

TEACHERS' GUIDE TO

ALCOHOL & DRUG USE PREVENTION

WHAT DO WE DO?

The National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) is a government body established to coordinate the prevention, treatment and management of alcohol and drug abuse in Kenya. We work towards a Kenya free from alcohol and drug abuse by conducting research that helps in formulating policies and laws, conducting public education and facilitating development of rehabilitation facilities.

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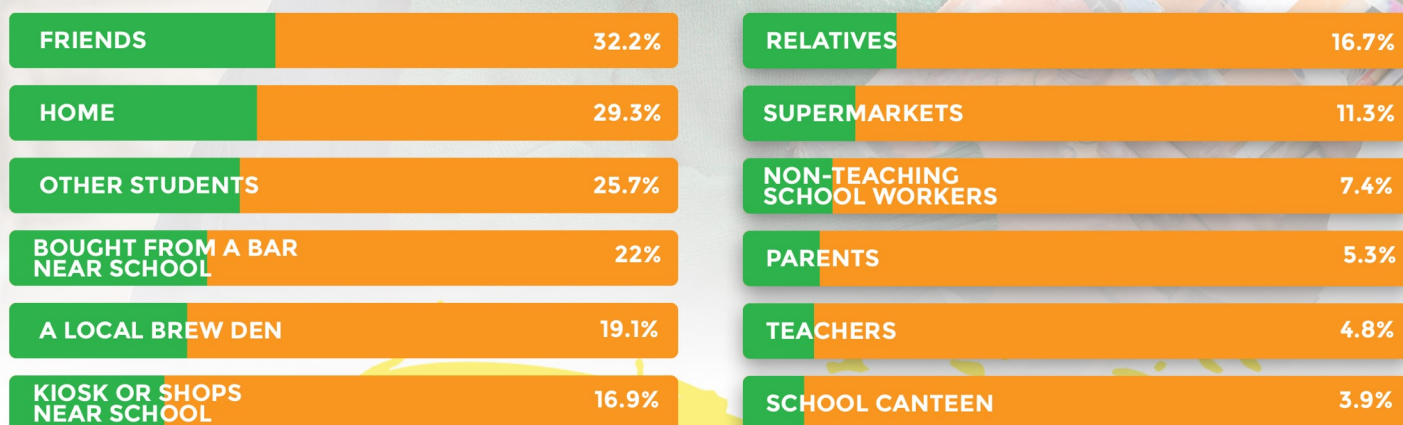
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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol and drug use in institutions of basic learning is a growing problem that needs urgent attention. Task forces and commissions of inquiry established to investigate indiscipline and student unrest in the country have repeatedly pointed at the alcohol and drug use in our learning institutions as a part of the problem. Surveys conducted by NACADA in primary (2018) and secondary schools (2016) showed that schools are not drug free places. The common sources of drugs mentioned by students included from:



The surveys also revealed that teachers were ill-equipped to handle incidences of alcohol and drug use in schools; and commonly resort to methods that are not linked to positive outcomes such as random drug testing, use of ex-drug users and unqualified people to sensitize students on alcohol and drug use. It is however important to note that not everyone is “doing it”. The majority of students in our Kenyan schools are not using alcohol and other drugs.

This booklet aims to sensitize educators on how to prevent and manage alcohol and drug use in our schools. We hope that you find it useful in your work and that you share with your colleagues as we work towards drug-free schools in Kenya.

Schools **Matter** because they:

- Shape attitudes towards responsible behavior in general and towards substance use in particular.
- Teach appropriate prosocial roles and behaviors and reinforce the positive behaviors that children learn at home and in the community.
- Provide children and youth an opportunity to practice these roles and behaviors under adult supervision.

This means that the environment in the school and classroom can **make a difference**.

Most children and young people spend more time in school than at home. This means schools play a key role in influencing the development of young people.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The first step towards a strong bond between learners and teachers is listening with empathy and care.
- Teachers can have a positive influence on children and youth to help them grow happy and resilient.
- Even in very difficult circumstances, children who are in school and feel a sense of belonging are less vulnerable to risky behaviors.
- Creating a positive school culture supports children's active participation in school.
- Interactive curriculum activities support the development of personal and social skills of children.
- Keeping children in school is an effective approach to preventing drug use and other problem behavior.
- 11 or 12 years old is a critical period for initiation of drug use. The earlier children initiate use, the more likely they are to use later in life and become problem users.



DID YOU KNOW?

A poor school climate encourages initiation of drug use.

This includes:

- **Physical and Psychological** danger in form of teasing, bullying, and gangs; Poor, uncaring, and disrespectful interactions and relationships with teachers and peers.
- **Teachers** are more focused on order than on teaching, but have great difficulty in maintaining order.
- **Low expectations of achievement;** Reactive, punitive, or inconsistent approaches to discipline.
- **School policies/regulations** that are neither understood nor fairly enforced.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PREVENTION

Over the years schools have taken different steps to prevent and manage drug use incidents among learners. Most of these efforts have left the problem unresolved and educators frustrated. Research shows what approaches work and also what does not.

WHAT WORKS IN SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- Addressing perceptions of risk or harm associated with substance use - If children perceive that the risk and harm is great they are less likely to use;
- Emphasizing immediate age-appropriate consequences of substance use - young brains cannot process long term consequences;
- Addressing misconceptions regarding the normative nature and expectations of substance use - when young people think more of their peers use it makes them more likely to use;
- Using structured interactive sessions with learners - meaning one single session is not enough;

WHAT DOES NOT WORK IN SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- Non-interactive methods such as lecturing a large number of students;
- Utilizing unstructured discussions;
- Increasing learners' knowledge by providing facts concerning specific substances, which may simply make the learners more informed consumers;
- Posters and pamphlets only;
- Using ex-drug users to provide testimonials, which may exaggerate or sensationalize drug use;

WHAT WORKS IN SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- School regulations that aim to reduce or eliminate availability of and access to tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs; and address violations of substance use policies with positive sanctions, providing referral to counseling or other support services NOT punishment;
- Emphasizing life skills development including drug refusal/resistance skills;
- Involvement of parents in addressing problem behavior through early intervention.

WHAT DOES NOT WORK IN SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

- Focusing on building self-esteem only;
- Random drug testing that is not linked to any intervention like counselling;
- Scare tactics and frightening examples and personal stories that exaggerate and misrepresent the dangers of substance use, and that contradict learners' own experiences and those of their peers;
- Any stand-alone, single event activities in place of activities that are ongoing, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate.

WHY SHOULD YOU PUT IN PLACE SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGIES IN YOUR SCHOOL?

The first step in prevention of alcohol and drug use in schools is policy. It is therefore important that schools have clear statements on prevention and management of incidents. Strategies will serve the following purpose:

- Set norms concerning acceptability of substance use by reducing learners exposure to peers and adults who are substance users
- Reduce accessibility of substances
- Act as a deterrent to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and possession
- Specify clear, transparent, and consistently enforced consequences for violations by learners.

The school substance use strategies should ensure a non-punitive approach and keep students in school unless the health and safety of the school and its students might be put at risk.



WHY DO CHILDREN EXPERIMENT OR USE ALCOHOL AND DRUGS?

Understanding the reasons children and young people use alcohol and drugs can give some insight into how to address the problem of drug use in schools.

Use by significant others like their family and friends. Children ape what they see around them.

Popular media influence including movies, cartoons, TV shows, music videos and advertisements.

Escape and self-medication to address unhappiness, stress, to gain additional energy and focus to study.

Rebellion to make parents angry. Drugs may enable them to behave aggressively and display independence.

Boredom, idleness or being alone can cause them to crave excitement leading to trying out drugs.

Seeking instant gratification. Drugs and alcohol work quickly on the brain and may be seen as a shortcut to happiness.

Lack of confidence. Children who are shy may find they are able to do things under the influence of drugs.

Misinformation concerning drugs and alcohol. Children may interact with persons in the community who will assure them that the risks are minimal. Inaccurate information is dangerous but avoidable.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF ALCOHOL & DRUG USE

EDUCATIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Truancy
- Class skipping
- Constant lateness to school
- General loss of interest in school
- Poor school performance
- Complaints about poor class conduct and attitude
- Dropping out of organized activities
- Dropping out of school

SOCIAL SYMPTOMS

- Changes in personality and behavior
- Changes in friends
- Unknown friends
- Changes in hangouts
- Always going “nowhere special”
- Secretive phone conversations
- Callers who refuse to identify themselves
- Hang-up phone calls
- Noticeable hostility and outbursts
- Constant lying
- Stealing of small items
- Disappearance of clothing and money
- Constant manipulation to get money
- Unexplained disappearance of money

PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

- Depression or over activity
- Talkativeness
- Loss or increase of appetite
- Mood swings
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Hallucinations
- Unpredictable behavior
- Lack of ambition and drive
- No motivation – apathy

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Poor physical coordination
- Eye changes
- Slurred speech
- Overall changes in physical appearance
- Dreamy or blank expression
- Loss of memory
- Trembling
- Needle marks
- Disappearance of drugs from the medicine cabinet
- Unexplained appearance of pills, seeds or drug paraphernalia

WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED IN ORDER TO AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE?

Children 6-11 years need to:

Learn what medicines are for, their safety rules, and the dangers of incorrect use.

Understand the dangers of giving medications to others and consuming hazardous household products.

Learn the adverse effects of second-hand smoke.

Learn basic prosocial skills and impulse control.

In the upper school grades, begin to learn drug refusal and other social skills.

Children 12- 15 years need to:

Develop positive social norms and attitudes that are protective against substance use.

Learn their school's rules regarding both legal and illegal substances.

Understand how advertising attempts to influence children to use alcohol and other substances.

Learn the adverse consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use on feelings, perceptions, and behavior; health and the developing brain.

Continue to learn and practice a range of personal and social skills.

Teenagers 16-19 years need to:

Learn the definitions of substances, substance misuse and abuse, and substance dependence.

Continue to use values, decision-making, and assertive behaviors in situations where substances are being used or there are inducements to use.

Learn the consequences of unlawful substance use.



HOW SHOULD YOU MANAGE ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL?

The school requires clear policies and procedures to address the following:

- Handling of different incidents including possession of alcohol or drugs, using alcohol or drugs in school and at school events.
- Appropriate response to a student rumor or undocumented report that a student may be using or selling. (Suspension, exclusion? Counseling or referral?)
- What violations can be dealt with in a non-punitive manner?
- When and how should families be involved and contacted?
- When and how should police be involved and contacted? (How are police likely to respond to reports from the school?)
- What procedures or understandings should be in place with local enforcement to ensure that reports are handled appropriately?
- What referral mechanisms does the school have? Are counseling and treatment services available?
- What kind of ongoing support can the school offer for learners involved in substance use, including positive reinforcements for policy and treatment compliance?

MANAGING ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL

You are an important source of information for learners who have questions about alcohol and drugs. Stay informed about the different drugs in your area or that your learners are exposed to and learn about the effects.

Remember that as a teacher your attitude towards and relationship with learners can make a difference. Modelling appropriate behaviour regarding use of alcohol and drugs in school and during school events is part of the action you can take.



TIPS TO BUILD A POSITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:

- Set clear rules and boundaries which you should enforce fairly and consistently.
- Keep an open mind and ask learners for their opinions.
- Be a good listener and be available.
- Praise and reward good behaviour and achievements.
- Encourage learner participation in and out of the classroom.



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