



# School Resource Officer

*By Officer Troy Nielsen, South High School SRO*

## School Youth Drug Trends

Teen drug use is on the rise. There are a variety of factors that contribute to teen drug usage; and it is important for adults to determine the “why.” Once the “why” is determined, the root of the problem can be addressed.

A few national statistics from [The Recovery Village](#):

[25.8%](#) of 12th graders have tried alcohol

[29%](#) of high schoolers drank in the last month

[19.5%](#) of 12th graders have used marijuana in the past month

[4.1%](#) of 8th graders have used marijuana in the past month

[10%](#) of high schoolers earning A's as grades currently use marijuana, compared with [48%](#) of those earning D's or F's

2.3% of high schoolers have use an amphetamine in the last 12 months.

The most common reasons young people experiment with drugs are:

- Curiosity
- Peer Pressure and the exposure to others using drugs on Social Media
- Desire to fit in
- Attempts at self-medication
- Addiction
- Boredom

Traditionally, alcohol has been a popular drug among middle and high school students. However, recently there has been a shift from alcohol to marijuana usage within this age group. Though marijuana is still the most prevalent drug of choice in young people, other types of substances are also accessible and being tried. Those include:

- Amphetamines - these are most commonly found prescribed to combat ADHD
- Cough medicines - DXM is the main ingredient and causes “robotripping”
- Hallucinogens - often in the form of mushrooms or LSD.
- Ecstasy (MDMA) - it is a stimulant and hallucinogen combined. Typically found in a pill or liquid form



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- Inhalants - these products are easily bought or found at home. These include spray paints, markers, glues and cleaning fluids. They contain dangerous substances that have psychoactive (mind-altering) properties when inhaled.

So why the shift towards “other drugs” and away from alcohol? Ultimately, it comes down to access. It is much easier for teens to acquire “other drugs” than alcohol. Alcohol is regulated and strictly sold to those 21 years and older. As for the others, they find people in their communities that either have drugs or can get them. Here in Fargo, we mostly see marijuana, some hallucinogens, DXM, and some amphetamines (mostly kids diagnosed with ADHD sharing their meds).

A common question from adults is not just why kids are using alcohol and drugs but how are they getting access to those substances. The age old saying, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way” applies. Young people network via social media in an attempt to acquire what they are looking for, in addition to getting the substances from friends, family members, neighbors or others.

Parents should be aware, too, that teens don’t just purchase these substances. Sometimes, they’ll trade services for drugs or alcohol. These services can include rides, food, or other things help “pay” for what they need.

The bottom line for parents is to be vigilant, talk and be honest with your teen, ask questions, and be involved. If you ever have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your student’s School Resource Officer. We care about their health and wellbeing and can be a resource to provide you with available services and supports.

