as well as brain functioning. Negative effects include decreased ability in planning, executive functioning, memory, spatial operations, and attention.

Alcohol can lead to other substance use.

Alcohol use is associated with a greater likelihood of using other substances, including marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs.

Marijuana

Marijuana can harm adolescent brain development. Marijuana use distorts how adolescent minds perceive the world, causing poor judgment and decision-making, including unprotected sex and driving while intoxicated. Marijuana use can cause a lack of balance and coordination (possibly increasing injury risk in activities such as driving and sports) in youth. It is also linked to earlier onset of psychosis in youth known to be at risk for schizophrenia.

Marijuana is addictive. Nine percent of people who try marijuana become addicted.

Marijuana use can lead to use disorder. Recent data suggest that 30 percent of those who use marijuana may have some degree of marijuana use disorder.

The Consequences of Underage Drinking and Substance Use Can Be Devastating

The consequences of underage drinking and substance use can include:

- Injury or death from accidents
- Unintended, unwanted, and unprotected sexual activity
- Mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety disorders
- Difficulty with attention, concentration, problem solving, learning, and memory
- Allergic reactions, breathing trouble, coma, and even permanent brain damage or death
- Academic problems.

Underage Drinking and Substance Use Is Not a Top-of-Mind Concern Among Parents

Many parents with children under the age of 21 don't believe underage drinking and substance use are issues to be concerned about and may not have conversations with their kids surrounding these topics. However, parents have a significant influence on their children's decisions to experiment with alcohol or other drugs.

Research suggests that one of the most influential factors when a child is growing up is a strong, open relationship with a parent. When parents create supportive and nurturing environments, children make better decisions.

The "Talk. They Hear You."® Campaign is designed to provide parents and caregivers with the information and resources they need to properly address underage drinking and substance use with their children.

"Talk. They Hear You." Provides Parents With Knowledge, Resources, and Confidence

The Campaign uses social media; the website www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov; partnership outreach; and radio, television, and print public service announcements to help parents feel more confident when talking to their children about alcohol and other drugs.

Campaign messages:

- Emphasize the importance of parents talking to their kids about underage drinking and substance use prevention before they reach an age when they are confronted with decisions about it
- Offer advice to parents about preparing children to deal with peer pressure that may lead to alcohol and substance use
- Focus on helping parents address the issue of underage drinking and substance use in a manner that emphasizes their children's ability to make their own decisions
- Model behaviors and situations when parents can begin the conversation about the dangers of alcohol and substance use with their children.

References and citations can be found at www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov.

For More Information

Visit www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov and download the **"Talk. They Hear You."** app.

For more information about TTHY or substance abuse prevention efforts in your community, please contact:

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