

Street Smart Prevention:



**PROMOTING HEALTHY
YOUNG PEOPLE!**



Tampa Bay
Times
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Promoting healthy communities

Let's face facts. The misuse and abuse of alcohol, over-the-counter medications, illicit drugs and tobacco affect the health and well-being of millions of Americans. Not only does misuse of these substances affect the users, but it also affects their families, neighbors and the rest of our communities.

The Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance (HCADA) knows this and works with community partners to promote healthy communities. In existence since 1989, HCADA is active in the community and is supportive of law enforcement, the court system, prevention agencies and substance abuse treatment providers.

Work through HCADA task forces includes addressing alcohol issues on college campuses; supporting the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program; preventing underage drinking and impaired driving; supporting responsible vendor training regarding alcohol and "safe rides" programs; working in the areas of smoking prevention, cessation, second-hand smoke, smoking effects on pets, smoking in multi-unit housing, retail sales to minors, and support for Youth Making A Difference (YMAD) clubs in middle and high schools, reaching more than 3,000 students during the school year; educating

legislators and providing volunteers to assist the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) during its Drug Take Back Days.

HCADA offers open membership and participation to all interested individuals and continues to provide a public forum for sharing information and new ideas. For more information about the coalition, check out its website at hcada.com or call 813-238-4034.



Going beyond the text

Journaling to self-awareness

Keeping a journal or writing a blog is a great way to learn more about yourself. Who are you? Why do you do what you do? Do you have strong convictions? Are you able to stand up to others when your ideas are questioned? In your journal, record your general thoughts and feelings as well as your thoughts about articles you read in the *Tampa Bay Times*. To begin your journal, write about something that you have read in the *Times* that directly affects, influences or impacts your life. Continue journaling by recording the daily happenings in your life.



Parent pointer

Many parents are surprised to learn that they are the most powerful influence on their children when it comes to drugs. But it's true. How do you model positive behavior for your children? What messages do you give them about casual drug use? Think about it. Sixty percent of teens who have abused prescription painkillers did so before age 15, and 45 percent of those who use prior to the age of 15 will later develop an addiction. Kids need to hear how risky drug abuse can be. They need to know how damaging it can be to their lives. They need you, their parents, to be good role models.

Sources: Partnership for a Drug Free America; Health Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The brain: A complex organ

While many drugs – including alcohol and tobacco – are physically addictive, they also are mentally addictive. As the National Institute on Drug Abuse notes, “The human brain is the most complex organ in the body.” Weighing in at only three pounds, this organ is the center of all human activity.

You need your brain, from breathing to thinking to eating, to conduct your day-to-day activities. The brain can be compared to a complex computer. Instead of electrical circuits on the silicon chips that control our electronic devices, “the brain consists of billions of cells, called neurons, which are organized into circuits and networks, working together as a team. Each neuron acts as a switch controlling the flow of information. If a neuron receives enough signals from other neurons it ‘fires,’ sending its own signal on to other neurons in the circuit,” according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

“Networks of neurons send signals back and forth to each other and among different parts of the brain, the spinal cord, and nerves in the rest of the body. To transmit a message, a neuron releases a chemical neurotransmitter via transporter molecules into the gap, or synapse, between it and the next cell. The neurotransmitter crosses the synapse and attaches to receptors on the receiving neuron, like a key into a lock. This causes changes in the receiving cell. Other molecules called transporters recycle neurotransmitters, which limits or shuts off the signal between neurons.”

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

Drugs and the brain

Drugs interfere with the way neurons send, receive and process signals through these neurotransmitters. The National Institute on Drugs notes, “Some drugs, such as marijuana and heroin, can activate receptors because their chemical structure mimics that of a natural neurotransmitter in the body. This allows the drugs to attach onto and activate the receptors. Although these drugs mimic the brain’s own chemicals, they don’t activate receptors in the same way as a natural neurotransmitter.

“This can lead to abnormal messages being sent through the network. Other drugs, such as amphetamines or cocaine, can cause neurons to release abnormally large amounts of natural neurotransmitters, which prevent the normal recycling of these brain chemicals by interfering with transporters. This also amplifies or disrupts the normal communication between neurons.”

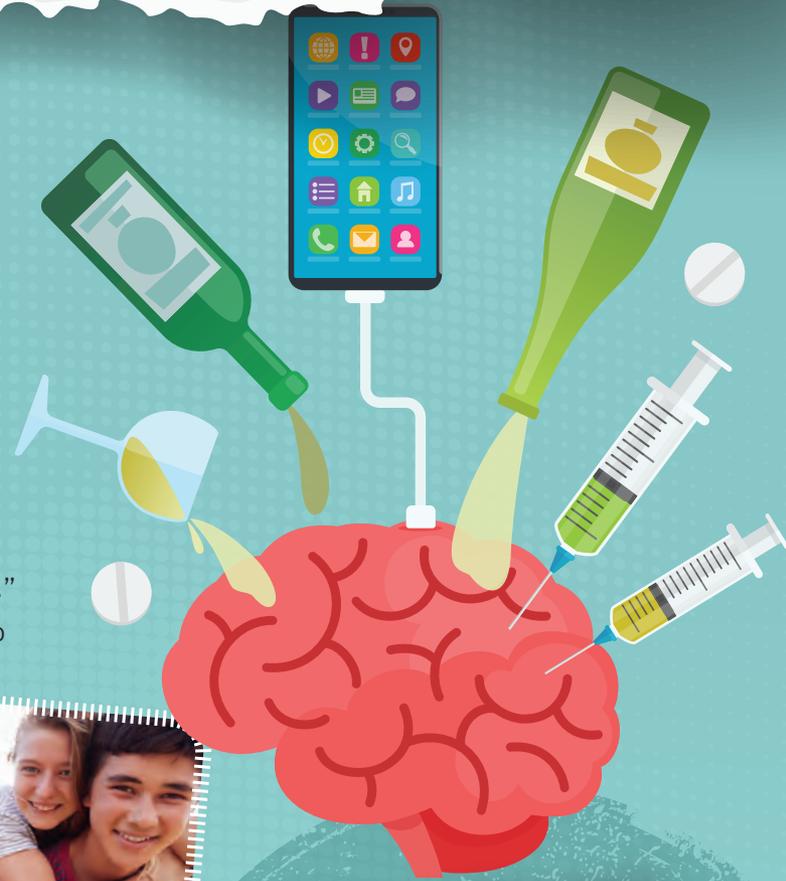
Not only do drugs alter the communication in the brain, but they also affect the relationship between the brain and the rest of your body.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

The TEEN brain



A teen brain is like a fast car with bad brakes! It's capable of learning and doing things quickly, but the parts that control decision-making and judgment are not completely developed. The American Medical Association reports that the brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence, and drugs can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes. Frontal lobe development and the refinement of pathways and connections continue until age 16, and a high rate of energy is used as the brain matures until mid-20s.



Did you know?
Science about brain development suggests that most people don't reach full maturity until the age 25. Drugs, especially alcohol, can damage and kill brain cells. The most commonly used drug among Hillsborough County students is alcohol. Drinking heavily for an extended time period can permanently damage the brain, memory, thinking and concentration.

RISKY BEHAVIOR >>>>>

The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior (YRB) Survey found that among Hillsborough County middle and high school students:

- 14.5 percent drank alcohol
- 5.7 percent binge drank
- 4.5 percent of drivers drove after drinking alcohol
- 15.6 percent rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol

Rates of binge drinking among high school students have generally been declining in recent decades. Although males historically had higher rates, in 2019, female high school students were more likely to drink alcohol and binge drink than male high school students.

National surveys find that

- 19 percent of young people ages 12 to 20 reported drinking alcohol
- 11 percent reported binge drinking in the past 30 days.
- 10 percent of 8th grade students and 34 percent of 12th grade students reported drinking alcohol during the previous 30 days.
- 5 percent of 8th grade students and 17 percent of 12th grade students reported binge drinking during the previous two weeks.

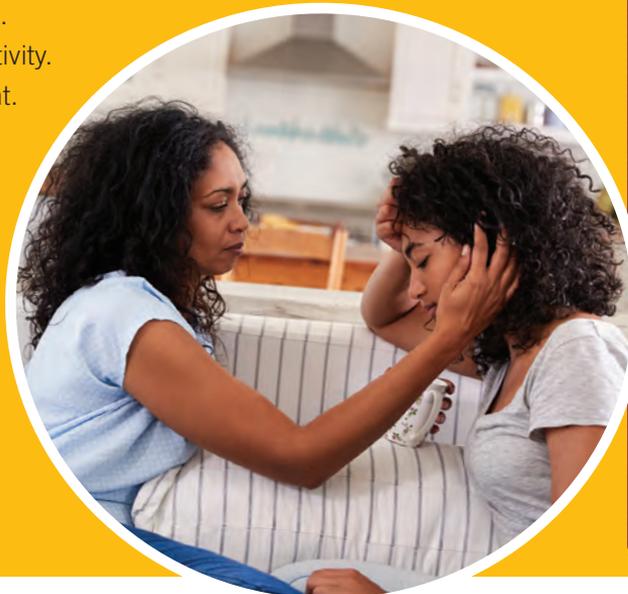
Source: Florida Department of Health; Centers for Disease Control, Florida Department of Children and Families

Drinking is dangerous

Young people who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems, such as higher rates of absences or lower grades.
- Social problems, such as fighting or lack of participation in youth activities.
- Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.
- Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.
- Unwanted, unplanned and unprotected sexual activity.
- Disruption of normal growth or sexual development.
- Physical and sexual violence.
- Increased risk of suicide and homicide.
- Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls or drowning.
- Memory problems.
- Misuse of other substances.
- Changes in brain development that may have lifelong effects.
- Alcohol poisoning.

Source: Centers for Disease Control



Think about it:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, generally, the risk of young people experiencing the problems noted is greater for those who binge drink than for those who do not binge drink.
- In addition, the earlier a person begins drinking, the more susceptible that person is to develop an alcohol disorder later in life.



Going beyond the text

Peer pressure

Young people often encounter peer pressure to do things that may be harmful to them. However, the Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance Youth Empowerment Model has a secret. The staff of HCADA knows the young people in Hillsborough County are an untapped resource in the effort to prevent harm from underage drinking, tobacco and other issues.

Look for an article in the *Tampa Bay Times* in which peer pressure may have played a role for an adult or young person. In your journal, write about the peer pressure you perceive in that article and share it with your class.

Next, take notes about the examples of peer pressure you see, read and hear about at your school and in your community during the course of the week. Are all of these examples negative or are some positive? Explore in a formal blog post why it is important for people to be prepared for situations in which they may feel pressured to do something that may have negative effects on their lives. Be sure to use specific examples from the article to support your ideas.

Young brains and alcohol

When teens drink, alcohol affects their brains in the short term, but repeated drinking also can impact those brains down the road, especially as their brains grow and develop. So, the next time someone offers you a shot or beer, think about the risks:

- An intoxicated person has a harder time making good decisions.
- An intoxicated person is less aware that his or her behavior may be inappropriate

or risky, including drinking and driving, sexual activity (like unprotected sex) and aggressive or violent behavior.

- Research shows that drinking during the teen years could interfere with normal brain development and change the brain in ways that have negative effects on information processing and learning.
- There is increased risk of developing an alcohol-use disorder later in life.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens



Addiction, dependence and tolerance

Many people think drug addiction, dependence and tolerance are the same thing. However, each term means something very different regarding how drugs affect a person's body and brain. Learning the difference is important.

Tolerance happens when a person no longer responds to a drug in the way he or she did at first. So, it takes a higher dose of the drug to achieve the same effect as when the person first used it. This is why people with substance use disorders use more and more of a drug to achieve the "high" they seek.

Dependence means that when a person stops using a drug, their body goes through withdrawal, a group of physical and mental symptoms that can range from mild (if the drug is caffeine) to life-threatening (such as alcohol or opioids, including heroin and prescription pain relievers). Many people who take a prescription medicine every day over a long period of time can become dependent; when they go off the drug, they need to do it gradually to avoid withdrawal discomfort. But people who are dependent on a drug or medicine aren't necessarily addicted.

Unlike tolerance and dependence, addiction is a disease; but like tolerance and dependence, addiction can result from taking drugs or alcohol repeatedly. If a person keeps using a drug and can't stop, despite negative consequences from using the drug, they have an addiction (also called a severe substance use disorder). A person can be dependent on a drug, or have a high tolerance to it, without being addicted to it.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens



<<< Parent tip

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among America's teens and young adults, posing substantial health and safety risks. Teens try alcohol for a variety of reasons – to exert independence, to feel more carefree or escape from stress, peer pressure and even boredom. Many tend to do so without fully recognizing alcohol's negative effects or health risks. So what do you do if you find out your child is drinking?

- Foster regular and productive communication.
- Try to be objective and open.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Ask why your child is interested in drinking.
- Let them know they're being heard.
- Discuss the negative effects of alcohol.

COMMUNICATE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

- Offer empathy and compassion.
- Address issues calmly and directly.
- Communicate clear expectations.
- Discuss, and agree upon, consequences.
- Help your child understand the legal implications.
- Explain why drinking is very different for a teenager than for an adult.
- Keep an eye on how your child is coping.

If there is a history of addiction in your family, then your child has a much greater risk of developing a problem. Be aware of this elevated risk and discuss it with your child regularly, as you would with any disease.

Source: Drugfree America

The brain and nicotine

While most people understand how smoking affects the lungs and heart, what is less known is the effect nicotine has on the brain.

Nicotine mimics several neurotransmitters and activates dopamine signals, creating a pleasurable sensation. Lori A. Russell-Chapin, Ph.D., professor at Bradley University's Online Masters of Counseling Program, notes that over time, the brain begins to compensate for the increased signaling activity by reducing the number of acetylcholine receptors. The result of this is nicotine tolerance, so continued and more nicotine is needed.

Nicotine also stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain, so your brain associates nicotine use with feeling good.

According to the National Institutes of Health, "the nicotine in cigarettes changes your brain, which leads to withdrawal symptoms when you try to quit. When this happens, you may experience a variety of side effects, including anxiety, irritability and a strong craving for nicotine."

Here are the most common side effects of nicotine and smoking on the brain.

- Cognitive decline
- Increased risk of dementia
- Loss of brain volume
- Higher risk of stroke
- Higher risk of cancer

Sources: Medline Health; National Institutes of Health



Going beyond the text Unexpected consequences

Did you know that new findings from a team of American researchers link marijuana and alcohol consumption in teenagers to significant changes in their sleeping patterns? You may think those things are not related, but they are. Research has shown that teenagers need to get more sleep than adults in order to lead healthy lives. And, as noted, a young person's brain is not fully formed until well into adulthood. In a study published in May 2015 in the journal *Sleep Health*, researchers from the Rand Corp. looked at the connection between teenagers' sleeping patterns and the consumption of marijuana and alcohol. These researchers concluded that teens who consume these substances predictably sleep less than their counterparts who don't consume marijuana or alcohol. Look for articles on this topic in the *Tampa Bay Times* and on reputable websites. As part of your research, interview at least three of your peers regarding this topic. Based on the information you have discovered, write your own investigative article on what you have learned. Use the articles published in the *Times* as models.

Did you know?

Quitting nicotine can benefit your brain, as well as many other parts of your body. Mayo Clinic reports that once you stop smoking or vaping, the number of nicotine receptors in your brain will return to normal, and cravings should subside. According to the Mayo Clinic, quitting tobacco can:

- Slow your heart rate just 20 minutes after your last cigarette.
- Reduce the levels of carbon monoxide in your blood to a normal range within 12 hours.
- Improve your circulation and lung function within three months.
- Decrease your risk of a heart attack by 50 percent within a year.
- Reduce your stroke risk to that of a nonsmoker within 5 to 15 years.

Source: Medline Health

Youth making a difference

Youth Making A Difference (YMAD), a part of the Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance, is composed of youth ages 11-22 who are interested in making their voices heard through community service and youth advocacy. The YMAD experience includes training, discussions, personal development, team-building exercises, youth summits, recreational activities, snacks and fun.

YMAD empowers youth through three components: education, skills and action. All three parts are critical to achieve true youth empowerment to impact the community as well as the youth themselves.

YMAD works with other agencies to effect positive changes that benefit youth.

If you are passionate about being part of a positive change in your community, or in the world as a whole, call YMAD so you can become involved today. Go to <http://hcada.com/ymad> for more information.

Want to sign up? Call 813-238-4034.



Deadly consequences

Tobacco use, in any form, causes both immediate and long-term damage. One of the most serious health effects is nicotine addiction, which extends tobacco use and can lead to severe health consequences. The younger people are when they start using tobacco, the more likely that those people will become addicted. Health effects from tobacco can be permanent and deadly.

- Early cardiovascular damage is seen in most young smokers.
- Smoking reduces lung function and stunts lung growth.
- Young people are sensitive to nicotine and can feel dependent earlier than adults.
- One third of young people who use tobacco will die prematurely from smoking.
- The adverse health effects from cigarette smoking account for an estimated 443,000 deaths, or nearly one of every five deaths, each year in the United States.
- Smoking causes an estimated 90 percent of all lung cancer deaths in men and 80 percent of all lung cancer deaths in women.
- Also, smoking has been proven to cause these cancers: acute myeloid leukemia, bladder cancer, cancer of the cervix, cancer of the esophagus, kidney cancer, cancer of the larynx (voice box), cancer of the oral cavity (mouth), pancreatic cancer, cancer of the pharynx (throat) and stomach cancer.

Sources: U.S. Surgeon General and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

VAPING



Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, are battery-operated products designed to deliver nicotine, flavor and other chemicals. Although some people think using e-cigarettes can help them quit smoking, remember these are still addictive and dangerous. E-cigarettes turn highly addictive nicotine, along with other chemicals, into a vapor that is inhaled by the user. E-cigarettes do not contain tobacco. Instead, there's a mechanism that heats up liquid nicotine, which turns into a vapor that smokers inhale and exhale.



NOT JUST WATER

Vaping is not just flavored water vapor. According to the American Lung Association, "Vaping involves inhaling 'e-juice' in the form of aerosol produced by an electronic cigarette or vape device. The aerosols typically contain flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease, nicotine and other harmful chemicals."

E-cigarettes deliver a high level of nicotine very quickly. Each pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. According to the American Lung Association, "Nicotine is harmful to developing brains, affecting attention, learning, mood, impulse control and memory. Nicotine use in youth can increase risk for addiction to other drugs as well; research shows that teens who have vaped are almost four times as likely to go on to smoke traditional cigarettes. The FDA is also investigating a link between seizures from nicotine overdose in kids caused by vaping."

Peer pressure and managing stress are some of the main reasons that kids start vaping. Some kids use vaping to cope with stress, anxiety or social situations. Some other reasons kids experiment with e-cigarettes include:

- **Rebelliousness/independence**
- **Misinformation**
- **Social media influence**
- **Close family or friend influence**
- **Smoke tricks or interest in marijuana**

Source: American Lung Association

Did you know?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States; nearly all tobacco use begins during youth and young adulthood.

Worldwide, approximately one in seven teenagers ages 13 to 15 smokes. According to Tobacco Free Florida, 25 percent of these teens tried their first cigarette before the age of 10! Why are young people so interested in smoking? The answer is simple: marketing.

Tobacco marketing is prevalent everywhere. From television and movies to radio to magazine ads and billboards. Smoking is promoted at home, at sporting events, arts festivals, music concerts and street events, not to mention prime product placement in stores.

Studies have proven that young people are twice as likely to be influenced by tobacco advertising as adults. Annually, tobacco companies spend hundreds of millions of dollars marketing their products in Florida.

Source: Tobacco Free Florida; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

✓ Just the facts

- ✓ In 2020, 23.6 percent (3.65 million) of high school and 6.7 percent (800,000) of middle school students reported current use of any tobacco product.
- ✓ If cigarette smoking continues at the current rate among youth in this country, 5.6 million of today's Americans younger than 18 will die early from a smoking-related illness. That's about 1 of every 13 Americans 17 years or younger.
- ✓ Nearly 9 out of 10 adults who smoke cigarettes daily first try smoking by age 18, and 99 percent first try smoking by age 26.
- ✓ Each day in the U.S., about 1,600 youth smoke their first cigarette and nearly 200 youth start smoking every day.
- ✓ In 2020, 85 percent of high school students and 74 percent of middle school students who used tobacco products in the past 30 days reported using a flavored tobacco product during that time.
- ✓ Electronic cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among youth since 2014.
- ✓ In 2021, 11.3 percent of high school students (1.72 million) and 2.8 percent (320,000) of middle school students reported current e-cigarette use.
- ✓ About 1 of every 5 high school students (19.6 percent) reported in 2020 that they used electronic cigarettes in the past 30 days.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Going beyond the text

It's all about the marketing

Tobacco marketing, especially vape marketing, is aimed at convincing teens that these tobacco products are the gateway to achieving the power, status and adult independence that they seek. In other words, tobacco companies manipulate the truth. Tobacco companies market social acceptance, success and being cool in one dangerous package.

Like any business, tobacco companies need people to buy their products to make money. Advertising and marketing plans provide opportunities to convince consumers that they "need" specific products. The goal of the marketing game is to convince as many people as possible to buy a company's products.

One way to understand how the advertising power of the tobacco industry has evolved is to

view this slide show of old cigarette ads at cnn.com/2014/01/10/health/gallery/historic-cigarette-ads. As you review these advertisements, think about how and to whom the products are being marketed. Next, check out tobacco marketing efforts on the Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids website: tobaccofreekids.org. Pay special attention to the Ad Gallery page.

Based on the ads presented at this site, along with ads you've seen in magazines and other publications, whom do you think they are targeting and why? What are your thoughts about these images? Discuss these images with your class and, in small groups, create a graphic organizer showing the rhetoric being employed by the advertisers.

Next, see if any of these forms of rhetoric are used in the ads in the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Write a fully developed comparison essay discussing your ideas. Be sure to use specific examples and image descriptions to support your points.

Speak now

Here's your chance to speak out against youth smoking. Write a letter to the editor of the *Tampa Bay Times* and your school newspaper explaining your thoughts about youth smoking. Cite the health risks, debunk the myth about smoking being cool, or talk positively about better ways to spend your time and money. Use facts from this publication, as well as the resources noted on these pages.

Altered states

A drug is a chemical substance used to treat, cure, prevent or diagnose a disease. Drugs alter a body's chemistry in some way. Whether those drugs are sold over the counter or prescribed by a medical doctor, drugs can be dangerous and should be used with caution. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, many young adults obtain the prescription drugs they abuse from friends and relatives.

A national crisis

In 2019, nearly 50,000 people in the United States died from opioid-involved overdoses.

"The misuse of and addiction to opioids — including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl — is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare," according to the National Institutes of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total "economic burden" of prescription opioid misuse in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment and criminal justice involvement.



Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 80-100 times stronger than morphine. Pharmaceutical fentanyl was developed for pain management treatment of cancer patients, applied in a patch on the skin. Because of its powerful opioid properties, fentanyl is often abused.

Because of the imminent danger of this drug, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has a One Pill can Kill campaign. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports there were 100,000 overdose deaths between March 2020 and March 2021.

In the beginning ...

In the late 1990s, healthcare providers began to prescribe prescription painkillers at greater rates. This led to widespread diversion and misuse of these medications before it became clear that they could be highly addictive.

Opioid overdose rates began to increase dramatically. In 2017, more than 47,000 Americans died due to an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin and illicitly manufactured fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid. That same year, an estimated 1.7 million people in the United States suffered from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers, and 652,000 people suffered from a heroin use disorder.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Breaking down the numbers

- Approximately 21 to 29 percent of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.
- Eight to 12 percent of people using an opioid for chronic pain develop an opioid use disorder.
- An estimated 4 to 6 percent who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin.
- About 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescription opioids.

Sources: National Institutes of Health

FENTANYL

Fentanyl is added to heroin to increase its potency, or it can be disguised as highly potent heroin. Many users believe that they are purchasing heroin and don't know that they are purchasing fentanyl, which often results in overdose deaths.

Similar to other opioid analgesics, or pain killers, fentanyl produces effects such as relaxation, euphoria, pain relief, sedation, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, urinary retention, pupillary constriction and respiratory depression.



Rates of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids other than methadone, which includes fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, increased over 16 percent from 2018 to 2019. Overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids were nearly 12 times higher in 2019 than in 2013. More than 36,000 people died from overdoses involving synthetic opioids in 2019. The latest provisional drug overdose death counts through May 2020 suggest an acceleration of overdose deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: DEA

Think about it:

There's a reason prescription drugs are intended to be taken under a doctor's direction: If used improperly, they can be very dangerous. In fact, despite what many teens and adults think, abusing prescription drugs is not safer than abusing illicit drugs. Prescription drugs can have dangerous short- and long-term health consequences when used incorrectly or by someone other than for whom they were intended.

More than half of the drug overdose deaths in the United States each year are caused by prescription drug misuse. Overdose deaths involving prescription drugs—including pain relievers, benzodiazepines and antidepressants — peaked in 2017 and then decreased steadily in 2018 and 2019. They increased again in 2020.

Increases were linked to a rise in the misuse of prescription opioid pain relievers, as well as the presence of fentanyl in the illegal drug supply. In 2019, more than 46 percent of deaths (10,400 deaths) involving prescription drugs also involved fentanyl. Among young people ages 15-24, deaths involving prescription drugs have been relatively steady over the last decade.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Your brain and prescription drugs

In the brain, neurotransmitters such as dopamine send messages by attaching to receptors on nearby cells. The actions of these neurotransmitters and receptors cause the effects from prescription drugs. Each class of prescription drugs works a bit differently in the brain and can cause actions like some illegal drugs:

- Prescription and illegal opioid pain medications bind to molecules on cells known as opioid receptors. These receptors are found on nerve cells in many areas of the brain and body, especially in brain areas involved in the perception of pain and pleasure.
- Prescription stimulants, such as Ritalin, have similar effects to cocaine, by causing a buildup of the brain chemicals dopamine and norepinephrine.
- Prescription depressants make a person feel calm and relaxed in the same manner as the club drugs GHB and rohypnol.

Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse



Your body and prescription drugs

Prescription drugs can help with medical problems when used as directed. However, whether they are used properly or misused, there can be side effects:

- Using opioids like oxycodone and codeine can cause you to feel sleepy, sick to your stomach and constipated. At higher doses, opioids can make it hard to breathe properly and can cause overdose and death.
- Using stimulants like Adderall or Ritalin can make you feel paranoid. They also can cause your body temperature to get dangerously high and make your heartbeat too fast.
- Using depressants like barbiturates can cause slurred speech, shallow breathing, sleepiness, disorientation and lack of coordination. People who misuse depressants regularly and then stop suddenly may experience seizures. At higher doses, depressants also can cause overdose and death, especially when combined with alcohol.

Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse



If you think someone is in distress, immediately call 9-1-1!
Symptoms of an overdose or chemical or alcohol poisoning may include disorientation, drowsiness, clammy or damp skin, passing out or difficulty in waking.

Going beyond the text

Looking at the news

Read the CNN article “High schoolers who misuse prescription opioids are at higher risk for suicidal behaviors, study finds,” cnn.com/2021/03/05/health/opioid-epidemic-suicidal-behaviors-teens-wellness/index.html. Answer the following questions about the article:

- Who is the article about?
- What are the main points of each paragraph?
- Where and when was the information gathered?
- Why are high school students who misuse prescription opioids at a higher risk for suicidal behaviors?
- How is this information useful?

Write a summary of the article based on your answers to these questions. Look for articles about this topic in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Share your thoughts about what you have learned with your classmates.

NALOXONE (NARCAN)

- Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. It attaches to opioid receptors and reverses and blocks the effects of other opioids.
- Naloxone is a safe medicine. It only reverses overdoses in people with opioids in their systems.
- There are two FDA-approved formulations of naloxone: injectable and prepackaged nasal spray.
- Police officers, emergency medical technicians and first responders are trained on how to give naloxone.



- Naloxone only works in the body for 30 to 90 minutes. It is possible for a person to still experience the effects of an overdose after naloxone wears off or need multiple doses if a potent opioid is in a person's system.
- In Hillsborough County, you can get naloxone from pharmacies with or without a personal prescription, from community-based distribution programs, or local health departments.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

CANNABIS

sativa

Marijuana is the term used to refer to the dried leaves, flowers, stems and seeds from the hemp plant, Cannabis sativa. The most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S., marijuana contains the mind-altering chemical delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), as well as other related compounds.

Marijuana can be mixed in food or brewed as a tea. When marijuana is ingested, the THC acts on specific molecular targets on brain cells, called cannabinoid receptors. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, these receptors “influence pleasure, memory, thinking, concentration, sensory and time perception and coordinated movement.

Marijuana over-activates the endocannabinoid system, causing the high and other effects that users experience. These effects include altered perceptions and mood, impaired coordination, difficulty with thinking and problem-solving, and disrupted learning and memory.”

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse



Harmful weed

Marijuana harms in many ways, and kids are the most vulnerable to its damaging effects. Use of the drug can lead to significant health, safety, social and learning or behavioral problems, especially for young users.

Marijuana, along with alcohol and prescription drugs, is the most commonly abused substance by people age 14 and older.



Delta-8 THC

Delta-8 THC is a psychoactive compound that is similar to delta-9 THC, one of hundreds of compounds found in a cannabis plant. Delta-8 THC products often involve use of potentially harmful chemicals to create the concentrations of delta-8 THC claimed in the marketplace.

The Food and Drug Administration notes, “It is important for consumers to be aware that delta-8 THC products have not been evaluated or approved by the FDA for safe use in any context.” It is important to keep these products out of the reach of children and pets.

Between January 2021 and February 2022, national poison control centers received 2,362 exposure cases. Adverse events included, but were not limited to: hallucinations, vomiting, tremors, anxiety, dizziness, confusion and loss of consciousness.

Source: Food and Drug Administration; Healthline

Higher concentrates

You may be under the impression that all marijuana – whether eaten, smoked, vaped, inhaled from a water pipe – is equal, but that is not accurate. Not only has the amount of THC in marijuana increased over the past few decades, but also it is much higher in some types of products, especially oils and extracts, which are often used in edibles and vaporizers. The potency of these products may cause greater health risks to users.

These extracts can deliver extremely large amounts of THC to the body, and their use has sent some people to the emergency room, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In addition, when a person is eating a THC induced cookie or candy product or using an extract in a vaporizer, the dosage the person is taking may be unknown.

When a person smokes marijuana, THC quickly passes from the lungs into the bloodstream. The body absorbs THC more slowly when the person eats or drinks it because it must pass through the digestive tract first. Since it takes longer to feel the effects of the THC when someone eats an edible compared to smoking marijuana, people end up eating more than the recommended serving.

Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse

Think about it

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), marijuana affects brain development. “When people begin using marijuana as teenagers, the drug may reduce thinking, memory, and learning functions and affect how the brain builds connections between the areas necessary for these functions. Marijuana’s effects on these abilities may last a long time or even be permanent.”

The NIDA refers to a study done in New Zealand, which concluded “people who started smoking marijuana heavily in their teens and had an ongoing marijuana use disorder lost an average of 8 IQ points between ages 13 and 38.”

Sources: Office of National Drug Control Policy; National Institute on Drug Abuse

MYTHBUSTING

MYTH: If it's a prescription, it must be safe. You can't get addicted to something your doctor prescribes.

TRUTH: Although many medications are perfectly safe if taken in the prescribed dosage for a short period of time, prolonged use can be dangerous and addictive.

MYTH: Natural drugs are safer than synthetic ones.

TRUTH: Marijuana, mushrooms and other "natural" drugs still alter brain chemistry and produce dangerous side effects.

MYTH: Drug addiction is a choice.

TRUTH: Drug use is a choice. Prolonged use changes your body and brain chemistry. When that happens, the user no longer appears to have a choice — this is when use and misuse become addiction.

MYTH: If you have a stable job and family life or if you are getting good grades in school, you're not addicted, even if you like to get high or drunk every day.

TRUTH: You may have a job or career, a loving spouse and kids, and still have a drug or alcohol problem. You can get good grades in school, participate in clubs and athletics, have a lot of friends and still be a drug addict.

MYTH: Detox is a cure for addiction.

TRUTH: Detox is difficult and it's just the beginning. Detox is the first step toward recovery, but addiction is a chronic illness — like diabetes, asthma or hypertension — and it needs to be managed for the rest of your life. There is no cure.

MYTH: Addicts are bad people.

TRUTH: Addicts are not bad people trying to become good people. They are sick people trying to get well.

MYTH: Coffee can sober up someone who has had too much to drink.

TRUTH: Only time sobers. It takes about one hour to oxidize each drink.

MYTH: Stimulants can improve academic performance in any student.

TRUTH: These drugs do not improve performance or focusing in individuals who do not have ADHD or ADD. But they can cause harm.

MYTH: Hard liquor is more intoxicating than beer or wine.

TRUTH: A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine and a 12-ounce wine cooler contain the same amount of alcohol and the same intoxication potential as 1.5 ounces of liquor.

MYTH: Someone who has had too much to drink will look intoxicated.

TRUTH: Someone's physical appearance can be misleading. One drink can impair someone's ability to drive. Judgment is the first thing affected when someone has been drinking, and important motor skills are next.

MYTH: Marijuana is harmless.

TRUTH: Marijuana harms in many ways, and kids are the most vulnerable to its damaging effects. Use of the drug can lead to significant health, safety, social and learning or behavioral problems, especially for young users.

MYTH: Cigar smoking and chewing tobacco are safe because you don't inhale.

TRUTH: Cigar smokers have higher death rates from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and are 4 to 10 times more likely to die from cancers of the throat, mouth, lips, larynx and esophagus than nonsmokers. People who chew tobacco are more likely to develop oral cancers, which affect the tongue, lips, cheeks and gums.

MYTH: Tobacco is not a drug.

TRUTH: The nicotine found in tobacco products is very addictive. Addiction to nicotine has been compared to having an addiction to cocaine or heroin.

MYTH: Smoking helps me to relax; smoking relieves stress.

TRUTH: Nicotine is a stimulant. Stimulants speed up your body; they do not calm your body down. Plus, no other drug keeps a user as busy as smoking.

Sources: Parents. The Anti-Drug; Deni Carise, Ph.D., CFO, Phoenix House; University Health Center; Tobacco-Free QC

Going beyond the text

Bombarded by ads

A drug is any non-food substance that when put into the body changes the way the body or mind works. Physicians may prescribe legal drugs. Over-the-counter drugs may be purchased at drug stores or other retail stores. Newspapers, the Internet and television frequently contain advertising for drugs. Monitor the *Tampa Bay Times* and your favorite television station for a week. In your journal, write down each time you see an advertisement for a prescription or over-the-counter drug. As a consumer, do you think you are being bombarded with these advertisements? What is the message that is being conveyed in these advertisements? Do you think the ads are trying to persuade you to use the drugs advertised? Use specific examples from the advertisements to support your ideas. Share your thoughts about what you have learned with your classmates.

Taking charge of your decisions

What is personal responsibility? What does it look like in society? What does it look like in your life? Simply put, personal responsibility means taking ownership of your life, your actions and your future. It always has been difficult being a teenager, but it seems like today's teens face more challenges than ever: drug and alcohol use, peer pressure, bullying, gangs, eating disorders, mental health problems, living through a pandemic – the list seems endless.

It is important to know you are not alone.

It also is important to remember that decisions you make today can affect your future, especially when it comes to illegal or negative behaviors. As Sir Isaac Newton discovered, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Accepting personal responsibility includes:

- Acknowledging that you are solely responsible for the choices you make in your life.
- Accepting that you are responsible for what you choose to feel or think.

- Accepting that you choose the direction for your life.
- Accepting that you cannot blame others for the choices you have made.
- Taking an honest inventory of your strengths, abilities, talents, virtues and positive points.

Source: James J. Messina, Ph.D., director of psychological services at St. Joseph's Children's Hospital in Tampa

Student advocacy

Students have a much stronger voice than they may realize in advocating for important changes toward a stronger and healthier society. Here are some tips that you can use and pass along to other students, parents and teachers.

- Voices are powerful and your voice matters.
- Learn how the law-making process works.
- Believe in the issue and be as well-informed as possible about it.
- Be prepared to explain how the legislation will affect you personally.
- Know the subject better than the elected official does.
- Make a point of meeting your elected officials before you have an issue to discuss. Then, when you need to see them, they will likely remember you.
- Person-to-person meetings are best, but if they are not possible, put your issue in writing.
- Send a hand-written "thank you" note when the elected official votes in favor of your issue.
- Approach your own elected officials. Elected officials respond to the people who elected them – their constituency.
 - o Be honest and straightforward.
 - o Be concise and to the point.

- o Don't talk to your elected official too soon. Understand that when an issue is in committee, the committee controls it.
- o Don't put the official in an embarrassing position, which could affect re-election.
- o Don't use pressure tactics, threaten or become angry.
- o Don't burn any bridges; someone not with you today may be with you tomorrow.

Think about it

Adolescents are a vulnerable population for substance use disorders based on multiple genetic and environmental risk factors. Unfortunately, the earlier a person uses tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, the more likely that will result in substance use disorders in adulthood.

Source: COVE Behavioral Health

Adults: A powerful influence

Many parents are surprised to learn that they are the most powerful influence on their children when it comes to drugs. How do you model positive behavior for your children? Think about it. Sixty percent of teens who have abused prescription painkillers did so before age 15, and 45 percent of those who use prior to the age of 15 will later develop an addiction.

Kids need to hear how risky drug abuse can be. They need to know how damaging it can be to their lives. Young people need the adults in their lives to be good role models. Many people dismiss underage drinking as a normal "rite of passage" in adolescence. It is important to remember that although alcohol is legal for adults, it can be unsafe and unhealthy. In Florida, drinking alcohol is illegal for those younger than 21. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more young people in the United States drink alcohol than smoke tobacco or marijuana.

Alcohol use by young people is a factor in a host of serious health, social and economic problems. Underage alcohol use can have immediate and tragic consequences, such as alcohol poisoning, injury and death, as well as long-range harmful consequences, such as increased risk for physical and developmental damage and chronic alcohol addiction.

Sources: Partnership for a Drug Free America; Health Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Parent tips

- > Talk to your teen and set clear and consistent expectations about not using alcohol or other drugs.
- > Be a good role model.
- > Be a good listener.
- > Give clear "no-use" messages about drugs and alcohol.
- > Help your child deal with peer pressure.
- > Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- > Monitor your child's whereabouts.
- > Supervise teen activities.
- > Maintain an open and honest dialogue with your child about drugs and alcohol and the consequences of using either.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The power of community



Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership. For information in Hillsborough County, go to aatampa-area.org, or call 813-933-9123.

COVE Behavioral Health

COVE treats substance use disorders and any co-occurring mental health symptoms in men, women (including pregnant women) and youth. Nationally awarded for its comprehensive coordinated care, COVE is a behavioral health organization with outpatient, residential and wraparound services to treat the whole person. Expert physicians are board-certified in addiction medicine and the staff is highly qualified and committed to enabling clients to achieve lifelong recovery. COVE offers adult residential treatment programs and outpatient programs for teens and adults. If you are concerned that you or someone you know may require detox, call the 24-hour Detox Desk: 813-384-4221. To learn more about COVE's services, visit covebh.org. Click on Community Education to learn more about substance abuse.

Narcotics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous is a global, community-based organization offering recovery from the effects of addiction through working a 12-step program, including regular attendance at group meetings. The group atmosphere provides help from peers and offers an ongoing support network for addicts who wish to pursue and maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Narcotics Anonymous' approach makes no distinction between drugs, including alcohol. Membership is free, and there are no affiliations with any organizations outside of NA, including governments, religions, law enforcement groups or medical and psychiatric associations. For more information, go to tampa-na.org or call 813-879-HELP.

Agency for Community Treatment Services (ACTS)

ACTS offers services for children, adults and families. For information on programs, eligibility and screening, call 813-246-4899. ACTS provides and manages a broad array of behavioral health services, including prevention, acute care and stabilization, treatment and support services in the arenas of substance abuse, co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness, child protection, delinquency, criminal justice, housing, economic self-sufficiency and health and wellness.

Nar-Anon

Nar-Anon is a 12-step program designed to help relatives and friends of addicts recover from the effects of coping with an addicted relative or friend. In this 12-step program, members offer help by sharing their experiences, strengths and hope. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of addiction involving a relative or friend. Joining is easy: Just attend a meeting. There are no dues or fees. For more information, call 800-477-6291.

Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE)

NOPE educates students in middle schools, high schools and colleges about the consequences

of drug consumption. A network of community leaders goes into Hillsborough County middle and high schools to deliver personal and blunt presentations, during which police officers explain the grim task of making death notifications to distraught families, and parents who lost children to drugs share the story of their loved one. NOPE offers similar presentations to parents so they know their children are often confronted about drugs at school bus stops, in school cafeterias, at movie theaters, at friends' homes and on their computers. Counselors and community leaders explain the signs of drug usage and the best ways to speak with kids about drugs. Parents can ask questions and speak privately with the professionals. The presentations are given in schools, community centers, religious halls and living rooms of concerned parents. For more information, go to nopetaskforce.org.

Phoenix House

Phoenix House is committed to treating the whole person – and their families – with caring, qualified professionals in the fields of psychiatry, medicine, mental health, social work, education and recovery support. Their teams of experts address underlying causes of substance abuse and behavioral patterns to guide clients toward lasting recovery. Phoenix House has outpatient services for adolescents and adults.

Going beyond the text

Special report

Read the *Tampa Bay Times* special report "If I Die Young" at tampabay.com/blogs/writelane/2018/04/02/episode-15-if-i-die-young/ and listen to Lane DeGregory's podcast. Read about Stacy Nicholson as she struggled for sobriety in the epicenter of Florida's pain pill crisis. Make a list of the obstacles Nicholson encounters and list the effects of those obstacles. Create a cause-and-effect chart with the information you have read and listened to. Also read the background story on Florida's pill crisis. In your journal, discuss your thoughts about what you have read and what the implications of the information are regarding this crisis. Share your thoughts with your class. In a small group, create a mockup FaceBook group page focusing on this epidemic. Create a name for the group, a graphic or logo and a purpose. Create five posts to share with your new followers.

GETTING HELP

Symptoms of an overdose may include disorientation, drowsiness, clammy or damp skin, passing out or difficulty in waking. There may be no noticeable signs if someone suddenly stops breathing. Call 9-1-1 immediately. Stay on the line with the operator and stay with the victim until help arrives. Try to remain calm and follow the directions of the 9-1-1 operator. This is no time to hesitate. If you think someone is in distress, immediately call 9-1-1!



GOOD SAMARITAN

The purpose of the Good Samaritan Act is to save lives. This act allows witnesses of accidental drug overdoses to call for help without fearing that they will be arrested for drug possession. A person making a good faith effort to obtain or provide medical assistance for an individual experiencing a drug-related overdose may not be charged, prosecuted or penalized for possession of a controlled substance if the evidence for possession was obtained as a result of seeking medical assistance. In addition, a person who experiences a drug-related overdose may not be charged, prosecuted or penalized for possession of a controlled substance if the evidence for possession was obtained as a result of the overdose and the need for medical assistance.

Source: Florida Senate

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Do you envision a community where youth and families are safe, healthy and free of substance abuse and addiction? Call the Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance (HCADA) today and get involved: 813-238-4034. Check out more at hcada.com. Are you or family members having problems with drugs or alcohol? HCADA can provide helpful resources to all who are in need of any kind of support. For a more comprehensive list of resources, go to hcada.com/get-help-now.



BEING IN CONTROL

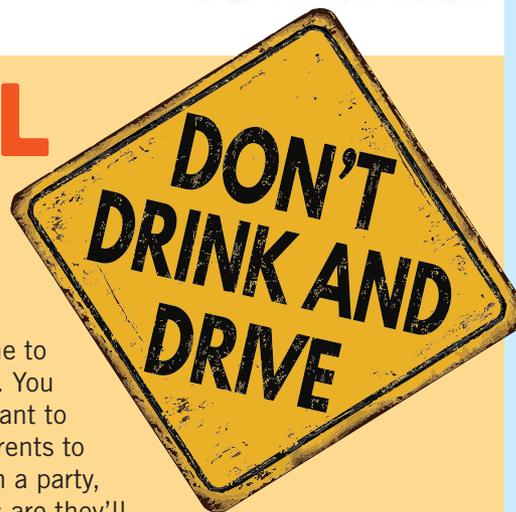
You don't need alcohol to fit in, deal with stress or have fun. Parties – prom, graduation, beach, holiday – can be a lot of fun without mixing in alcohol or drugs. But what happens if you are at a party and the friends you came with have been drinking or smoking pot? Do you have a plan to deal with situations like this?

It's hard to go against the group. But the last thing you want to do is see your friends get hurt, arrested or even killed. Do not get behind the wheel or in a car with someone who has been drinking or doing other drugs.

- Stay smart and speak up. If you have your driver's license, ask for the keys and get the group home safely.
- Find another ride: friends, taxi, Uber.

- Call someone to pick you up. You might not want to call your parents to get you from a party, but chances are they'll be happier that you called them rather than put yourself in a dangerous situation.
- Crash at the host's house.

Sources: National Institutes on Drug Abuse and Substance Abuse; Mental Health Services Administration



Community resources

ACTS (Agency for Community Treatment Services) Juvenile: 813-931-4669

ACTS Adult: 813-246-4899

Al-Anon/Alateen: 813-229-4540

Alcoholics Anonymous: 813-933-9123

Child Abuse Hotline: 800-962-2873

Tampa Police Department: 813-231-6130

Crime Stoppers of Tampa Bay: 800-873-(TIPS)

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay: 211

COVE (Adult and Adolescent Outpatient Services): 813-984-1818

Florida Highway Patrol: 813-558-1800

Florida Suicide and Crisis Hotline: 800-346-6185

Florida Tobacco Quitline: 877-U-CAN-NOW

Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance: 813-238-4034

Hillsborough County Department of Juvenile Justice: 813-276-8100

Hillsborough County Health Department: 813-307-8000

Hillsborough County School District: 813-272-4000

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office: 813-247-8000

Hillsborough County State Attorney's Office, 13th Judicial Court: 813-272-5400

MADD Tampa: 813-935-2676

Mental Healthcare (Gracepoint Wellness): 813-272-2244

Nar-Anon: 800-477-6291

Narcotics Anonymous: 813-879-4357

NOPE of Hillsborough: 813-855-5393

NOPE Journey To Healing Hearts Support Group: togetheragain@earthlink.net

Phoenix House: 813-881-1000

Plant City Police Department: 813-757-9200

Poison Information Center: 800-222-1222

Temple Terrace Police Department: 813-898-7110

The Spring of Tampa Bay/Domestic Violence Hotline: 813-247-7233

Turning Point of Tampa: 800-397-3006