

TRENDS IN YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE

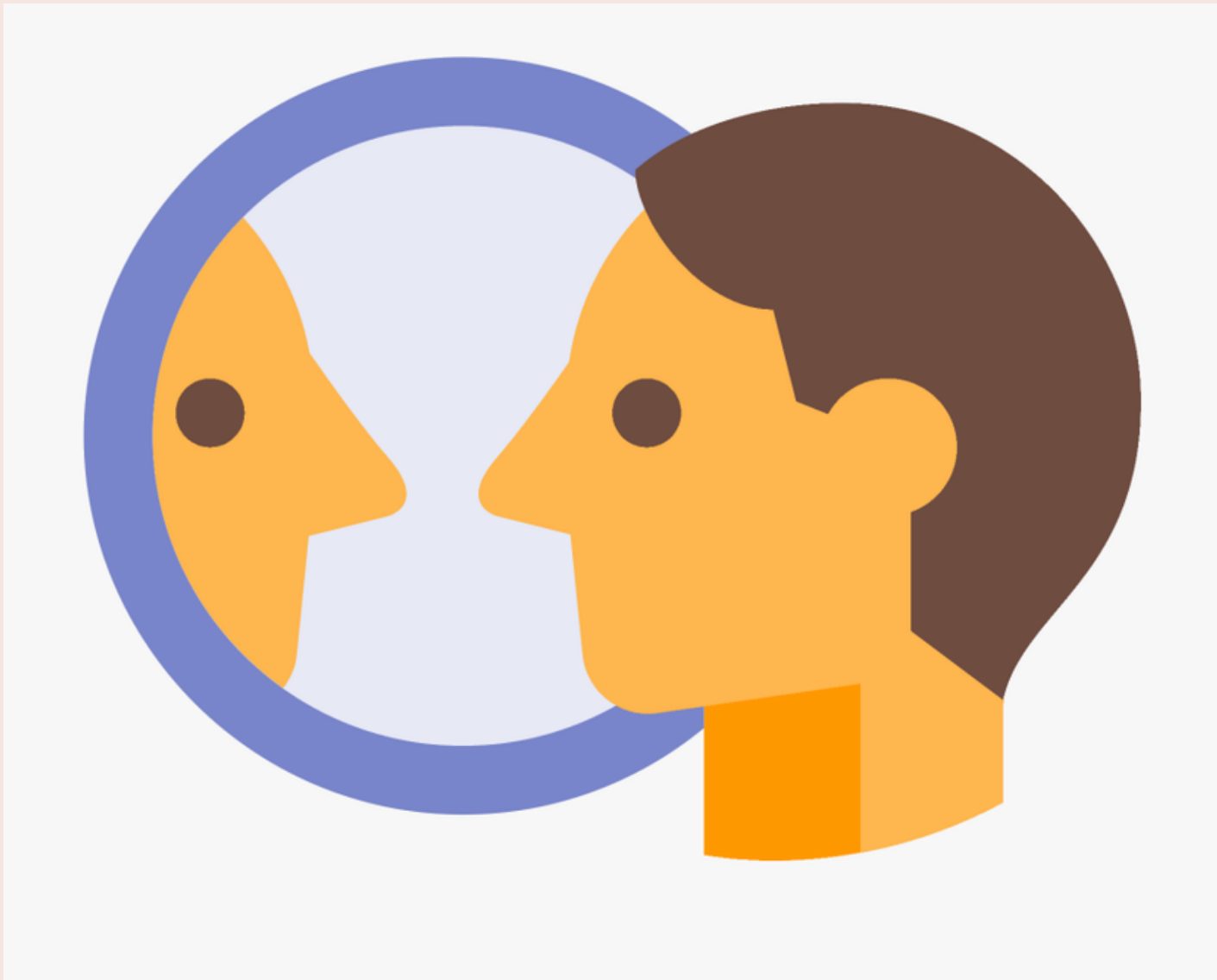
Laura Stevens



The University of Texas at Austin
Dell Medical School

REFLECTION

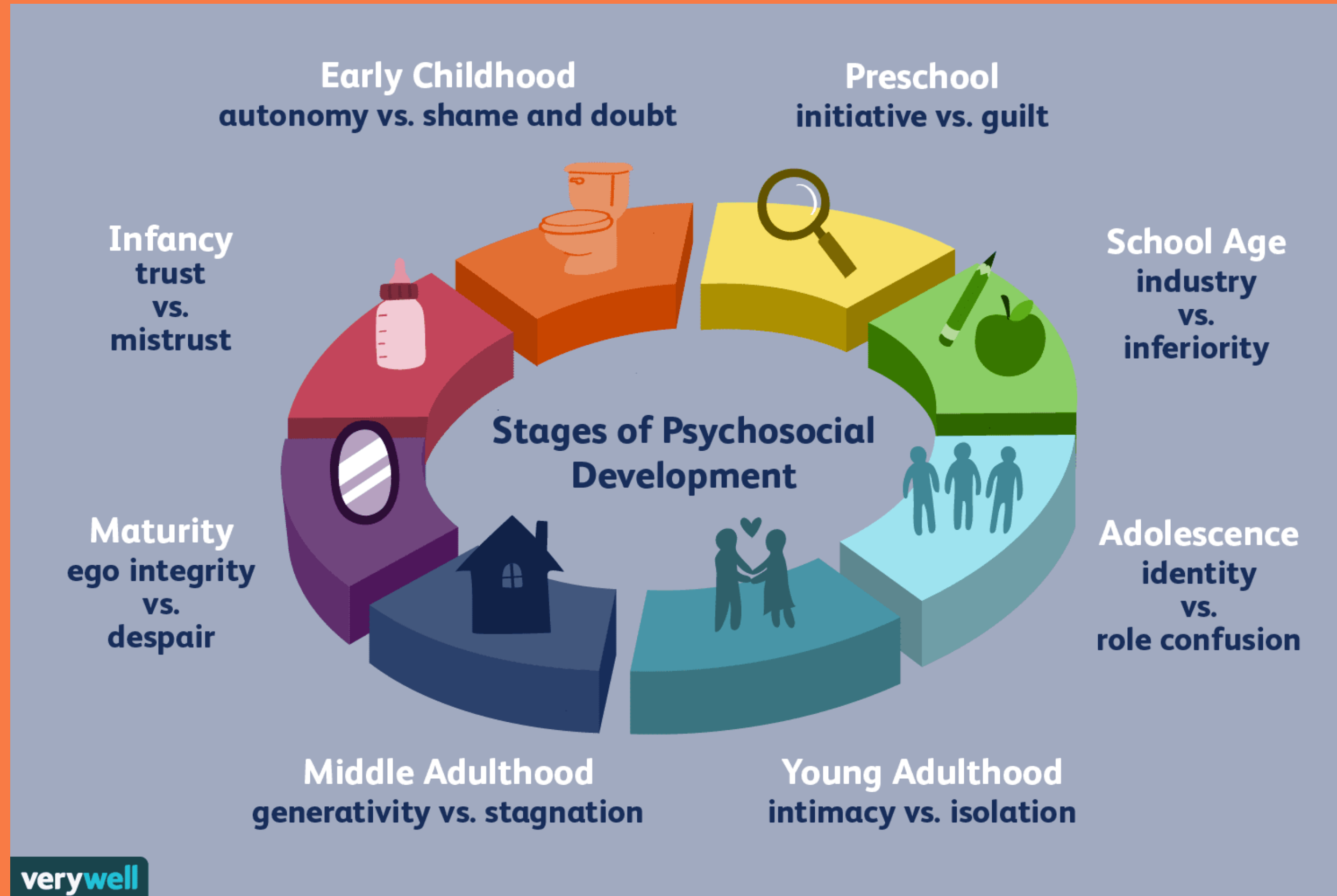
GO TO WWW.MENTI.COM
ENTER THE CODE ON THE
NEXT SCREEN



Give
yourself 1
point for
each you
have done

- failed a class
- drank alcohol before you were 21
- used a drug
- snuck out or run away
- cursed at an authority figure
- gone to school or work under the influence
- stolen something
- skipped school
- blown your paycheck
- dated someone the adults in your life didn't approve of

What defines adolescence?



What's going on in the brain during adolescence?



Second sensitive window for brain development

Development of the frontal lobe and executive functioning

Discarding unused connections

Unique Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Increased
influence from
peers and
decreased from
family members/
caregivers

Risk taking,
exploring
boundaries,
forming
independent
identities



Youth Substance Use: Some Facts

alcohol,
marijuana,
vaped
nicotine

the most used
substances for youth

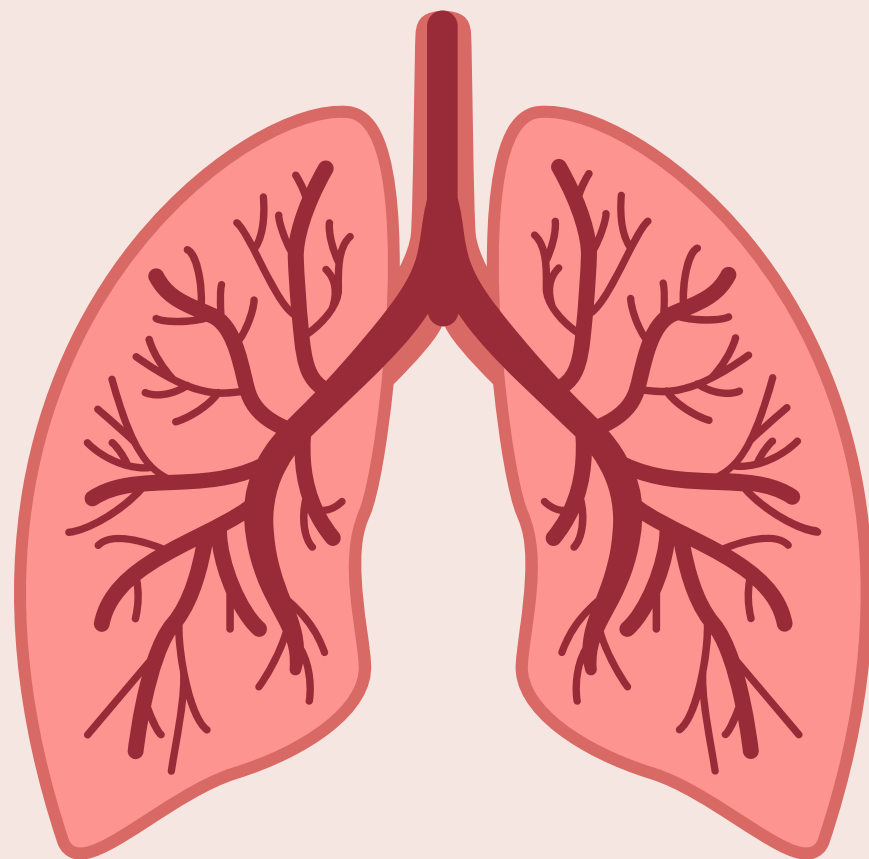
41%, 25%,
16%

the percentage of 12th,
10th, and 8th graders
who reported any
lifetime use of an illicit
substance

youth
substance
use is in
decline

declines have been
occurring for years,
most significantly in
2021

A note about inhalants

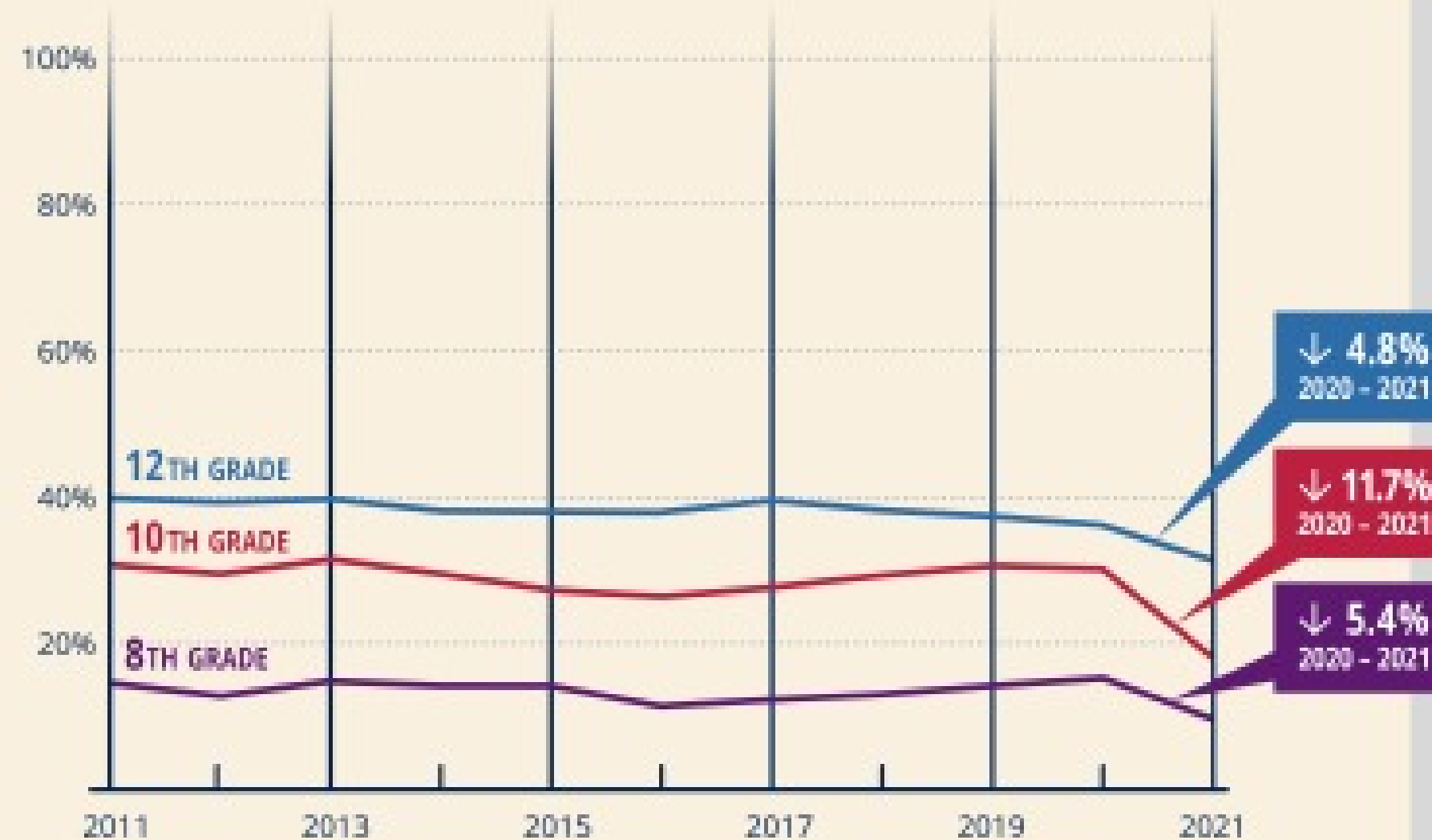


Inhalants are the most used illicit drugs among 8th graders (11%)

The youngest respondents report the highest use

Use sharply declines for 10th and 12th graders

U.S. Students Reporting Any Past-Year Illicit Drug Use*



*Illicit drug use in this survey was defined as use of marijuana, LSD, other hallucinogens, crack, other cocaine, or heroin; or any use of narcotics other than heroin, amphetamines, sedatives (barbiturates), or tranquilizers not under a doctor's orders.

Source: 2021 Monitoring the Future Survey

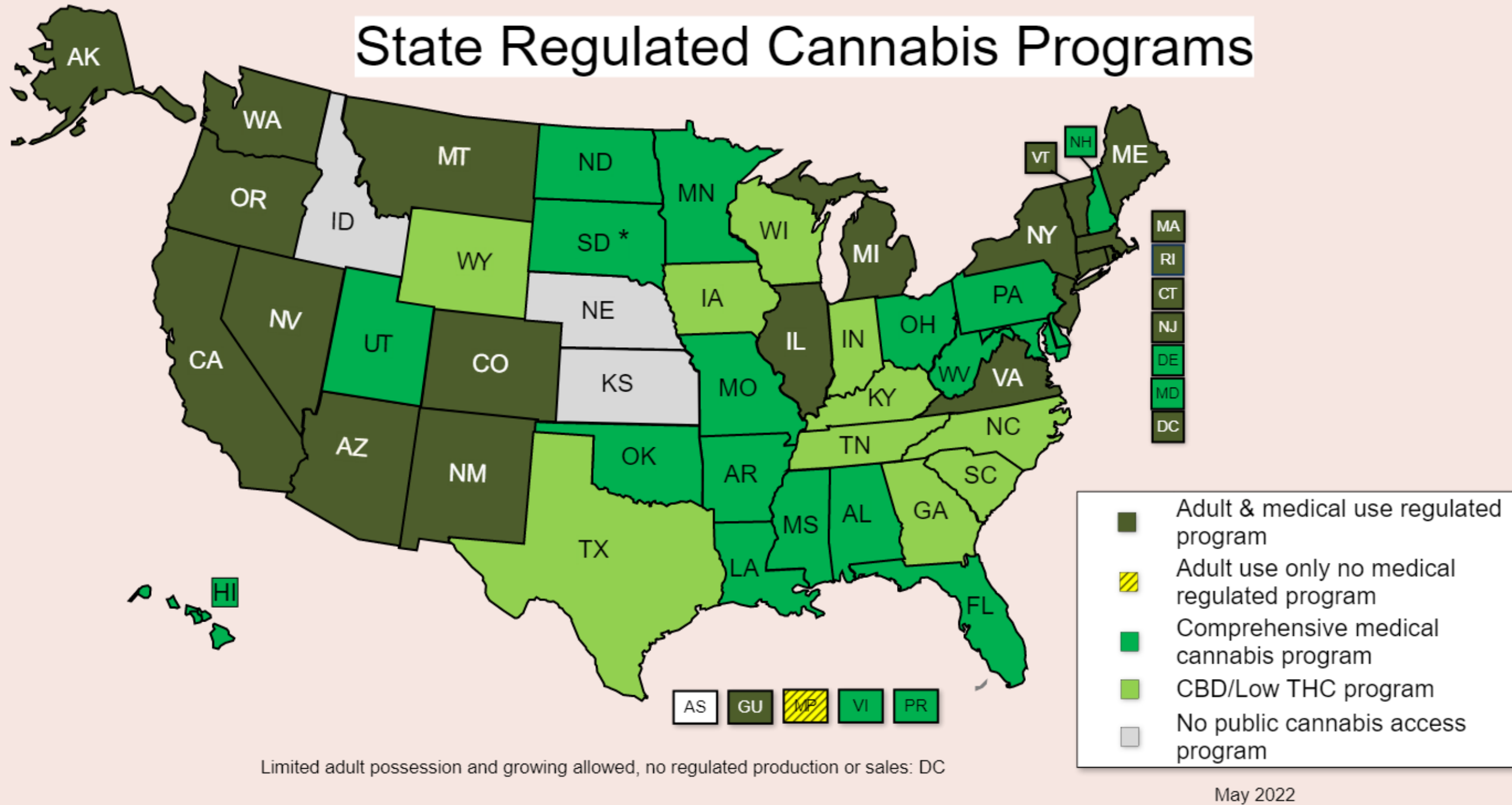
Differences by subgroups

Males report higher
use than females

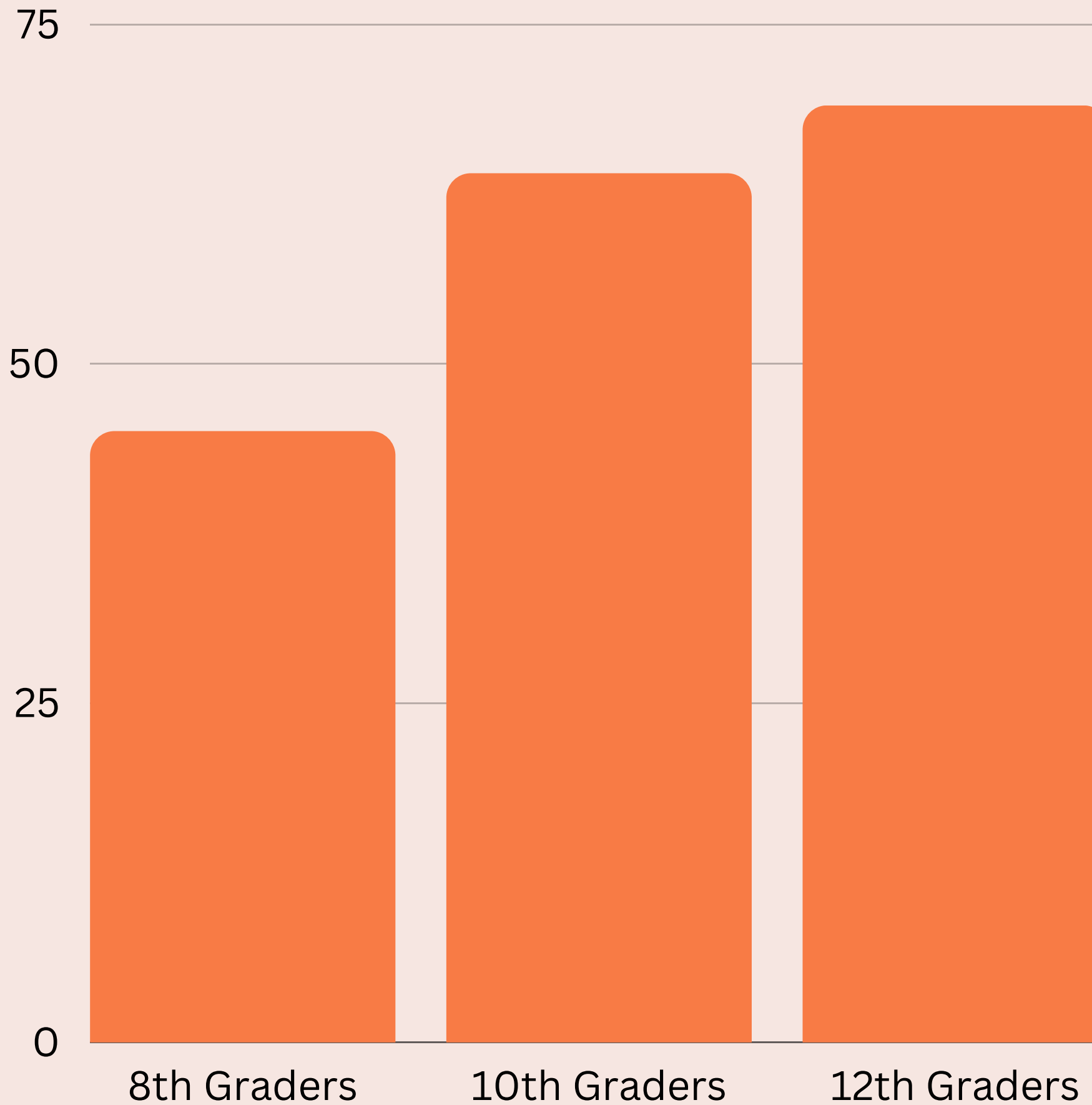
groups who say
they will probably or
definitely go to
college report lower
rates

no significant
difference by
region, pop density,
or parental
education

Let's talk about marijuana



Percentage of reported substance users who *only* use marijuana



... and alcohol

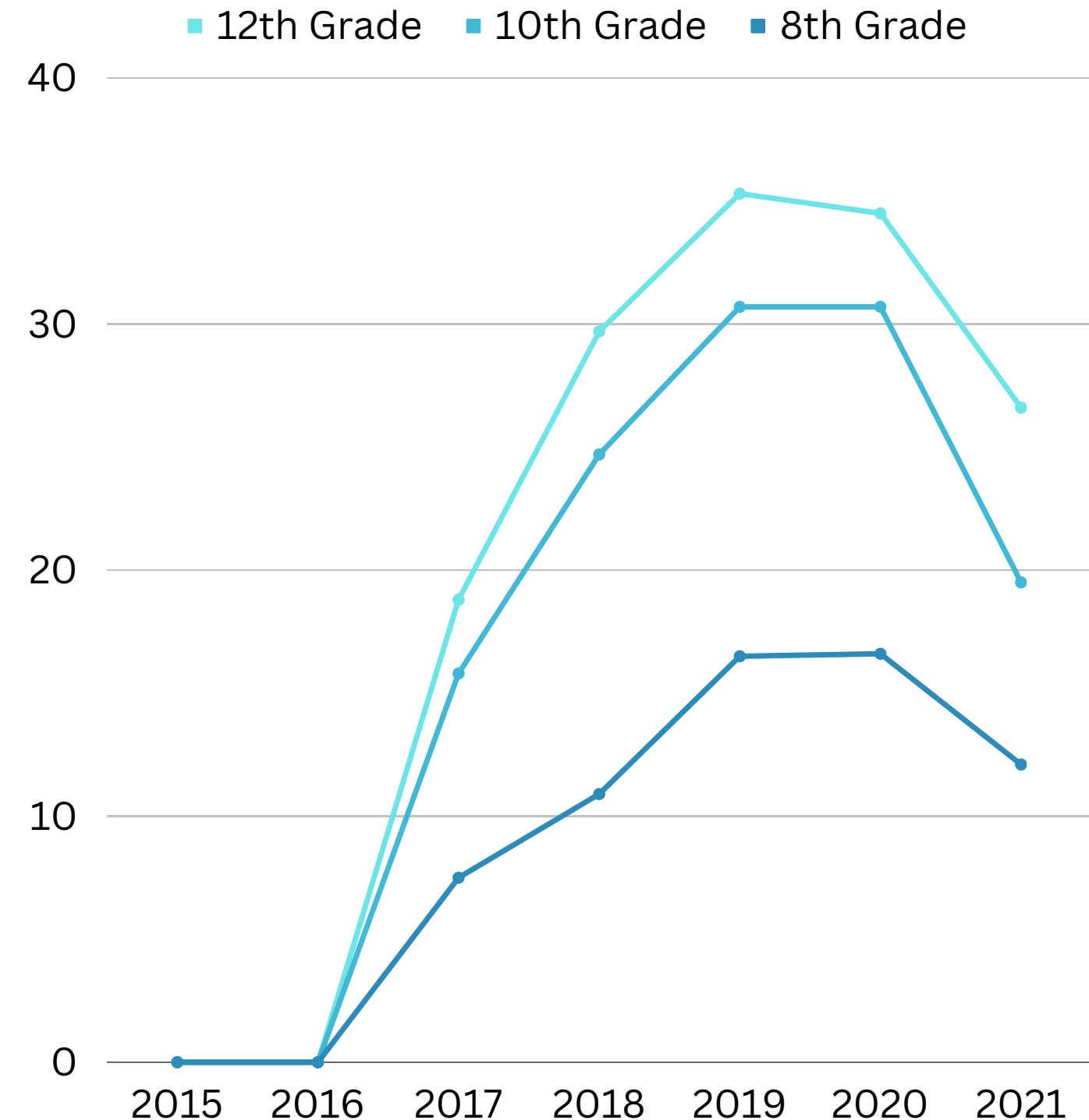


we're seeing
the lowest
levels of
alcohol use
ever

yet its use
remains more
widespread
than any illicit
drug

... and vaping

- although vaping is one of the most used substances, declines are steep
- when vaping came to prominence they marketed to youth
- federal and state laws have tackled vaping
- will we see a cohort effect?



What was notable about 2021?

We don't have an answer yet on the long-term effects related to substance use...

... but we know that mental health symptoms increased and access to resources decreased



What are the areas of concern?

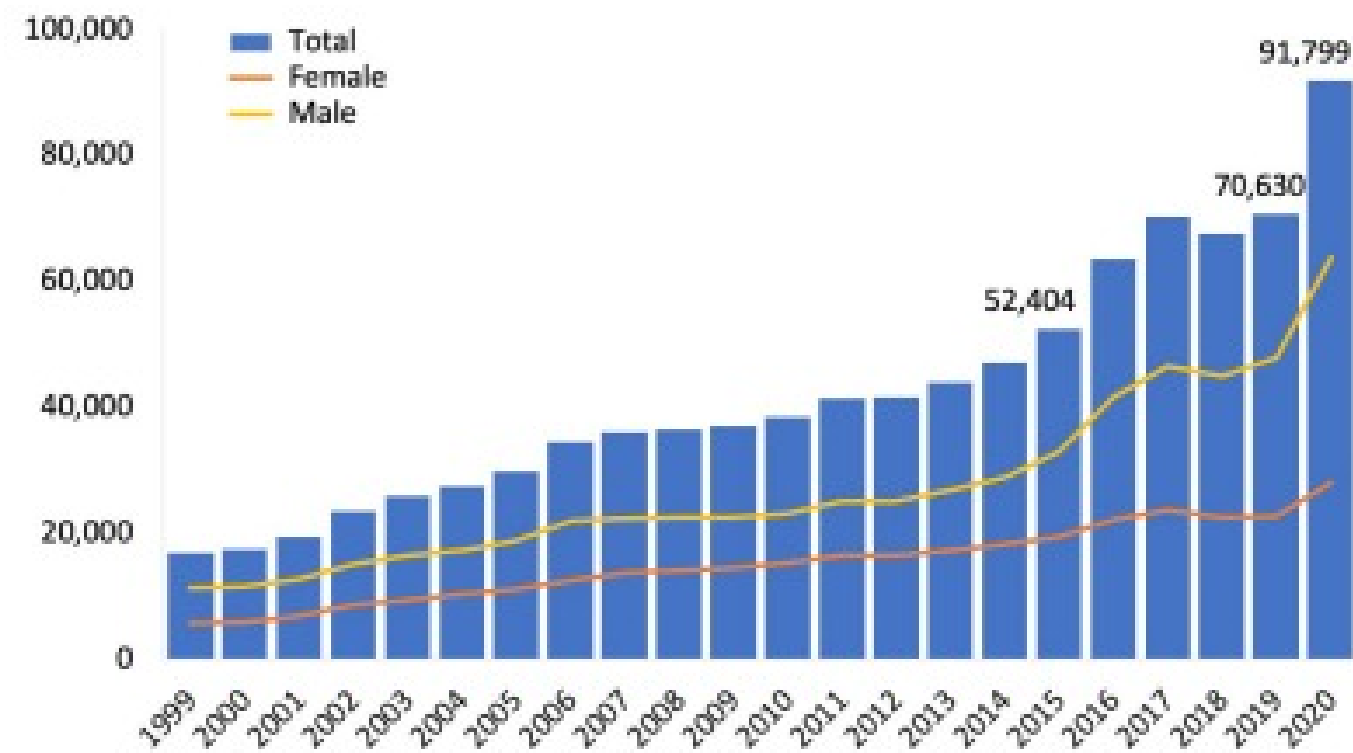
deaths due to overdose

trends of declines in use
year over year don't occur
for young adults

what will the long-term
impact of the pandemic
be?

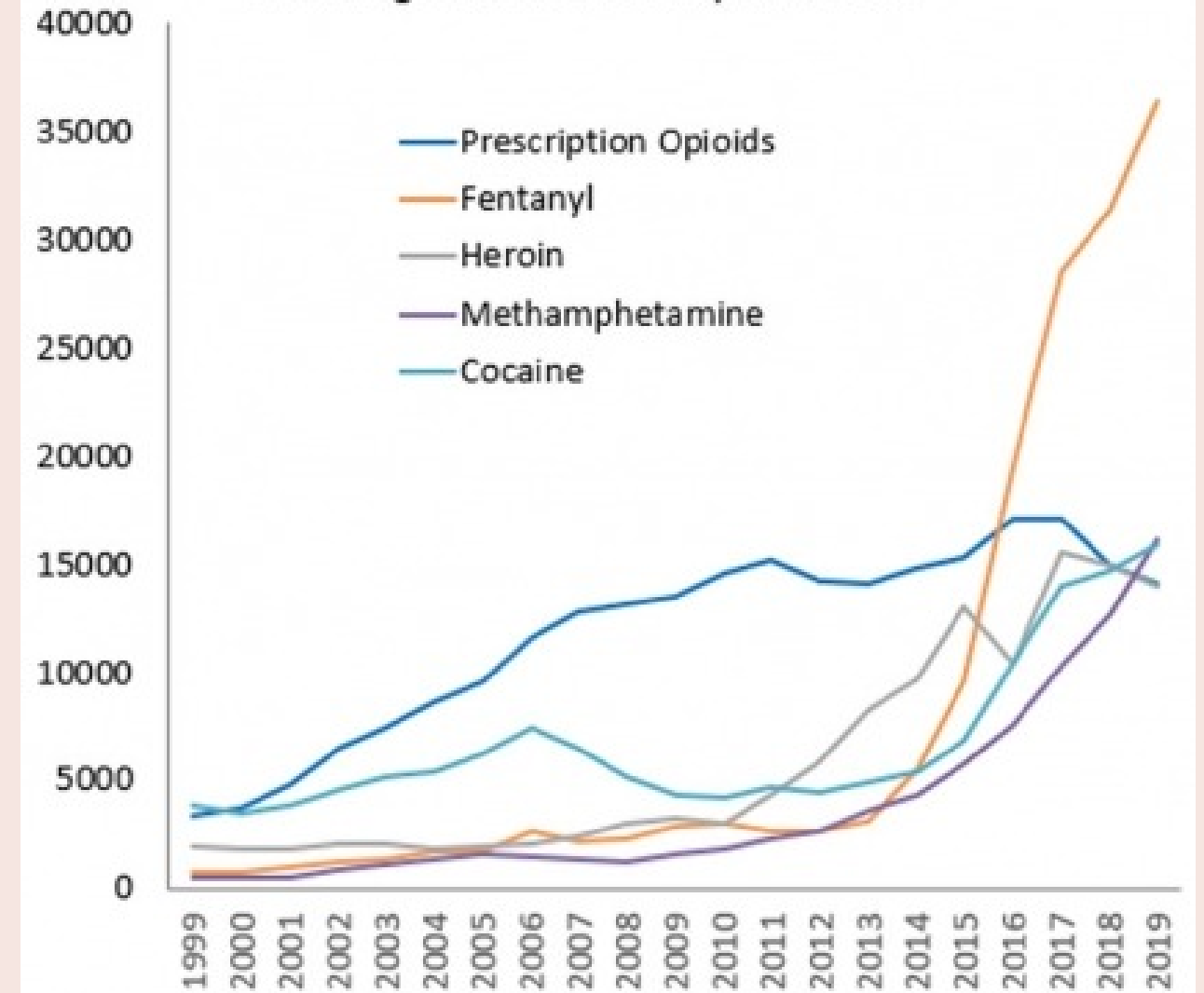
Overdose Deaths

**Figure 1. National Drug-Involved Overdose Deaths*
Number Among All Ages, by Gender, 1999-2020**



*Includes deaths with underlying causes of unintentional drug poisoning (X40-X44), suicide drug poisoning (X60-X64), homicide drug poisoning (X85), or drug poisoning of undetermined intent (Y10-Y14), as coded in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2021.

U.S. Drug Overdose Deaths, 1999-2019



<https://nida.nih.gov>, IC Fact Sheet 2022

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

Practical Skills and Approaches



REMEMBER
WHAT IT'S
LIKE TO BE
AN
ADOLESCENT



Know the difference
between "typical,"
"at-risk," and
clinically significant
substance use

DSM Criteria for SUD

- There are 11 criteria/symptoms for making a diagnosis of substance use disorder.
- They fit into four domains: impaired control over substance use, social impairment, risky use, and pharmacologic
- Based on the number of criteria met, a severity level is assigned (mild, moderate, severe)

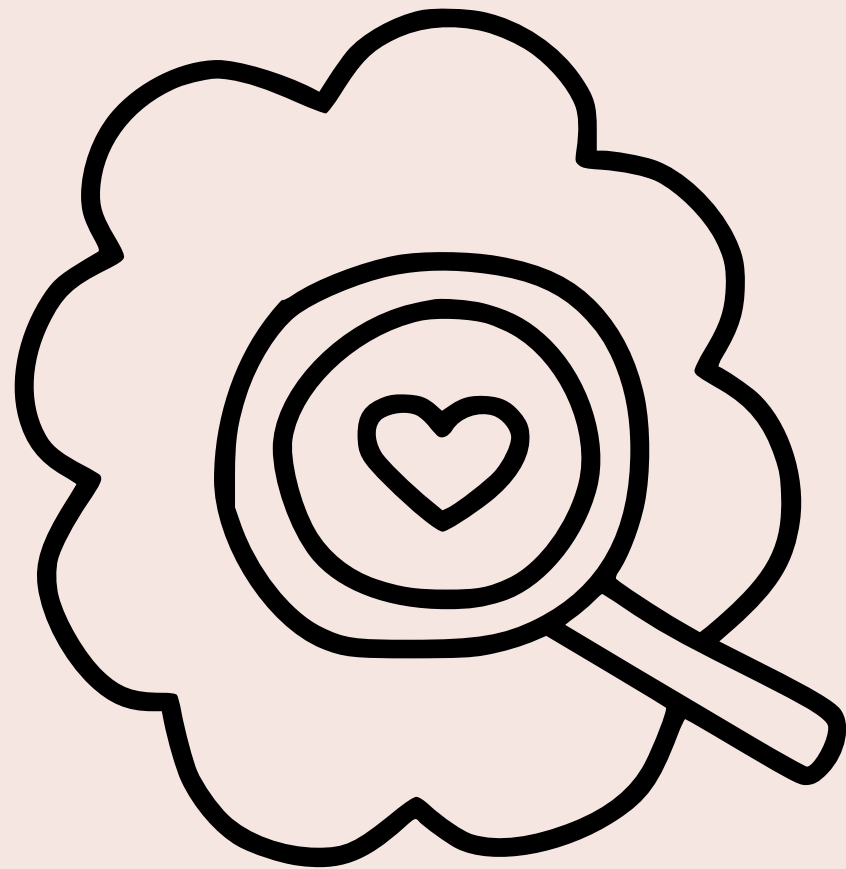


Philosophical shift from Recovery to Discovery

What do you think of when you hear the term "recover?"

What does it mean to discover?

Discovery in Practice!



Support and encourage the process of discovery, identity formation, and determining values. Be curious!

Maximize learning opportunities (in vivo is better!)

Act as a safety net rather than a protective armor

Do For- Do With- Cheer On

PRIORITIZE RAPPORT BUILDING

Don't rush goal
setting,
treatment
planning, or a
focus on
symptoms



Systematically Scale Back Support



Do For



Do With



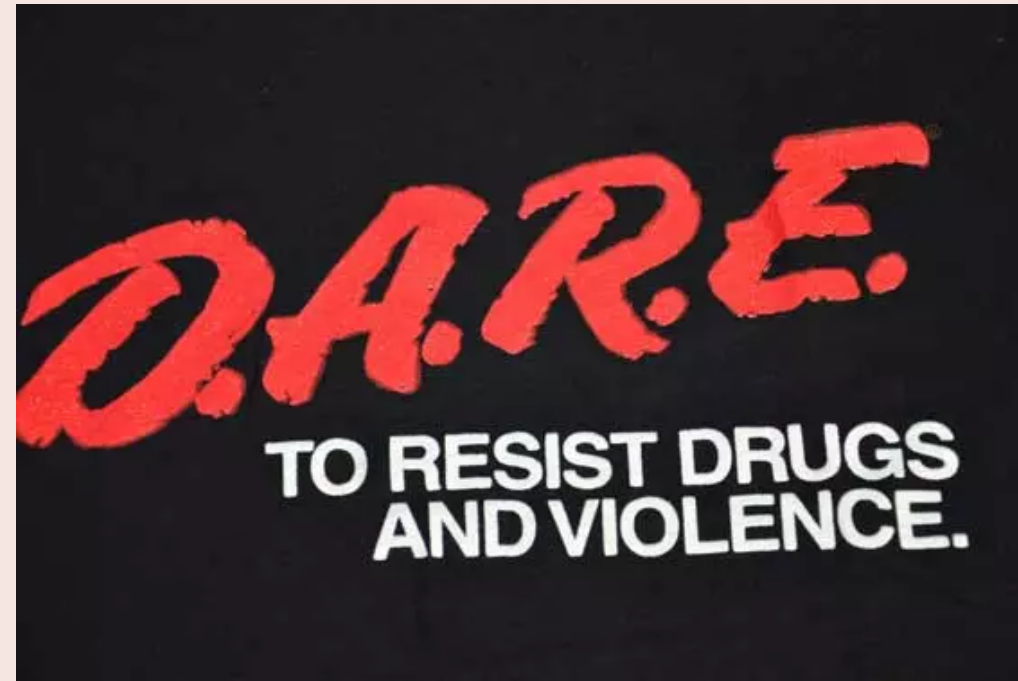
Cheer On



Allow for Risk

- Learning while doing is critical
 - Risk taking is normal!
 - Use it as a learning opportunity
- Provide tools

WHAT ABOUT ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGNS?



Do they work?



THANK YOU!

Questions?

Laura Stevens

Laura.stevens@austin.utexas.edu

