

**THE
FACTS.
YOUR
FUTURE.**

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

**Lesson 3:
Healthy
Relationships
and Building
Community**

TheFactsYourFuture.org



3.1 OVERVIEW

Before You Begin

This guide is intended for use when administering *The Facts. Your Future. Substance Abuse Curriculum* in a classroom setting. This curriculum is designed to comply with and meet the Florida Substance Use and Abuse Standards (HE.912.SUA). The target audience is youth in grades 9-12.

Prior to administering this lesson, it is recommended that instructors have reviewed the following:

- *The Facts. Your Future. Drug Facts for Instructors*
 - Fentanyl
 - Alcohol
 - Marijuana
 - Vaping
 - Prescription Drugs
- *The Facts. Your Future. Substance Abuse Curriculum - Lesson 1: Defining Choices Instructor Guide*
- *The Facts. Your Future. Substance Abuse Curriculum - Lesson 2: Building Coping Skills Instructor Guide*
- *The Facts. Your Future. Substance Abuse Curriculum - Lesson 3: Healthy Relationships and Building Community Instructor Guide*

It is also recommended that instructors have information available for organizations that provide drug use and abuse counseling and treatment services to teens in need. Information is located in *The Facts. Your Future. Drug Facts for Instructors* and at TheFactsYourFuture.org.









3.2 TRUST NETWORK

Overview

In this section, participants will define what a trusted adult is and identify adults, like parents, in their life who can help them in challenging or unsafe situations.

-  **KEY TAKEAWAY:** Identifying trusted adults in your life helps you know who you can go to for help.
-  **TIME:** 3 minutes
-  **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
 - Instructor Script

INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

-  We mentioned the power of relationships in Lesson 2 and how they can help you build resilience and bounce back from difficult situations. Relationships with your parents and caregivers are especially important. Think of an adult in your life who always makes you feel safe. They really listen to you, offer advice when you ask for it, and let you know your thoughts and ideas are heard and respected. For many of you, your parents, guardian, or caregiver immediately come to mind. For some of you, this may not be the case, but there is another adult in your life who fills a similar role.



At the end of this Instructor Guide, there are recommended trusted resources for both instructors and participants to reference. Also, there are Drug Fact Sheets for both instructors and participants with this information. To access these fact sheets, scan the QR code on page 3.

Identifying who the trusted adults (e.g., parents, etc.) are in your life now helps you know who to go to when you need help, for yourself or someone else. Whenever possible, a parent(s), guardian, or caregiver is a good place to start.

Notice, however, this isn't just one parent. You're going to identify more than one adult because every situation is different, and some adults may be better equipped to handle certain situations than others. Some may be available at different times or only located in specific places. Here are some examples:

- Your mom may be the person you go to when you're feeling sad.
- Your dad may be the person you go to when you need solid advice.
- Your aunt may be the person you can always run a hypothetical question by to get more information, day or night.
- Your mentor may be the person who will listen to you talk for hours and only offer advice when you clearly ask for it.
- Your school's guidance counselor may be the person you reach out to when you're concerned about a friend.
- Your coach may be the person you turn to when you're having trouble deciding what the best next step is.

These people become part of your larger trust network. To illustrate what a trust network is, let's talk through the question: Who do you trust?

Activity: Who Do You Trust?

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to help participants identify trusted adults in their life who will ultimately be part of their trust network.
- **Method:** Instructor-led discussion and participant reflection
- **Instructions:** Instructor follows the discussion prompts below.

Instructor Discussion Prompts

Now let's talk through a few factors that may help you identify the adults that you trust, including a parent, guardian, or caregiver, in your life. Let's consider the location of the adult, topics you may want or need to talk about, and their availability.

Here are some questions to consider:

- **Location:** Do you have an adult that you trust at home or in your family (e.g., parent, caregiver, older sibling, etc.)? School? Work? In a club? On a team? In a religious or faith-based organization?
- **Topics:** Is there a parent and/or trusted adults you would go to for advice? Information about difficult subjects, such as your mental health or substance use? Encouragement?
- **Availability:** Can you get help in the middle of a weekday? After school? In an emergency?

Instructor Note: Remind participants to keep these adults in mind because they will write them down later in this lesson.

In addition to parents, guardians, and caregivers, there are also resources such as drug use hotlines, non-profit organizations, and mental health and well-being services. Trained experts are available to provide help in key areas such as substance abuse disorders and treatment options, crisis counseling, mental health support, and more.

At the end of this lesson, you will write down three adults in your life and be provided with a few resources available to you when you need help.

Building your network is an important step in advocating for yourself. Now that you have this network of adults and resources in mind, let's think about how and when you should ask for help.

38% of disciplinary actions in Florida schools involve drugs and illicit substances.


Parents and trusted resources make up a youth's trust network.




3.3 ADVOCATING FOR YOU

Overview

This section emphasizes the importance of participants advocating for themselves, what it means, and examples of *how* to advocate for themselves. Participants will develop a personal message that can be their go-to response when faced with a challenging situation like refusing opioids or other substances.


 **KEY TAKEAWAY:** How, when, and who to ask (and keep asking) to get help.

 **TIME:** 10 minutes

 **RESOURCES NEEDED:**

- Instructor Script
- Activity: My Personal Message Worksheet

INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

 Advocating for YOU, or self-advocacy, means speaking up for yourself, your beliefs, and asking for help when you need it. Self-advocacy takes everything we've been talking about and applying it.



It only takes **two salt-sized grains** of fentanyl to kill someone.

- It means knowing what stresses you out and how you typically respond.
- It means thinking through healthy coping strategies to help you deal with challenging situations.
- It means knowing what's important to you in order to establish personal boundaries.
- It means forming your trust network with adults and resources that can help you.
- It means knowing **your why**.

Knowing what matters to you and why can help you advocate for yourself in situations that may have been intimidating in the past.

Here are a few scenarios that demonstrate how your why can help you advocate for yourself:

Instructor Note: You may choose to read some or all of these. The idea is to move participants *from* what they've learned in each lesson *toward* personal application.

Reflection: How does knowing what is important to you and why impact your daily decisions about using or not using opioids and other substances?

Scenario 1

- You have routinely gone out with friends after practice but have started to notice that you're sluggish the next day and have trouble focusing in class and on tests. You decide that you will no longer go out after practice so that you can get 8 hours of sleep each night.

Decision: You decline invitations to go out at night after practice.

Your Why: Your classes and your entire day are much easier when you get 8 hours of sleep each night.

It's easy for you to stick to this boundary around your time by saying no to this type of invitation because you know it's not worth it to wake up late and struggle through the next day.

Scenario 2

- You have a tendency to react to test-related stress by avoiding it at all costs, but that has led to two failed tests. You decide to study with a friend prior to the next test to try and bring up your grade.

Decision: You ask a friend for help studying.

Your Why: You want to handle academic stress in a healthy way and ultimately do better on tests.

Knowing your tendency to avoid studying for tests helps you identify the healthy coping skill of asking a friend for help.

Scenario 3

- You have a relative who struggles with addiction, and you've seen the toll it takes on everyone in the family. You just don't want to take the chance that you may struggle as well. So you have a hard rule that you always say no to drinking with friends and ensure you are not in situations where drinking will be present.

Decision: You do not drink and avoid situations where alcohol will be present.

Your Why: You have a relative who struggles with addiction and don't want to take a chance that you could too.

These are clear examples of how knowing your WHY directly influences the decisions you make. Knowing why something is important to you makes it less likely you'll cross your own boundaries or forget about them altogether. It may not always be easy to advocate for yourself in a situation where it seems like you're doing things differently than your friends. However, knowing your why helps you feel confident in making choices that fit your goals, values, and beliefs. It helps you know what you're saying yes to.

Fentanyl slows the respiratory system,
causing apnea and other breathing problems while sleeping. It may also cause hypoxia, where not enough oxygen reaches the brain.

Notes

Reflection: Ask students to reflect on what information might be helpful to them when considering whether to use or not use opioids or other drugs or when advocating for themselves for others.

Overdoses kill more U.S. citizens than breast cancer, guns, and car crashes combined.

And, there are different ways you can ask for help.

Ask for More Information

For example, advocating for yourself can be as simple as asking for more information about a topic, like:

- What really happens to your body when you vape?
- Does the school have any groups or support for people who have experienced bullying?
- Can I get addicted to pain pills after taking them for wisdom tooth surgery?

As we discussed in Lesson 1, asking for more information - knowing the facts - can help you make informed choices that will allow you to meet your future goals.

Be Open

Advocating for yourself and your needs can also mean being open about what you’re experiencing, even when it’s hard. This could look like telling an adult (e.g. parent, teacher, coach, etc.):

- I’m not feeling like myself lately. I think I want to talk to someone about my mental health.
- Lots of people in my grade are vaping. I know it’s bad for you, but I’m tempted to try it.
- I’m feeling overwhelmed juggling school, a part-time job, and my responsibilities at home. I’m getting headaches and am having trouble sleeping. I just want something that will make me feel better.

Asking for help sooner gives your parent(s), guardian, and caregiver the opportunity to determine the resources, services, or extra support you need before the situation becomes worse or you turn to unhealthy coping strategies. And if asking for help doesn’t work the first time, keep asking until you get the help you need.

3.4 ADVOCATING FOR A FRIEND

Overview

In addition to advocating for themselves, it’s important for participants to understand their unique position in recognizing when a friend or family member may need help. This section discusses approaches and strategies for advocating for a friend and culminates in them developing an action plan for advocating for themselves and others.

KEY TAKEAWAY: You’re in a unique position to notice when a friend needs help and to be an advocate for them.

TIME: 7 minutes

- RESOURCES NEEDED:**
- Instructor Script
 - Activity: Advocacy Action Plan Worksheet

INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

Some of you may have a friend who is struggling. Maybe they are struggling with feeling overwhelmed by everyday stressors or with defining decisions such as whether to try opioids or other drugs. You may notice a friend has a problem with drug abuse, and you recognize they need help. They may need you to advocate for them in some way.



Abuse of prescription drugs can cause: sedation, heart attack, memory loss, cognitive damage, suicidal thoughts, seizures, tremors, or death.

When someone is really struggling, whether with excessive stress, mental health challenges, or drug addiction, it can feel impossible for them to get help for themselves. They may not even realize how bad things have gotten. Friends are in a great position to notice changes in someone's mood or behavior and be an advocate to get them the help they need.

Do Some Homework

If you think a friend is struggling with drug abuse, take some time to do your homework. This goes back to knowing the facts. All this means is taking a few minutes to learn about the effects of opioids and other drugs.

Doing your homework can also mean taking a few minutes ahead of time to think through, and even write out, what you're going to say.

Start the Conversation

Having conversations like this can be hard, but here are some examples of ways you can get the conversation started to help advocate for a friend:



- **Talk to them about your concerns.** Using "I" statements and open-ended questions lets them know what you've observed and what has caused you to feel concerned.
 - I noticed you haven't wanted to get together lately. So, I'm checking to see how you're doing.
 - Last night your words sounded slurred, and I saw an empty beer can in your bag. I'm worried that you've been drinking, and I want you to know I'm here for you.
- **Bring in a parent or guardian.** It may feel uncomfortable or like you're telling on them if you talk to an adult, but nothing is more important than your friend's health, safety, and well-being.
 - I'm concerned about your safety, and I think it's time to talk to an adult about this to get the best kind of help for you. I know this is scary to think about, so I'll be there for the conversation if you want. Who do you think would be best to talk to first?
 - Should we talk to your parent or someone else you trust? I know that might seem scary, but I can go with you, if it helps.
- **Let them know what support you can provide.** Giving examples of how you can be there for them can be especially helpful.
 - I've had times when it's been difficult to manage my anxiety too. Would it be helpful to see my list of coping strategies or make a list for you together?

It can be hard to think about when and how to help a friend in need, and you might even feel scared to do it.

Let's do an activity where you can start to think about how you might be able to advocate for a friend in need.

High school students who legitimately use prescription opioids are 33% more likely to abuse opioids after high school.

For more help with talking to a friend about opioid or drug use, visit: <https://TheFactsYourFuture.org/help-your-friends/>

Notes

How to Get Help

If you know someone has issues with continued opioid or substance use, seek professional help. A doctor can screen for signs of **drug use** and related health conditions and suggest possible next steps. Other more immediate resources include:

988 Florida Lifeline

Call, text, or chat 988 to be connected to trained counselors.

988LIFELINE.ORG

CORE Network

A long-term substance use disorder recovery program designed to establish a coordinated system of care for those seeking treatment for substance use disorder.

FLCORENETWORK.COM

iSaveFL

Drug overdose is a nationwide epidemic and an increasing number of Floridians are losing their lives to overdose - you can help save a life with naloxone.

ISAVEFL.COM

Local Services

If you or someone you know is in need of substance abuse and/or mental health services, our local managing entities can help you locate available programs.

**MYFLFAMILIES.COM/
SAMH-GET-HELP**

Addressing Prevention with Youth

Listen

A young person may come to you for advice, or you may notice concerning changes in behavior. Refrain from judgment. Listen, and try to learn more about what's going on.

Talk early and often

Regular conversations about the risks of opioids and other substances can help. Have a prevention plan, and address drug use in different ways throughout the year.

Start with the facts

Discuss the mental and physical health impacts of drugs. Focus on the harm drug use can do to academics and relationships.

Practice

Consider taking time to role play various scenarios about coping with stress, what to do if a friend offers you opioids or other drugs, or what to do if a friend needs help.

The Facts. Your Future. is a multifaceted initiative led by Florida's First Lady, Casey DeSantis, to heighten youth understanding of the dangerous and life-altering effects of drug use.

Get more Facts for
Teens about **Opioids
and Substance Abuse**

TheFactsYourFuture.org

