



# I know a young person who is using a substance.

## How do I know if they need support?

**It's normal to have many emotions when you suspect or find out a young person in your life is using a substance. You may be wondering if there is anything you can do.**

First, substances aren't just drugs like cocaine, opioids, methamphetamine and ecstasy (MDMA). Cannabis, alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, vape products and prescription drugs (like benzodiazepines) are also substances. Keep in mind, the type of substance a young person is using isn't as important as the effects it has on them and their relationships — including their relationship with you.

The signs of substance use will vary. Possible signs that someone may be having negative consequences related to substance use include withdrawing from family and friends, missing school or work, and changing physical appearance such as weight gain or loss and bruises or marks. However, these signs could also be unrelated to substance use.

Sometimes it can be hard to know if a young person's substance use is causing harm, or if they are even using substances at all. There are many things to think about when defining "problematic substance use" by young people that can make something more (or less) risky. This includes their health, their age, the substance they are using, how and how often they use, and the effects

of the substance use on their day-to-day life, health, relationships and schoolwork or employment.

If a young person uses **any** substance, at **any** frequency, it's okay for you (and them) to reach out for advice and support. *They don't need to have a substance use disorder (addiction) to seek support for themselves or for a family member/caregiver to seek support.* It's also okay to reach out if you aren't sure what's going on and just want more information about what you're seeing. Connecting with Foundry is one option for seeking information and support.

**Foundry offers health and wellness resources, services and support for young people ages 12-24 in British Columbia. Foundry also offers a variety of services for families/caregivers like you. We recommend calling your local Foundry centre to learn what in-person groups are offered in your community. Foundry Virtual BC also offers counselling, peer support, groups and workshops for family members/caregivers, with some services offered in both English and languages other than English. Find out more about all of these resources at [foundrybc.ca/get-support](https://foundrybc.ca/get-support).**

**Remember, whether your young person is accessing Foundry services or not, you are able to receive support as a family member/caregiver!**