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SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PRESENTATION
JANUARY 2026 WEBINAR

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Substance Use Prevention

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Learning Intentions

- Understand the consequences of youth substance use on the developing brain.
- Review Utah's youth substance use data.
- Learn about Utah's state laws related to substance use prevention in schools.
- Identify effective strategies for preventing substance use within the Protective Factor Framework.
- Discover substance use prevention resources.

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Consequences of Youth Substance Use

The Developing Brain and Substance Use

Impacts on the developing brain:

- Attention
- Learning
- Mood
- Impulse control
- Increased risk for future addiction

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Additional Impacts

Linked to impaired decision-making, which has led to:

- Drinking and driving
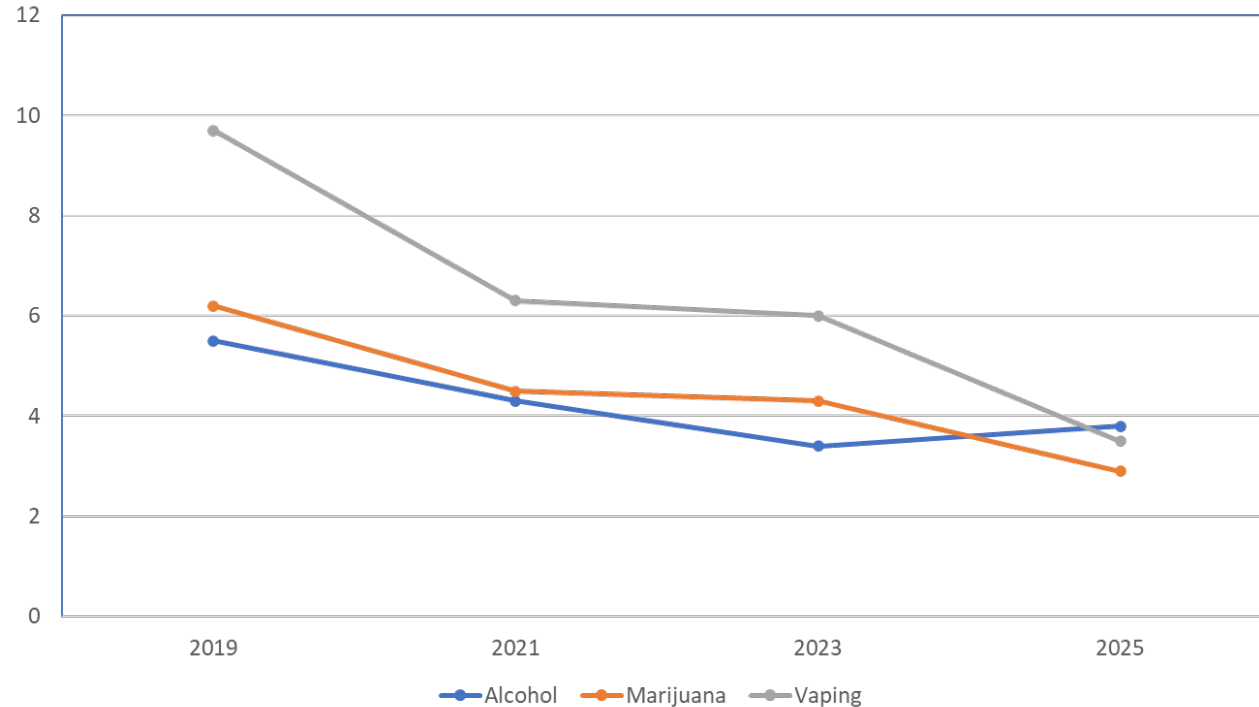- Unprotected sex
- Violence
- Injury
- Death

Linked to:

- Higher absenteeism
- Low or failing grades

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Substance Use Trends

2025 SHARP Survey Results: State Average

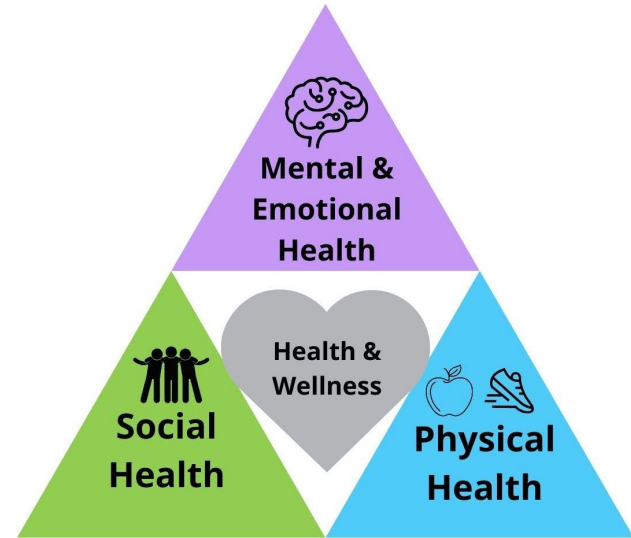| Substance	Lifetime use	Past 30 days
Alcohol	10.9%	3.8%
Vaping	8.1%	3.5%
Marijuana	6.2%	2.9%
Inhalants	4.7%	1.6%
Cigarettes	3.2%	0.5%
Prescription Drugs	1.9%	0.6%

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State Average SHARP Survey: Past 30-Day Substance Use Trends

Substance Use Prevention in Schools: State Laws

Health Education Core Standards

- Standards include a substance use prevention strand, as required by state law

- K-6, middle school, & high school

Underage Drinking and Substance Use Prevention (Botvin LifeSkills Training)

Utah Code Section 53G-10-406

- Must be implemented in grades:
  - 4 or 5
  - 7 or 8
  - 9 or 10

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Positive Behaviors Plan

Utah Code Section 53G-10-407

A Local Board-approved, "plan to address the causes of student use of alcohol, tobacco, electronic cigarette products, and other controlled substances through promoting positive behaviors."

Created by the school principal with input from:
- Parents
- Students
- Staff

Must Address:
- Peer pressure
- Mental health
- Creating meaningful relationships

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Suicide Prevention Programs

[Utah Code Section 53G-9-702](#)

Suicide Prevention Program requirements and positive behaviors plan requirements are similar and can be developed together.

Elementary/Secondary School Requirements:

- Resiliency
- Healthy habits
- Self-care
- Problem-solving
- Conflict resolution

- Methods of strengthening the family
- Methods of strengthening the youth's relationships with school and community

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Effective Strategies

Invitation

Keep the Positive Behaviors Plan requirements in mind as we discuss strategies that have been found to be effective in substance use prevention.

Peer Pressure	Mental Health	Creating Meaningful Relationships

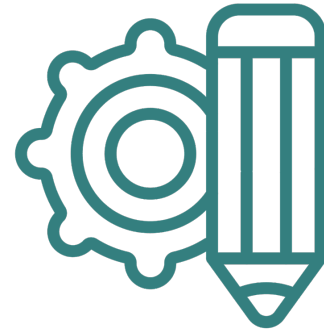Utah State Board of Education

Concrete Supports in Times of Need

Encourage Students to Get Enough Sleep

- The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study shows longer sleep is a protective factor.
- Adequate sleep helps combat stressors linked to substance use initiation.
- Getting a full night's sleep may make students more resilient, reducing the likelihood of turning to substances.

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Knowledge of Development

Teach Youth About Brain Development

- The adolescent brain is still developing and is more susceptible to addiction and other negative impacts of substance use.

[Mountain Plains PTTC: Using Adolescent Brain Development to Inform Prevention Practice YouTube Video](#)

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Social Connections

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Enhance Connections and Bonding with Prosocial Adults and Peers
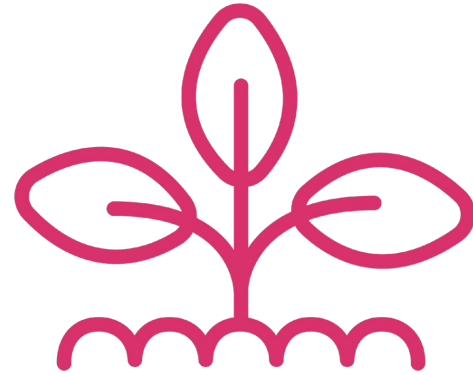
- Youth who have positive relationships with adults and peers with healthy behaviors are less likely to engage in substance use.

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Share Out:

What activities or practices have you used that enhance connections and bonding?

Resilience

Healthy Alternatives

- Some youth engage in substance use as a means of coping with stress, anxiety, depression or other challenges.
- Teach healthier alternatives to dealing with life's stressors.

Brainstorm:

Healthy Coping Strategies.

Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence

Cite Immediate Consequences

- Naming immediate consequences is more likely to have a greater impact on youth than more distant threats such as car crashes, lung cancer, or death.

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Skill Building

Elementary Schools:

- Self-control
- Emotional awareness
- Communication
- Social problem-solving
- Academic support, especially in reading

Secondary Schools:

- Study habits
- Communication
- Peer relationships
- Self-efficacy and assertiveness
- Drug resistance skills

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Peer-led Components

- Research shows that prevention activities that are peer-led or have peer-led components are more effective than approaches that are adult-led only.

Communicate Positive Social Norms:

State of Utah 2025 SHARP Survey Results:

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Perceived vs. Actual Norms

What We Think vs. What is Real

- Perceived norm: "Everyone is vaping."
- Actual norm: "Most students don't vape"

Research shows that when we close the gap between the perceived norm and the actual norm, outcomes improve.

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Evidence-Based Programs

Programs proven to effectively achieve desired outcomes.

Program Directories

- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development
- Crime Solutions (National Institute of Justice)
- Model Programs Guide (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention)
- Program Directory Search (youth.gov)
- What Works Clearinghouse (Institute of Education Sciences)

Ineffective Strategies

Do the best you can until you know better.

Then, when you know better, do better.

-Maya Angelou

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Avoid (1)

- Language and visuals that may be stigmatizing to those who use or have used substances.

- Knowledge-based Information.

- Role Playing the Problem Behavior.

Avoid (2)

- Scare Tactics
  - Mock Car Crashes
- One-time Assemblies and Events
- Personal Testimony from People in Recovery

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Resources

Substance Use Prevention Resources

- [USBE Substance Use Prevention Resources](#)
  - Best practices and resources library: alcohol & tobacco prevention & cessation
  - Positive Behaviors Plan-53G-10-406 FAQ
  - Evidence-based program directories

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Reflect:

Start

Stop

Continue

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Please Share Your Feedback

https://usbe.az1.qualtrics.com/ jfe/form/SV_6gIHktHNSURQKl8

Thank You!

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