



THINK.LEARN.DECIDE.

A collaborative community effort including students, parents/guardians, school administrators, police, the juvenile justice system, and non-profit partners



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Second Chance is provided by **Transitions... The Process of Change** under contract with the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families Foundation.

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Funding for Second Chance is provided by Arlington County Schools.



Early Intervention for Teen Substance Use

"I can take lessons I have learned and apply them to the real world."

- student participant

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

What is Second Chance?

Second Chance is an educational program for Arlington middle and high school students to help them avoid using alcohol, drugs, and/or certain other substances. It is not treatment or therapy. Teens showing signs of early substance use will benefit most from attending Second Chance.

Why should a student attend Second Chance?

Students who are found to be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, and/or certain other substances may be diverted to Second Chance in lieu of school suspension by Arlington Public Schools or prosecution by Arlington County Juvenile Courts. Parents who are concerned about or see signs of early substance use can refer their teen, and students can refer themselves. (A self- or parent referral will not necessarily preclude a teen from being able to attend Second Chance again should the need arise.) Participation in Second Chance is confidential.

What are the benefits of attending Second Chance?

Students learn how substance use affects their physical and mental health, as well as skills to deal with peer pressure. Guest speakers each day supplement the curriculum. Parents/guardians learn how to communicate more effectively with their teen and set clear limits and expectations for their behavior. Students referred to Second Chance by APS or the Courts who successfully complete the program usually avoid suspension from school and/or prosecution in juvenile court.

How long are the sessions and who must attend?

Students attend a 3-day session, followed 6-8 weeks later with a booster session. Parents/guardians must attend a 3-hour session after the initial student session and, later, the booster session with their student. Attendance at all sessions is required for successful completion.

How much does it cost?

The program is free for all Arlington middle and high school students.

What about absence from school?

Participation is an excused absence for APS students, but students and their parent/guardian are responsible for notifying schools. Students are responsible for making up missed work.

How can I find out more?

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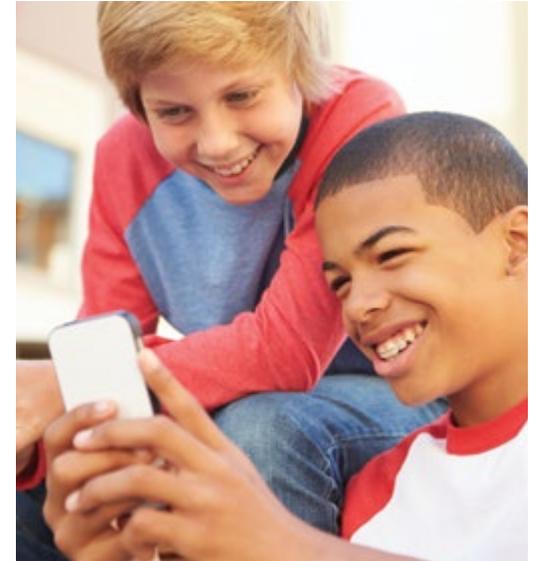
"Second Chance gives teens a wake-up call and a chance to start over by making better decisions."

- parent participant

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Student Session:

- Recognizing the influence of substance use on physical and mental health, family, and community
- Developing an understanding of the impact of alcohol and drugs on one's life and possible consequences of further involvement
- Learning how stress, coping skills, and peer pressure intersect with alcohol/drug use
- Practicing refusal skills and identifying other activities to replace time spent using alcohol/drugs
- Developing an action plan to help make healthy choices and avoid substance use



Parent/Guardian Session:

- Reviewing the effects of alcohol on adolescent brain development
- Recognizing signs and symptoms of substance use
- Communicating effectively and setting clear limits and expectations

Booster Session:

- Reviewing the action plan
- Identifying and evaluating changes
- Discussing barriers to positive change and identifying strategies for overcoming them