

What You Can Do To Prevent **SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

It's true, youth are more inclined to listen to their peers than their parents, this is part of the way the brain develops. When a baby is born, their brain's sole responsibility is keeping them alive, then as they grow into adolescence, finding their tribe becomes important. Think of your top three happiest memories. What were you doing? How did you feel? Who was there? Each of these memories was likely a shared experience. You were laughing and smiling with loved ones, maybe food was even involved. Now think of your three worst memories. What was going on? How did you feel? Who was there? In each of these memories, you likely were alone or felt alone.

Substance use becomes a problem for some because they either are alone or felt alone. Connection has been shown to be important in our everyday lives, again think of your happiest memories. Fairfax County's "Three to Succeed" describes protective factors that youth need to achieve their higher selves. If a child has at least three of these protective factors, they are more likely to succeed in life: having high personal integrity, having community adults to talk to, performing community service, participating in extracurricular activities, having teachers recognize good work, and having parents available for help. What you notice is five of the six protective factors involve connection with someone else, the first protective factor describes connection with oneself.

For general questions about the FCPS Substance Abuse Prevention Program, please contact the Office of Student Safety & Wellness at: (571) 423-4270 and be sure to follow us on Twitter at @FCPSSAPS.

For further Information & support:
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Sources & Resources

Knowing the Signs: Substance Abuse & Today's Youth
Adverse Childhood Experiences
Substance Use Prevention & Encouraging Healthy Brain Development
REVIVE Training for Opioid Overdoses
FCPS Substance Abuse Prevention Program