



# Substance Use Reality Check

## *Some ways of using substances are safer than others.*

Many teens **try** alcohol and drugs but do not use substances frequently.

- ✓ **7 in 10** high school students have **tried alcohol**
- ✓ **1 in 5** high school students have used prescription drugs **without a doctor's prescription**



## *Substance use can have a negative impact.*

- ✓ **Alcohol** is a common **weapon** used by perpetrators of sexual violence, and is connected to **2 in 3 sexual assaults** among adolescents
- ✓ **Anxious and depressed** teens are **twice** as likely as their peers to try **marijuana** by age 16

## *Safety is most important.*

The connection between **choices** and **consequences** can be impaired under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

- ✓ **22%** of sexually active high school students reported using **alcohol or drugs** during their most recent sexual encounter
- ✓ Nearly **1 in 4** youth report having had sex **without a condom** because they were drinking alcohol or using drugs

Youth should feel comfortable asking questions **without fear of judgment or punishment**. Addiction is **not a choice**, and could be a sign of mental illness, trauma, or other life stressors.

## *ASK. Be clear that your intention is to help, not police youth.*

For more information, check out <http://besafe.org/help/substance-use>



Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, 99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139 / 617.492.8306

[www.besafe.org](http://www.besafe.org) · [besafe@barcc.org](mailto:besafe@barcc.org)



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## Substance Use Fact Sheet References

- ✓ **7 in 10** high school students have ever **tried alcohol**<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **1 in 5** high school students have used prescription drugs **without a doctor's prescription**<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ **22%** of sexually active high school students reported using **alcohol or drugs** during their most recent sexual encounter<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Nearly **1 in 4** youth report having had sex **without a condom** because they were drinking alcohol or using drugs<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ **Alcohol** is a common **weapon** used by perpetrators of sexual violence<sup>4</sup>, and is connected to **2 in 3 sexual assaults** among adolescents<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **Anxious and depressed** teens are **twice** as likely as their peers to try marijuana by age 16<sup>6</sup>

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2. Kaiser Family Foundation Youth. (2011). *Sexual Health of Adolescents and Young Adults in the United States*. <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/3040-05-2.pdf>
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4. Boston Area Rape Crisis Center Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Special Report (2006). Findings from the *Violence Against Women Survey* and Lisak, David (2002). *The Undetected Rapist* <http://www.barcc.org/information/facts/stats>
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