

Regional Advisory Board (RAB) of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions

January 2021 Newsletter

Did you know?

CDC Reports Record-breaking Surge in Overdose Deaths. There were more than 81,000 drug overdose deaths between June 2019 and May 2020, according to the CDC. This is the largest number of drug overdoses ever recorded during a 12-month period. The number is an 18% increase from the prior 12-month period. In Indiana, there was a 20% increase from the prior 12-month period. The use of synthetic opioids, likely fentanyl, is a primary factor driving the overdoses. There were also significant increases in overdose deaths involving psychostimulants with abuse potential such as methamphetamine. Deaths involving cocaine also increased 26.5% compared to the previous reporting period. While the increase began before the COVID epidemic, between March 2020 and May 2020, the deaths accelerated at a concerning rate. (getsmartaboutdrugs.gov, 12/18/20)

The CDC reported that non-fatal drug overdoses increased for children under the age of 15 between 2016 and 2019. The increase appears to be due largely to stimulants such as cocaine, meth and Ecstasy. Overall, drug overdoses in this age group are rare, and are largely unintentional. The findings come from an analysis of almost 90 million emergency room visits. Suspected heroin overdoses among 15- to 24-year-olds dropped between 2016 and 2019. The rate of drug overdoses involving all drugs for children ages 11 to 14 increased an average of 2.3% per quarter during that time. The average quarterly rate rose 1.9% for opioid-related overdoses and 4.3% for stimulant-related overdoses. (drugfree.org, 12/10/20)

A new survey has found vaping rates among teens and young adults have dropped significantly during the pandemic. Researchers at Stanford University found 32% of teens and young adults who used e-cigarettes said they quit this year, while another 35% said they had cut back on vaping, HealthDay reports. One-fourth of survey respondents who cut back or quit said concerns about lung health were a major factor in their decision. The researchers conducted a nationwide online survey in early May, with more than 4,300 participants ages 13 to 24. Almost 2,200 of the participants said they had used e-cigarettes. Those who adhered to stay-at-home mandates were 50% more likely to quit or reduce their e-cigarette use. Only about 15% of those who cut down or quit said they did so because they were concerned their parents would find out they vape, the survey found. (drugfree.org, 12/10/20)

2020 Monitoring the Future Survey results. Researchers were able to collect data from only about one-fourth of its usual sample, and the results fundamentally apply to the first quarter of 2020 due to the closing of schools because of COVID. Key findings include:

- Among 8th graders, past 12-month use of inhalants is up to 6.1% in 2020, compared to 3.8% in 2016. This represents a 64% increase.
- Among 8th, 10th and 12th graders, cigarette smoking remains at or near historic lows.
- Alcohol use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in the past 12 months has leveled off from its historical gradual decline.
- Amphetamine, inhalant, and cough medicine misuse are trending upward among the youngest students. (CADCA e-news, 12/17/20)

- Past-year marijuana vaping holds steady, while daily or near-daily marijuana vaping using any device decreases by more than half among tenth and twelfth graders.
- While still high, nicotine vaping levels have held steady after huge surges over previous years. Between 2017 and 2019, past-year vaping nicotine catapulted from:
 - 7.5% to 16.5% among eighth graders
 - 15.8% to 30.7% among tenth graders, and
 - 18.8% to 35.3% among twelfth graders.

This year, it holds steady at:

- 16.6% among eighth graders
- 30.7% among tenth graders, and
- 34.5% among twelfth graders (The Marijuana Report, 12/16/20)

Psychedelic Mushrooms: In the Spotlight

Studies are currently evaluating psilocybin's, the active ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, potential for medical benefits—a measure that may provide a false sense of safety around its use, especially among teens. There is a shift in attitude toward psychedelic drugs in the U.S., as voters in Oregon legalized psilocybin and voters in Colorado decriminalized its use. In turn, this can reduce young people's perception of psilocybin's harm. Regardless of law or potential medical uses however, psilocybin is a powerful, dangerous hallucinogenic drug. Youth must be made clearly aware of these dangers and empowered to steer clear of this drug.

Psychedelic mushrooms are either fresh or dried and are typically brewed as a tea, covered in chocolate or mixed with food to help hide their unpleasant, bitter taste. Many of them are poisonous and some are even fatally so.

Once consumed, psilocybin's hallucinogenic effects, or "trip," usually begin within 30-45 minutes of ingestion and can last up to six hours. When "tripping" on psilocybin, users experience an altered sense of time and space, along with intense changes in mood and feeling. Behavior may become strange and erratic, potentially including overwhelming emotions and bouncing thoughts that cause users to become a danger to themselves. Additional possible effects of psilocybin, include: euphoria, peacefulness, spiritual awakening; derealization, or the feeling that your surroundings are not real; depersonalization, or a dream-like sense of being disengaged from your surroundings; distorted thinking, confusion and paranoia; inability to effectively speak or communicate, or talking nonsense; visual alteration and distortion, such as halos of light and vivid colors; dilated pupils; nausea and vomiting; numbness in the face; dizziness, lightheadedness, and twitching; and muscle weakness and loss of basic motor skills.

One cannot predetermine the length and intensity of a trip, or if one will have a good or bad trip, as effects vary from one individual to another based on differences in mental state, past experiences, expectations for this experience, the user's personality, their immediate environment, and the potency of the psilocybin.

The effects of psilocybin do not always end when the "trip" is over. Ongoing anxiety and a loss of reality may continue. Traumatic flashbacks may also occur several days, months or even years after use. Psilocybin mushroom use can trigger underlying mental health disorders, intensify current mental health conditions, and lead to psychosis. (Prevention Action Alliance, 12/14/20)

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