

PREVENTION

INTERVENTION

RETENTION



SUBSTANCE USE
TOOLKIT

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

3rd Millennium Classrooms has been a leader in substance abuse prevention and intervention since 1999, when we introduced the nation's **first online alcohol education course**. Over the years, we have expanded our programs to cover a wide range of substances and wellness topics, ensuring that individuals have access to personalized experiences that change behavior in a meaningful way. As we celebrate our **25th year of business**, we are proud to introduce this **Substance Use Toolkit**, which pairs nicely with any of our courses, and will provide resources and exercises for individuals seeking effective refusal skills.

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AT A GLANCE

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT SUBSTANCES

ALCOHOL

Physical, Emotional, and Social Consequences

Here's how alcohol affects the body **physically** including short-term and long-term consequences:

- **Short-term effects:** problems with memory, speech impairment/slurring, impaired vision, decreased motor skills, poor balance, increased confidence and lack of inhibition, mood and behavior changes, etc.
- **Long-term effects:** heart disease, depression, dementia, cancers such as liver, breast, throat, and intestine cancer, seizures and epilepsy, diabetes, sleep apnea, liver damage, including cirrhosis, can lead to liver failure, etc. (Slivinski, 2019).

How could your physical impairment in a scenario where alcohol is being used affect your ability to make safe decisions?

Reflect on a time when you or someone you know experienced the physical effects of alcohol. Have them describe how it felt and the impact it had on their health, abilities, and choices.

Here are some ways alcohol can influence **emotions, often leading to mood swings, heightened aggression, or sadness.**

- Alcohol is a depressant, which can exacerbate feelings of sadness or anxiety. Individuals who misuse alcohol may also struggle with mood swings, irritability, or feelings of guilt and shame after drinking episodes.
- Around 30-50% of individuals with alcohol dependence also suffer from co-occurring mental health disorders, such as depression or anxiety (NIAAA, 2021).

What emotional consequences might you face after binge drinking? How could this impact your relationships and mental health?

Have you ever noticed a change in your emotions when drinking alcohol? Did it make you feel more relaxed, or did it leave you feeling anxious or sad afterward? How long did these feelings last?

Alcohol can affect you socially and legally:

- It's estimated that 53% of adults have been negatively affected by someone else's drinking, such as through emotional stress, disrupted relationships, or financial impact (Alcohol.org, 2020). This shows how alcohol misuse can affect not only the drinker but also their relationships.
- Individuals may become unreliable, aggressive, or distant, straining friendships and family connections.
- Alcohol misuse can lead to significant legal consequences, including DUI charges, fines, and jail time, as well as financial burdens such as legal fees, increased insurance premiums, and job loss. These repercussions extend beyond health, affecting both the individual's financial stability and their future opportunities.

How can alcohol misuse interfere with your professional life? What are some potential long-term consequences if you don't make changes?

Learn more about our alcohol-related courses and how they use evidence-based strategies and individualized experiences at 3rdmil.com.

Alcohol Prevention



Alcohol Wise is an alcohol prevention course that uses personalized feedback and evidence-based strategies to help individuals understand their drinking behaviors, risks, and consequences. The course offers different versions tailored to various age groups, including high school students and college-aged individuals, addressing age-specific concerns like academic impact, social behavior, and campus resources. Each version aims to reduce high-risk drinking and promote healthier habits.

Alcohol Intervention



Greek Wise is a comprehensive course for fraternity and sorority members that covers topics such as hazing, alcohol use, sexual assault, and bystander awareness, providing personalized feedback to promote safer, more responsible behaviors.

Under the Influence focuses on adults, helping individuals reflect on their drinking habits, health impacts, and legal risks, while creating a personalized plan for behavior change. **Under the Influence JV**, tailored for juveniles, emphasizes similar lessons with added focus on peer pressure, underage drinking laws, and strategies for avoiding alcohol-related issues, with both courses utilizing personalized feedback.

CANNABIS

Short-term Effects, Long-term Effects, Social Consequences, and Misconceptions

Here's how cannabis affects the body **physically** including short-term and long-term consequences:

- **Short-term effects:** Smoking marijuana produces immediate effects, while ingesting it takes 30 minutes to an hour to feel the impact (NIH, 2019). Short-term side effects include difficulty thinking, impaired memory, altered senses, mood changes, and impaired reflexes. Users may experience poor decision-making, memory lapses, enhanced sensory perception, mood swings, and slower physical responses.
- **Long-term effects:** Prolonged cannabis use can lead to cognitive impairment, dependence, and mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. Regular use, especially during adolescence, can affect brain development and lead to long-term memory and learning difficulties.

How does cannabis affect your reaction time and judgment while driving? Why might driving under the influence of cannabis be just as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol?

Cannabis use can **impact your mental health** and lead to other **social consequences**:

- Regular or heavy use of cannabis has been linked to worsening mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, visual and auditory hallucinations, delusions that prevent the brain from processing information, and even psychosis.
- Using this substance during adolescence or early adulthood can negatively impact brain development and increase vulnerability to mental health disorders.
- Cannabis can lead to social consequences that extend far beyond personal health. These consequences often include strained relationships with family and friends, legal trouble, and declining academic or job performance. **While cannabis has been legalized in certain regions, its misuse still carries stigma and can result in negative social outcomes, such as damaged reputations or lost opportunities.**

“How could regular cannabis use affect your personal relationships or future goals? What impact could it have on your reputation in school or at work?”

Can using cannabis to manage stress or anxiety sometimes make these issues worse? Why might cannabis use lead to a cycle of increased dependence to manage mental health?

Here are some common **myths** to dispel about cannabis use:

Myth #1: Cannabis is not addictive or a gateway drug.

Fact: According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 9% of people who use cannabis will become dependent on it, and this number rises to 17% for those who start using as a teenager (2019). Cannabis alone is not a “gateway” to harder drugs; instead, other influences often play a more critical role in an individual’s progression to substance misuse, such as environment, genetics, and personal circumstances.

Myth #2: You can’t overdose on cannabis.

Fact: While a lethal overdose of cannabis is extremely rare, people can experience acute cannabis toxicity, commonly known as “green out.” This can cause intense anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, vomiting, and in severe cases, hospital visits. These effects are especially pronounced with high-potency products like edibles or concentrates.

Emergency room visits due to cannabis-related incidents increased by 25% between 2016 and 2019, particularly due to edible consumption, where individuals misjudge doses (SAMHSA, 2020)

Myth #3: Cannabis helps focus and creativity.

Fact: Cannabis can initially produce a feeling of relaxation or creativity in some individuals, but studies show that it impairs short-term memory and executive function, which are crucial for tasks requiring focus. In fact, heavy use has been shown to reduce motivation and productivity over time, especially in tasks requiring critical thinking and sustained attention.

Research has shown that long-term cannabis users perform worse on memory and attention tasks compared to non-users (Meier et al., 2017).

Myth #4: Cannabis is legal in my state, so I won’t face any legal consequences.

Fact: While cannabis has been legalized in some states and countries, it remains illegal under federal law in many places, including the United States. In addition to federal restrictions, state laws often have strict age limits, generally requiring individuals to be 21 years or older to purchase or use recreational cannabis. Minors, even in states where cannabis is legal for adults, can face serious legal consequences for possession or use.

Furthermore, legalization often comes with restrictions, and ignoring those can result in legal consequences, like DUIs or job termination.

Just because something is legal, does that mean it has no risks? Can legal substances still have serious social or professional consequences?

What other activities or coping strategies could you use to relax, manage stress, or handle social anxiety without relying on cannabis?

Cannabis Prevention



The **Cannabis Wise** courses are designed to educate users about the risks and consequences of cannabis use. Both courses emphasize prevention, providing personalized feedback on cannabis use patterns, the risks of edibles and concentrates, and the potential for addiction, with content customized for

Each of our intervention and prevention courses have a version tailored for secondary school students, and a version for college-aged or adult users.

Cannabis Intervention



THC 101 offers personalized feedback to help users recognize health risks, legal consequences, and behavioral patterns related to cannabis use.

THC 101 JV, on the other hand, is tailored specifically for juveniles, focusing on similar risks while emphasizing state-specific legal concerns and developmental impacts. Both courses encourage positive behavior changes through personalized plans.

NICOTINE

Short-term Effects, Long-term Effects, Common Myths, and Social and Financial Consequences

Here's how nicotine affects the body **physically** including short-term and long-term consequences:

- **Short-term effects:** Increased heart rate and blood pressure, dizziness and lightheadedness, and reduced appetite
- **Long-term effects:** Physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms that lead to addiction, cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, cognitive impairment, and increased risk of other addictions.

While nicotine itself is not a carcinogen, it plays a critical role in promoting cancer by sustaining smoking habits, which expose users to the numerous carcinogenic chemicals found in tobacco. Smoking is linked to several types of cancer, including lung, throat, mouth, and esophageal cancer. Even vaping may expose users to harmful chemicals like formaldehyde (American Cancer Society, 2021).

How do you feel about the fact that nicotine is highly addictive? How does this influence your view of people who struggle to quit?

Have you ever felt pressured to vape in social situations, or have you seen others using e-cigarettes? How did that experience make you feel, and how did you respond?

Here are some common **myths to dispel about nicotine use:**

Myth #1: Smokeless tobacco and vaping are safer than smoking cigarettes.

Fact: These products contain carcinogens that increase the risk of oral cancers, gum disease, and tooth decay. They also deliver nicotine in high concentrations, making them highly addictive and harmful to cardiovascular health.

Cases of vaping-related lung injuries have led to hospitalization and even death, particularly among those using **black-market products or THC-containing vape pens.**

Myth #2: Vaping is a good way to quit smoking.

Fact: Many people who try to quit smoking with vaping end up dual using — continuing to use both cigarettes and e-cigarettes, maintaining nicotine addiction rather than reducing it.

How could you recognize the early signs of nicotine dependence in yourself or others?"

Nicotine use, whether through smoking, vaping, or smokeless tobacco products, not only has significant health risks but also carries **social and financial consequences:**

Social stigmatization, strained relationships, and workplace limitations can isolate nicotine users, while the financial burden of ongoing product purchases, medical expenses, and lost opportunities can add up significantly over time. Reflecting on these factors may help individuals make informed decisions about their nicotine use and consider the broader implications on their lives.

While e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches like ZYN are often marketed as **cheaper alternatives** to traditional cigarettes, they still carry significant financial costs over time. If someone uses one disposable vape every 2-3 days, their monthly costs could exceed \$150, leading to an annual cost of about \$1,800 (Vapor4Life, 2023). A can of ZYN costs between \$4 and \$6, meaning a daily user could spend \$1,800 to \$2,160 annually (ZYN, 2023). Even moderate users who consume one can per week would spend \$208 to \$312 annually (ZYN, 2023).

Additionally, hidden costs like increased health insurance premiums and long-term healthcare expenses related to nicotine use further contribute to the financial burden.

How does the cost of using vaping devices or nicotine pouches compare to other things you could spend that money on?

What are some long-term financial consequences of regularly buying e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches, even if the individual costs seem small at first?

Nicotine Prevention & Intervention



Nicotine 101 educates individuals about the health effects, risks, and social pressures of nicotine use, with a focus on vaping. It helps participants understand addiction, triggers, and the consequences of long-term use, offering personalized plans for quitting. The course is designed for both prevention and intervention, reinforcing non-use and guiding users toward behavior change.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE & ILLICIT DRUGS

Physical, Emotional, and Social Consequences

Here's how opioids can affect the body **physically** including short-term and long-term consequences:

- **Short-term effects:** euphoria and pain relief, drowsiness, mental fog and confusion, slowed breath and respiratory failure, elevated heart rate, anxiety, panic attacks, etc.
- **Long-term effects:** physical dependence and addiction, cognitive decline including memory, focus, and decision-making, organ damage, paranoia, hallucinations, aggression, etc.
- Misuse of prescription drugs, especially when combined with other substances, can result in life-threatening consequences like overdose.

How do you think using opioids could affect your ability to perform daily tasks, such as staying alert, working, or exercising?

If prescribed opioids for pain, how would you manage the dosage to avoid misuse? What steps would you take to prevent developing a dependency?

Here's how opioids can impact your emotions:

- **Mood swings and irritability:** While opioids may initially induce relaxation or euphoria, withdrawal or tolerance can lead to dramatic fluctuations in mood.
- **Increased anxiety and depression:** As dependence grows, many individuals experience heightened anxiety or depressive symptoms, especially between doses or during withdrawal periods.
- **Emotional Numbness:** Chronic opioid use can dull the ability to feel pleasure or emotional connection, leading to a sense of detachment from loved ones or daily activities.

Have you ever felt the need or desire to take prescription medications that don't belong to you? Do you think it was to escape from stress or other challenges in your life?

How do you think peer pressure or social situations might influence someone's decision to use opioids? How would you handle a situation where you are offered opioids?

If you noticed someone close to you misusing opioids, how would you address the situation or offer support?

Here are some more reflection questions to help you consider how using opioids would affect your social life and interpersonal relationships:

Could using opioids lead you to gravitate toward new social circles or friends who also use drugs? How might that impact your life?

How might opioid use affect your ability to be present and engaged in conversations with friends or family?

How might your relationships change if opioid use led to legal or disciplinary consequences?

Do you think opioid use could lead to feelings of guilt or shame in your relationships? How would those feelings impact your social interactions?

Prescription and Illicit Drug Prevention & Intervention



Other Drugs covers the main drug categories—opioids, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens—and includes the dangers of drugs like fentanyl and misused prescription medications such as Adderall, Vicodin, and Xanax. The course uses personalized feedback to help participants reflect on their drug use, recognize signs of addiction, and develop strategies for change.



LOOKING AT THE CONSEQUENCES OF MIXING SUBSTANCES

Mixing substances, particularly opioids with other drugs or alcohol, is extremely dangerous and significantly increase the risk of overdose, mental health issues, and long-term health consequences.

Risk of Overdose

The combination of substances—like opioids and alcohol—enhances their depressant effects, significantly increasing the risk of fatal respiratory failure. A study by Hernandez et al. (2019) found that the efficacy of naloxone, a life-saving drug used to reverse opioid overdoses, decreases when multiple substances, especially alcohol and sedatives, are involved. This makes overdoses from mixed drug use more difficult to treat effectively.

Impaired Judgment & Increased Risk of Accidents

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) warns that mixing opioids with alcohol increases the likelihood of accidents and falls due to the severe impact on cognitive abilities and motor function (NIDA, 2021). The combination of both substances slows reaction time and coordination, making individuals more vulnerable to physical injuries.



Mental Health and Emotional Instability

Mixing opioids with other drugs like marijuana, stimulants, or sedatives can worsen existing mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. Chronic misuse of these substances can lead to more severe psychological symptoms, including paranoia, hallucinations, or psychosis.

Long-Term Health Consequences

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) reports that individuals who mix opioids with alcohol are at a higher risk of liver disease, particularly cirrhosis, due to the compounding toxic effects on the liver (NIH, 2020).
- Research published in the Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology found that chronic users of both opioids and stimulants showed a higher incidence of brain abnormalities and cognitive impairment compared to users of either drug alone (Andrews & Dugan, 2021).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that individuals who misuse opioids alongside other drugs are at a higher risk of poly drug addiction, complicating treatment and recovery efforts (SAMHSA, 2020).

Legal Consequences

The penalties for driving under the influence DUI involving multiple substances, such as alcohol and opioids, are often harsher than those for single-substance intoxication. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that individuals caught driving under the influence of opioids and alcohol face increased legal consequences, including higher fines and longer jail sentences (NHTSA, 2019).



ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS **RECOGNIZING & RESISTING** **PEER PRESSURE**

Build resilience against peer pressure, develop effective refusal skills, and become more confident in navigating social situations where substances are involved. Write down how you think you would respond in these scenarios and/or develop a plan for how to respond better:

You're at a party with a group of friends, and they've started playing a drinking game in the living room. Laughter fills the room as they pass around shots and take turns. Suddenly, one of the players decides to leave the game, and your friend turns to you with a grin, saying, "Come on, take their place! You've gotta join in—just for a little while." They keep asking you, insisting that it's all in good fun, even though you haven't been drinking and don't really want to start.

You're at a cozy restaurant on a first date. After looking over the menu, your date casually suggests, "Let's get a drink, it'll be fun!" You politely decline and order water when the waiter arrives, but your date isn't satisfied. As the waiter reads off the drink specials, your date chimes in, "Actually, we'll have two margaritas." Even though you've already said no, they try to override your choice, leaving you feeling uncomfortable.

You're hanging out with a group of friends at someone's house on a Saturday afternoon. The room is filled with music and conversation, but soon, they pull out some weed and start passing it around. As the smell fills the air, they start urging you to take a hit, saying, "Come on, everyone's doing it. It's no big deal." You haven't smoked before and aren't really interested, but the pressure is mounting as they keep insisting.

School just ended, and you're walking with a few classmates to the nearby park. As you sit down on a bench, one of them pulls out a vape pen and starts using it, passing it around. "You should try this," one friend says, handing it to you. "It's not that strong, and it's totally safe." You've seen people vape at school before, but you've never done it, and you're not sure if you want to start.



You're out running errands and unexpectedly bump into someone you used to hang out with—and use drugs with. After catching up for a few minutes, they suggest hanging out later. “Hey, we should get together tonight, like old times,” they say, hinting at doing the same things you used to do together. It's been a while since you've seen them, and you're trying to stay on a healthier path, but they're persistent.

You're playing “Truth or Dare” with your friends during a sleepover. The dares have been silly so far, but suddenly, someone challenges you with something unexpected. They dare you to go to your parents' medicine cabinet and take some of the pills they find there. Your friends start giggling and egging you on, acting like it's just harmless fun, but you feel uneasy about the situation.

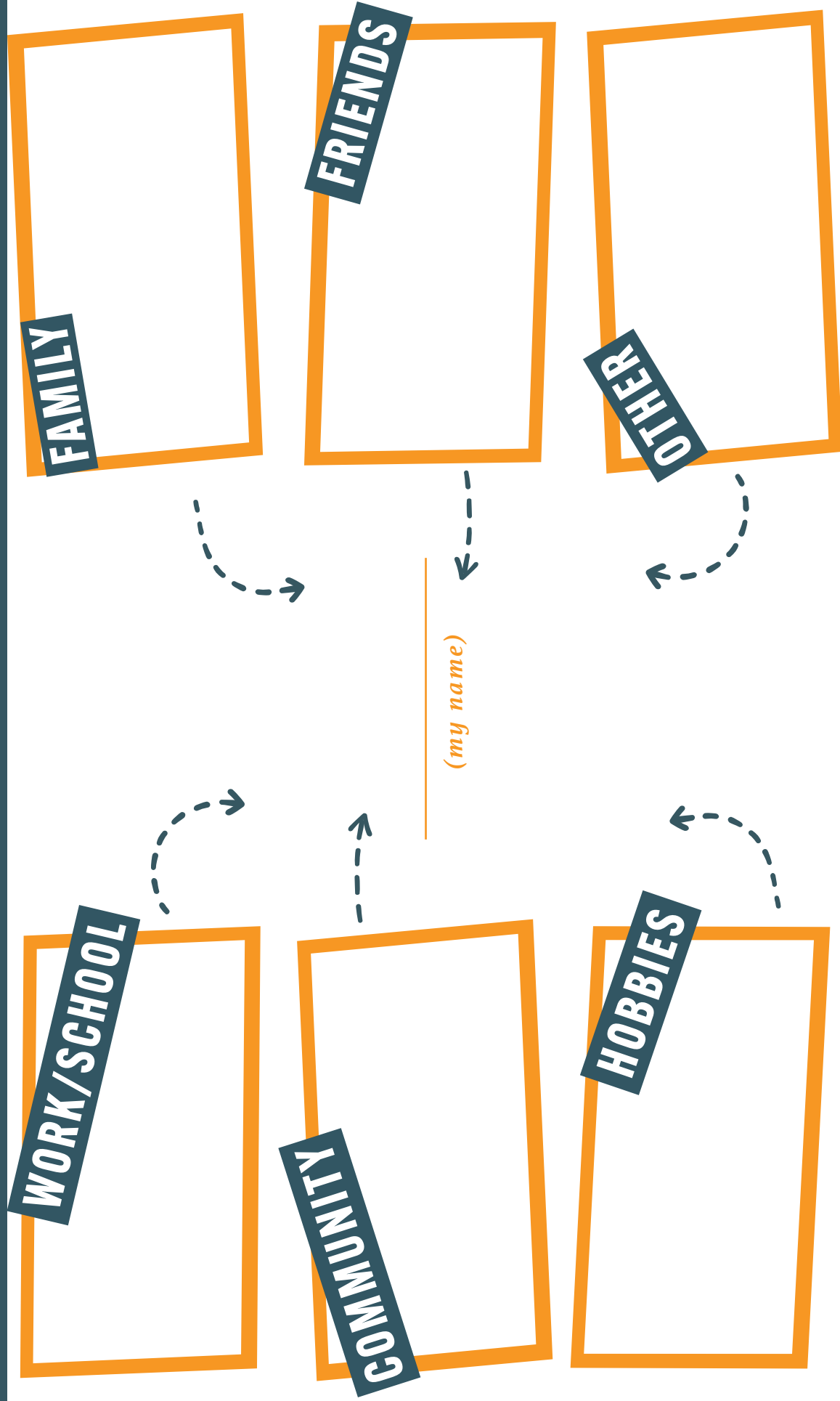
Finals week is coming up, and everyone in your dorm is stressed out. One of your roommates tells you they have a prescription for Adderall and that it helps them stay awake and focus. “Do you want some for your all-nighter? It'll help you ace that exam,” they offer. You've heard about people using prescription drugs to study, but you're worried about what it could do to your body and whether it's worth the risk.

After a fun night out, your friend offers to drive you and some others home. As you get into the car, you notice they've been drinking and have an open container in the front seat. “Don't worry, I've only had a couple, I'm fine to drive,” they say confidently. You're not comfortable with the situation, but you're unsure how to handle it without causing a scene in front of your friends.



Map Out Your

SUPPORT SYSTEM



SUBSTANCE REFUSAL

WAYS TO SAY NO THAT ARE MORE THAN "JUST SAY NO"

"I HAVE TO
DRIVE HOME
TONIGHT."

"MY PARENTS WILL BE MAD,
AND I DON'T WANT TO
DEAL WITH THAT."

"I ALREADY
HAVE A DRINK."

"I DON'T FEEL WELL RIGHT
NOW, AND DRINKING/
USING WILL MAKE
IT WORSE."

"I CAN'T HAVE A
DRINK WITH MY
MEDICATION."

"MY FAMILY HAS A HISTORY
OF ABUSING, AND I DON'T
WANT TO EXPOSE
MYSELF TO IT."

"I HAVE TO
WORK IN THE
MORNING."

"I'M NOT
WASTING MY CALORIES
ON ALCOHOL."

"I DON'T LIKE THE
WAY IT TASTES."

"I'M ALLERGIC
TO IT."



"IT GOES AGAINST MY
PERSONAL/SPIRITUAL
BELIEFS."

3RD MILLENNIUM CLASSROOMS
SUPPORT RESOURCES

3rd Millennium Classrooms | Prevention & Intervention

Our evidence-based online prevention and intervention courses were developed with industry leaders and subject matter experts to create engaging experiences that truly change behavior. Our offerings cover a broad spectrum of critical issues, including **alcohol, cannabis & THC, prescription and other drug misuse, consent and healthy relationships, bystander empowerment, nicotine and vaping, mental health, and more.** We help both individuals and organizations reach their goals.

For more information, visit ***3rdmil.com***.

National & International Hotlines

SAMHSA National Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (4357) | <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

Free, confidential 24/7 helpline offering support, treatment options, and information on mental health and substance use services across the United States.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

988 | <https://988lifeline.org/>

Available 24/7 for individuals in crisis or experiencing emotional distress, including those affected by substance use.

Addiction Treatment & Support Programs

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/>

NIDA provides comprehensive resources on substance misuse, including information on types of treatment, statistics, and guides for finding help.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

<https://www.aa.org/>

A global support group for individuals with alcohol use disorders, offering local meetings, online groups, and resources for sobriety.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

<https://www.na.org/>

A global, community-based organization offering support groups for individuals with drug dependency, focusing on peer support and 12-step recovery.

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