Counselor handouts for parents





What is Vaping?

Vaping is inhaling the vapor from an e-cigarette. Vaping has quickly become more popular with youth than cigarettes, especially because of the wide variety of fruity and sweet flavors marketed to the younger population. Vaping devices come in different forms such as pens, mods, and devices that look like a USB drive.

What are the dangers?

Vaping has dangerous chemicals in it such as nicotine. Some vaping devices are used for THC and synthetic chemicals that are dangerous. Vaping can become addicting because it rewards the pleasure centers of the brain. It can also lead to the use of cigarettes.

How can I talk to my child?

The best time to talk to your child is when you are calm. If you are angry or blaming, you may push them away. Be open and explain the dangers of vaping and what your concerns are. Try to find out the reason that they vape so you can help them develop better coping skills. For more information please visit drugfree.org.



5 stages of grief

There is no certain timeframe on grieving a loss. Everyone's grief looks differently. Your child may go back and forth between stages, or get stuck in one.

1.) Denial- *how? are you sure?*

2.) Anger- *why?*

3.) Bargaining- *but if...*

4.) Depression- *numb...*

5.) Acceptance- *it hurts, but I will be ok*

What are some ways to cope with the loss?

-distractions

-family & friend support

-change of scenery

-honor the loved one

-closure activity such as balloon release or letter

-simplifying and cutting out additional stress

How can I get my child more help?

Your child may need to see an outside mental health professional if they are not functioning well. If their eating, sleeping habits, or school are suffering, then it would be good to talk to a professional. To find a provider, call your insurance or talk to your school counselor to get referrals of people in your community.



Why do youth self-harm?

When youth are having a hard time coping with strong emotions, they look for ways to feel better. Self-harm offers temporary relief by releasing endorphins and other hormones that provide a sense of pleasure before the child feels the pain. It is a temporary way to distract themselves so they can cope with what they are feeling. These behaviors can be addicting because it is a quick solution to their problem offering them relief, much like a drug. It is important for them to seek professional medical and mental health treatment.

How can I talk to my child?

The first thing you want to do is stay calm and not show anger. The child will already have an overwhelming sense of shame, and depending on your reaction, it could push them away. Also, do not assume that self-harming behaviors automatically mean they are suicidal. Do not make your child promise to stop self-harming, because then they will try to hide it if they do slip up and self-harm. The best thing to do is be open and explain that you care, and that you are going to get them help.

What is the treatment for self-harming behaviors?

The child may need to be checked out by a medical professional to make sure the self-harm is not critical. The next step is for your child to get professional mental health counseling as soon as possible so they can learn skills to cope with their emotions. To find a provider, you can call your insurance company or ask your school counselor for references in your area. For more information please visit kidshealth.org.



Where does anger come from?

Anger is a secondary reaction to a primary emotion. Underneath anger lies embarrassment, shame, fear, anxiety, etc. All emotions start from thoughts, so the first step is to find out what the child was thinking before they reacted in anger. Next, help them discover what their triggers are so they can avoid them.

How can I help my child cope with anger?

Help the child develop coping strategies to use when they are feeling angry.

-Using their five senses

-Distracting

-Breathing exercises

How can I get my child additional help?

The best time to talk to your child is when you are calm. If you are angry or blaming, you may push them away. Be open and explain that you want to help them. A mental health professional can teach them coping skills to deal with their anger. To find a provider, call your insurance, or speak to your school counselor.



What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal part of life and can help motivate us. If we have too much anxiety then it can become disruptive to our everyday life. The "fight or flight" response can be helpful in dangerous situations, but when we get stuck in that mode, our brain doesn't know the difference between a real threat and just a perceived threat. Anxiety is common, with 40 million people in the US having a diagnosable disorder.

Signs your child is struggling...

-Excessive worry or fear

-Social anxiety

-Perfectionism

-Inability to relax

-Headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches, chest pain

-panic attacks

What is the treatment for anxiety?

After being seen by a medical professional to rule out other health issues, the next step would be to see a mental health professional. The therapist with teach the child Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to learn coping skills. To find a provider, call your insurance company or ask your school counselor for a list of references in your community. For more information please visit kidshealth.org.



How can I keep my child safe?

Children's entire world can revolve around technology. As a parent, you have the right to be in charge of their electronics. Decide what age they get certain devices. Then you can decide what screen time rules you will have. Lastly, you will need to make boundaries with social media usage.

What are some resources to help me as a parent?

-commonsense.org

-kidshealth.org

-parentsempowered.org

-empoweringparents.com

-ahaparenting.com

What are some apps I should be concerned about?

There are many apps that have the potential to be dangerous. Just a few: Kik, Whisper, YikYak, Snapchat, ChatRoulete, Tinder, Vaulty, Omegle, Ask.fm. Make sure to teach your child WHY these apps can be dangerous. Also teach them how to block and report inappropriate behavior by someone on social media.

Executive Functioning Tips



What is Executive Functioning?

Executive Functioning is a term that encompasses mental control and self regulation. Some of these processes include working memory, controlling emotions, keeping focused, starting tasks, and giving effort. Every individual struggles every now and then with executive functioning, but the concern is when it is interfering with your child's life then it becomes a problem.

What are signs that my child may struggle with EF?

-Waits until the last minute

-Organization problems

-Struggles to keep up with school work

-Overacts and takes things personally

-Avoids and procrastinates

-Time management issues

What are some tips to help?

-Color coding

-Break things into smaller tasks

-Take several small breaks

-Use charts and visuals

-Learn emotional coping skills

-Make lists

Please visit understood.org for more information