

Social Media & Substance Use

A Resource for Parents

**33.9% of youth surveyed
see youth their age use
alcohol on Snapchat**



**30.7% of youth surveyed
see youth their age use
marijuana on Snapchat**

48% of Snapchat users are 15-25 years old. Instagram is the second leading social media platform for youth. Students in Grant County reported being able to buy/sell items such as vapes via Snapchat in March 2021.

Prevention Tip: Talk about social media early and often - before youth even have access to the internet and devices. The American Pediatric Association recommends talking to youth about substance use as early as 9 and studies show that youth who have had these conversations with a parent/guardian are 50% less likely to use substances.

Within months of hearing it first from youth in Grant County, stories of drug dealing via Snapchat became common throughout the US and even across the globe. , such as the story found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR3OGAs0dk>

Prevention Tip: Monitor youth's online activity. Be on the app to see what they're posting and who they're talking to. Use apps that provide parental controls.

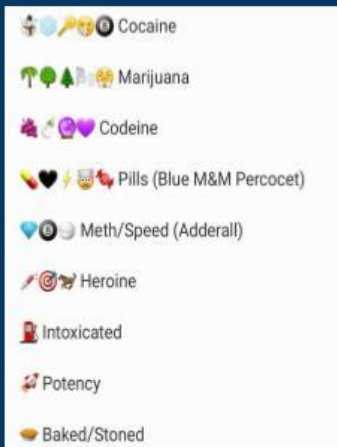
Know the Lingo

#HASHTAGS

#420 = Marijuana
#M30 = Percocet
#TINA = Meth
#MOLLY = Ecstasy

Work like a hyperlink - when you click on the #hashtag, you can see post with similar content from other people.

Emojis



Acronyms

DOC = drug of choice
CD9 = parents in the area
PAL = parents are listening
PAW = parents are watching

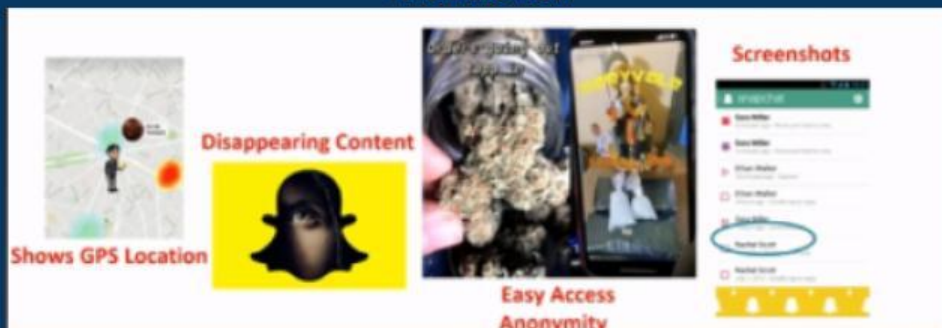
Several variations of each can be used. (i.e. MIL = Mom is listening, DAW = Dad is watching, etc.)

These are just some examples. This is not an exclusive list.

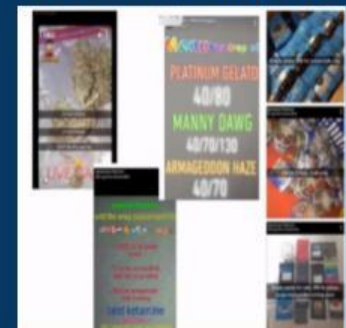
Know what they're talking about by talking with them. Communication should be open, honest, consistent, and ongoing.

Prevention Tip: Let them know you are a solid source of information and provide them the facts. Let them know they can talk to you without fear - allow them to ask questions and ask them open-ended questions (without simple 'yes' or 'no' answers) to find out what they know and what they think about substance use issues. Have conversations in relaxed settings such as during a car ride or commercial break. Look for opportunities to discuss substance use issues in everyday life situations (i.e. That movie scene had a red solo cup, what do you think it had in it?).

Know the Risk

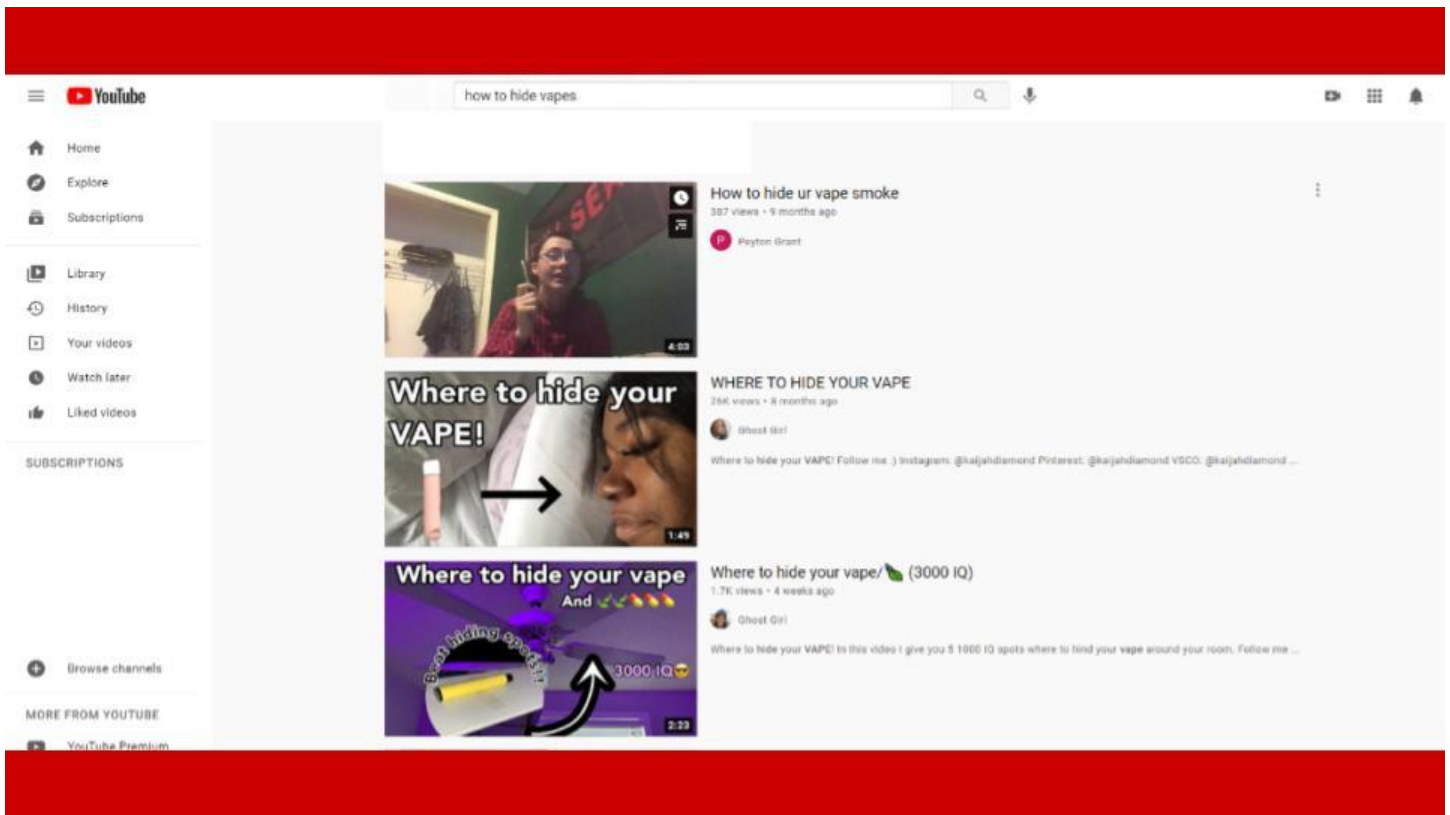


Know What the Deals Look Like



It's important to know the signs and risks of both substance use and social media dangers; however, it's equally important to create a game plan.

Prevention Tip: Let your youth know it is ok and normal to just say "no" and practice it! If they find themselves in a situation they can't handle, give them a chance to save face - create a code word. If they text/call that code, call to say they didn't do chores, finish homework, etc. so that you have to come get them and take them home.



Snapchat is not the only social media concern connected to substance use. Youth can search how to hide their vapes using videos created by their peers or they can learn how to 'lean and dab'...nope, it's not just a song - it's also a method for maximum inhale of marijuana.

Prevention Tip: Create an internet/social media contract so that youth know what is/is not acceptable and the consequences for inappropriate usage. Have access to their passwords and do random checks on their devices.

Unfortunately, substance use trends (i.e. methods of consumption and concealment) are constantly changing. Remember, you're not in this alone. It may not be possible for one person to stay "on top of" a steady stream of information but together we can share resources. Partner with other parents. Share what you know and ask them to share what they know. Prevention is a team effort.

#SocialMediaMonday isn't just a concern for youth substance use prevention.
We want our youth to be safe and healthy in every way!

Other issues can range from...

- Elementary students' exposure to nudity/graphic sex acts in video games such as Roblox
- Depictions of self-harm that do not also show those characters receiving the help they need in shows like Netflix's *Ginny & Georgia*

You may not be aware of every social media concern as it happens.
If you talk early and often, your youth will be prepared for these situations and know that you are a trusted source for information.

You can also...

- Connect with other parents or adults involved in your youth's life. Help each other stay up to date on these issues.
- Reach out when you have questions (your local coalition, Family Resource Youth Service Center Coordinators, counselors, etc.) If you have questions, other parents might too! If we don't have an answer, we'll find it. Tell us what you need for your family to thrive!

Having a hard time starting a positive social media conversation with your youth? Check out this short video: <https://www.facebook.com/imjoshshipp/videos/1158389404672731/> or the slightly longer version "Digital Citizenship Speaker" on Josh Shipp's YouTube channel.