

Navajo County Drug Project

Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse

A Coalition of Concerned Navajo County Residents Joined Together to:

- EDUCATE the Community on the substance abuse crisis
- REHABILITATE those who have fallen into the addiction
- ENFORCE laws pertaining to the spread of substance abuse in our communities



Calendar/E-Blast/Newsletter Item

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Why Does My Teen Act Like This?

From early adolescence through their mid-20s, a teen's brain develops somewhat unevenly, from back to front. This may help explain their endearingly quirky behavior but also makes them prone to risk-taking.

The parts of the adolescent brain that develop first are those that control physical coordination, emotion and motivation. However, the part of the brain which controls reasoning and impulses—known as the Prefrontal Cortex—is near the front of the brain and, therefore, develops last. This part of the brain does not fully mature until the age of 25. This can have noticeable effects on adolescent behavior. You may have noticed some of these effects in your teen:

- Difficulty holding back or controlling emotions
- A preference for physical activity
- A preference for high excitement and low effort activities (video games, sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll)
- Poor planning and judgment (rarely thinking of negative consequences)
- More risky, impulsive behaviors, including experimenting with drugs and alcohol

The development of the adolescent brain and behavior are closely linked. In a wink, hormones can shift your teen's emotions into overdrive, leading to unpredictable—and sometimes risky—actions. Unfortunately, developing brains may be more prone to damage. This means that experimentation with drugs and alcohol can have lasting, harmful effects on your teen's health.

- Research shows that alcohol abuse during the teenage years negatively impacts the memory center of the brain (the hippocampus)
- The use of drugs and alcohol may also disrupt the development of the adolescent brain in unhealthy ways, making it harder for teens to cope with social situations and the normal pressures of life

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Mission Statement:

To develop a diverse community representation, coordinate a sustained effort in educating and preventing the substance abuse through a plan for change in local social norms through prevention, treatment and vigorous enforcement of existing laws.

- Moreover, the brain's reward circuits (the dopamine system) get thrown out of whack when under the influence. This causes a teen to feel in a funk when not using drugs or alcohol—and going back for more only makes things worse

It is important to urge your teen to take healthy risks. Not only will participation in constructive activities—such as athletics or the arts—help him or her form positive lifestyle habits, it will help your teen's forebrain develop as well.

For more information, go to www.navajocountydrugproject.com