5 Stages of Substance Use in Teens

**Curiosity**
A healthy stage and can prevent substance experimentation.

Provide education and information on the effects of drug use.

Talk about peer pressure and how to say no.

**Experimentation**
Use to satisfy curiosity.

Substance can be obtained from friends or strangers (online)

Infrequent use.

May stop using on their own.

**Recreational Use**
Using drugs or alcohol, in a predictable pattern either in time (weekends) or in circumstances (lonely, bored or stressed).

May start to cause bad grades or behaviors.

**Coping Risky Use**
Has escalated to chronic (long term) use.

Failure to meet major responsibilities.

More of the substance is needed as the body builds up tolerance.

Withdrawal symptoms.

**Dependence Addiction**
Use is compulsive, chronic and out of control.

Psychological and physical changes from long term use.

May start to engage in risky, unsafe or illegal behaviors.

Substance is the priority.