According to the 2022 Health and Lifestyle Survey by Institute of Mental Health,

41.8% had started using drugs before turning 18.



Reasons behind Drug Use



21.6% cited **curiosity** was their reason for trying drugs.



19.7% believed drugs would **help with their problems**.



11.9% were influenced by **peer pressure** to use drugs.



15.6% of individuals aged 18 to 29 had the highest prevalence of binge drinking, compared to other age group.

National Population Health Survey 2021 by Ministry of Health

Study revealed that nearly

9% of Singapore's youth are "pathological gamers," dedicating 37.5 hours each week to gaming - double the amount of time spent by non-addicted players.



Study on Pathological Video-Gaming among Singaporean Youth by National Institute of Education and the Media Development Authority

Together we can promote healthier futures for adolescents.

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Scan the QR code to access more educational resources.

Oct 2024



Addiction in Adolescents

Information for Educators

NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Adolescence is a phase of rapid physical, emotional, and mental growth. Alongside physical changes and surging hormones, teens are also trying to define their identity and build social connections.

Now, imagine facing these challenges with the added lens of addiction – be it substances or behaviours. Many young individuals grapple with these issues in silence, often masked by academic and social pressures.

As educators, understanding addiction among adolescence is crucial for fostering empathy and support. By recognising the early signs and offering compassionate support, you can play a pivotal role in nurturing a safe space where students can find hope and healing on their journey to recovery.

Supporting Adolescents: Role of Educators

As an educator, your daily interaction with the students put you in a unique position to support them. You have the opportunity to recognise early signs of addiction and intervene before it worsens. By staying alert to these warning signs, you can help prevent addiction from escalating. Additionally, you serve as a role model for the students and as additional support figure for students who may lack a healthy family environment.

Types of Addiction



- Iliicit drug use
- Presciption drugs (codeine)
- Alcohol
- Inhalants
- Smoking
- Vaping



- Gambling
- Gaming

Signs of Addiction

Addiction often manifests subtly. Educators are often the first to notice changes in the students. Here are key signs to watch for.

Behavioural: Sudden changes in behaviour, such as increased lying, avoidance of eye contact, sleeping in class or frequent absences from school

Emotional: Unexplained mood swings such as irritability or anger outbursts, lack of motivation, looking sullen or withdrawn

Social: Withdrawal from classmates, friends and social activities that were previously enjoyed

Physical: Noticeable changes such as weight loss or gain, unkempt appearance, bloodshot eyes

Academic: Significant drop in academic performance or loss of interest in school activities like CCA

Note: These signs can vary depending on the unique circumstances of the youth, but being aware of these general indicators can help you identify students who need support and intervention.



Supporting Students at Risk of Addiction

1. Forging relationships that are trusting, empathetic, compassionate and non-judgmental.
2. Provide a safe environment by talking to them in private. Avoid calling them out in class or in front of their friends.
3. Start the conversation with care and understanding. Let them know they can approach you anytime they want.
4. Express concern, not accusation. Avoid shame and blame.
5. Listen actively to understand their needs and focus on what they are saying.
6. Validate the student and acknowledge what they said without judgment.
7. Avoid handling issues that are out of your expertise. Direct your students to professionals such as counsellors, doctors and other support services when needed.
8. Focus on the behaviour, not the student.
9. Respect confidentiality to help them build trust in you.
10. Educate and empower students with knowledge and tools to make informed choices. Help them connect with people and activities that will promote feelings of self-efficacy.
11. Teach students healthy coping skills (eg. managing stress and emotions) to prevent continued engagement with addictive behaviours.
12. Celebrate the small successes and affirm all the efforts your students have made.
13. Follow up regularly with your student to for ongoing support and encouragement.

Seek Professional Help

School Counsellors

Offer immediate support and can help students access external treatment if needed.

National Addictions Management Service

Provides specialised addiction services for adolescents struggling with substance or behavioural addictions. Our services include:

- Assessment and treatment of addictive disorders by a multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, counsellors, psychologists, nurses and medical social workers
- Individual counselling sessions and family therapy
- Referral to community resources for group and peer-led programmes