

Are you worried about drugs or alcohol?

Some people use drugs and alcohol responsibly and safely, but for many they can become an unhealthy coping tool, making situations harder in the long run.

Understanding the impact

People choose to use drugs and alcohol for different reasons. Some might use them to feel more confident, escape tough situations, or fit in with friends. But what might seem like a quick fix can lead to problems in the long run, like affecting your health, relationships, and even your future goals.

Using drugs and alcohol can have serious risks, especially for teenagers.

These can include:

- Health problems - Drugs and alcohol can cause serious health problems by affecting your brain and body. They can disrupt normal brain development, impairing memory, decision-making, and concentration, which can make learning and schoolwork harder. Long-term use can damage vital organs like the liver and heart, and weaken the immune system, making it harder to fight off illnesses.
- Addiction - Some substances can be addictive, meaning you might feel the need to keep using them, even if you don't want to, and lead to risky decision making if you can't easily get hold of them.
- Mental health issues - Substance use can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, or mood swings. They can also make it harder to cope with stress or negative emotions, potentially worsening existing mental health problems.
- Legal consequences - Possessing, using, or supplying certain substances is illegal and can lead to criminal charges.

Helpful tools

Tips for staying safe:

Set boundaries – Peer pressure can lead you to do things that you aren't comfortable with. Surround yourself with people who respect your choices.

Know your limits - If you do choose to drink alcohol or try drugs, know your limits and be aware of the impact on your body and mind.

Stay in control - Always stay with people you trust, and make sure you have a plan to get home safely. Don't accept drinks or substances from strangers.

Look out for your friends - If you see a friend who is struggling or using drugs or alcohol in a risky way, talk to them about it. They might be too scared or embarrassed to reach out themselves.

Other resources

- [YP@Motiv8](#)
- [Talk to Frank](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Kooth](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Talk/Isle Listen](#)