



2020 Health *Standards of Learning*: Support for the Instruction of Opioid Awareness and Prevention

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Introduction

The 2020 Health *Standards of Learning: Support for the Instruction of Opioid Awareness and Prevention Instructional Guide*, a companion document to the 2020 Health *Standards of Learning*, amplifies the *Standards of Learning* by defining the core knowledge and skills in practice and supporting teachers and their opioid awareness and prevention instruction. The local curriculum should include a variety of information sources, readings, learning experiences, and forms of assessment selected at the local level to create a rigorous instructional program.

The Instructional Guide is divided into three sections: Understanding the Standard, Skills in Practice, and Concepts and Connections aligned to the Standard. The purpose of each is explained below.

Understanding the Standard

This section includes health understandings and key concepts that assist teachers in planning standards-focused instruction focused on opioid awareness and prevention. The statements may provide definitions, explanations, or examples regarding information sources that support the content. They describe what students should know (core knowledge) as a result of the instruction specific to the course/grade level and include evidence-based practices to approach the standard.

Skills in Practice

This section outlines skills that are specifically linked to the standard. They frame student inquiry, promote critical thinking, and assist in learning transfer. Curriculum writers and teachers should use them to plan instruction to deepen their understanding of the broader unit and course objectives. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of student expectations. The four healthy lifestyle practices are *critical thinking and decision making; acquiring, evaluating, and communicating health information; developing and using social skills; and regulating emotions and building resilience.*

Concepts and Connections

This section outlines concepts that transcend grade levels and thread through the K through 10th grade substance use/misuse prevention to include opioid awareness and prevention program of instruction as appropriate at each level. Concept connections reflect connections to prior grade-level concepts as content and practices build within the discipline as well as potential connections across disciplines.

Kindergarten

Students in Kindergarten recognize basic facts and concepts about their bodies and begin to acquire health skills and practices, including social and emotional skills, that keep them safe and healthy. Students learn to seek help and advice from parents/guardians and other trusted adults and begin to learn how to seek reliable health information. They understand how to make good decisions about simple health issues, respect others, follow school safety rules, and be responsible.

K.1.i Identify medicine as a pill or liquid that can be taken to feel better when sick but can cause harm if misused.

K.1.j Describe how medicine and other substances can be helpful or harmful and recognize poison warning labels.

K.2.i Describe consequences of taking medications unsupervised.

K.2.j Identify the meaning of safety signs, symbols, and warning labels and understand the dangers of white powder and other unknown substances.

K.3.i Discuss why medicines should only be taken under the supervision of a parent/guardian.

K.3.j Identify adults to ask for help and assistance with harmful and unknown substances.

Understanding the Standard

Medicine can be helpful when used correctly but harmful if used incorrectly.

- Medicine is given to someone who is sick to feel better. Medicine comes in many forms—liquid, pill, cream, inhaler, and shots (vaccines). Medicine can be bought at a store or pharmacy. A doctor can also prescribe medicine. (1.i)
- Taking medicine incorrectly: Taking too much, when not needed or prescribed for someone else, can cause harm to a person. Medicines taken incorrectly can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, stomach pain, or may cause more serious damage to the body. (2.i)
- Children should only take medicine given to them by a parent/guardian, doctor, nurse, or other trusted adult. Adults read and follow directions to give medicines correctly. Children should not take medication from a friend (peer) or strangers. (3.i)

Many items sold in stores and found around the house including over the counter medication, prescription medication, and household cleaners or other nonfood substances can be misused and harmful to the body.

- Most household cleaners (e.g., dusting polish, toilet cleaner, disinfectant) have a warning label on them because they are poisonous. Household cleaners and other poisonous substances should be kept in a safe place in the home and out of reach of small children. (1.j)

- No one should taste or eat unknown substances. There are white powder substances such as flour or salt used in cooking that do not harm people; other white powder substances, such as household cleaners and drugs, are very harmful to people. (2.j)
- Notify a parent or adult if there is an unknown substance before smelling, touching, or picking it up. (2.j)
- Helpful adults include parents/guardians, grandparents, adult relatives, and adults at school or in the faith community. (3.j)
- Adults can help you in an emergency. Adults may know how to handle an emergency and can help children feel less scared. Parents/guardians, adult family members, adult neighbors, and adults at school can help with emergencies. If you need help but don't see an adult you know, look for a police officer, firefighter, or other adult wearing a nametag, such as a store employee or amusement park worker. (2.1)

Many items sold in stores and found around the house can be harmful to your health if they are sniffed, ingested (swallowed), sometimes touched, or misused.

- Most household products (e.g., dusting polish, toilet cleaner, laundry detergent, batteries, insect repellent, disinfectant, batteries) have a warning label on them because they are poisonous. Household cleaners and other poisonous substances should be kept in a safe place in the home and out of reach of small children. (1.m, 2.m)
- No one should taste or eat unknown substances, including/especially non-food white powder, because these substances may be harmful. (3.m)
- If an unknown substance is present, notify an adult. Do not smell, touch, or pick it up. (3.m)

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** The student will identify household products that could be harmful if used incorrectly. *When students are presented with pictures of common household items, they can sort them into categories of “safe” and “unsafe”.*
- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** The student will differentiate between pictures of medicines and candy that look alike, describing each.

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Medicine can be helpful when used correctly but harmful if used incorrectly.

Connections: In Kindergarten, students learn to recognize that medicines can be helpful when taken as directed but can also be harmful if misused. They should understand the meaning of safety signs, symbols, and warning labels, and be aware of the dangers of unknown substances like white powder. Additionally, students should be taught that medications should only be taken under the supervision of a trusted adult, and they should know who to ask for help if they encounter harmful or unknown substances.

- *Within the grade level:*
 - K.2.m) Recognize that not all products advertised or sold are healthy or safe.
 - K.3.m) Recognize that some household products are harmful if touched, ingested, or inhaled and the importance of asking adults before touching, ingesting, or inhaling white powder or other unknown substances.
- *Vertical Progression:*
 - 1.2.h) Explain why it is important to follow safety rules and guidelines for personal safety.
 - 1.2.i) Describe how to report a dangerous situation.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th-grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade 1

Students in Graded One, focus on personal safety and major body organs. Students begin to understand how behaviors can impact health and wellness now and in the future. Students begin to relate choices with consequences, which relates to responsible decision making and supports social and emotional development. They begin to examine the influence of social media on health decisions and to identify ways to access reliable information. Students are taught to exhibit respect for self, others, and the environment, which supports social and emotional development specifically in terms of self-awareness and social awareness.

1.1.g Identify that medicines can be both helpful and harmful.

1.2.g Explain the harmful effects of misusing medicines and drugs.

1.3.g Create safety rules for medications in the home.

Understanding the Standard

Medicines/medication can help a person feel better but can be harmful if not used correctly.

- Medications are used to cure, prevent, or manage disease and used to ease symptoms such as fever, cough, or pain. Some medicines are given to a person by a doctor, or the doctor prescribes the medicine that is picked up at a pharmacy/drugstore. Some medicine can be bought at the store without visiting the doctor. (1.g)
- Medicine should only be used for the illness or problem it is meant for and only for the person it is meant for. Medicine can be harmful to the body if taken incorrectly. It can lead to illness or injury of the body organs. (1.g)
- Children should only take medicine given to them by a parent/guardian, doctor, nurse, or other trusted adult. Children should not take medication from a friend (peer) or a stranger. (3.g)
- Parents/guardians should have a safe place to keep medications at home. (3.g)
- No one should taste or eat unknown substances. There are white powder substances such as flour or salt that are used in cooking and do not harm people; there are other white powder substances, such as household cleaners and drugs, that are very harmful to people. Ask an adult first before smelling, touching, tasting, or picking up an unknown substance. (2.g)

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** As students learn to assess the potential benefits and risks of medications, it is important for them to be able to identify the specific reasons for taking a medication and understand the intended benefits, recognize potential side effects, and evaluate the dangers of misuse. *When presented with this information, students can create a story about a character who is sick and needs to take specific medication to get well.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Medicines can be helpful to a person; however, if safety rules are not followed medicines can cause harm to the body.

Connections: Students begin to relate choices with consequences, which relates to responsible decision making and supports social and emotional development. In Grade Two, students learn about the harmful effects of various substances. They will deepen their understanding of the negative consequences of using medicines, alcohol, and tobacco, including impaired physical and cognitive functions, as well as long-term health risks like cancer and heart disease. Students also recognize the dangers of tobacco smoke and nicotine products and learn to avoid them.

- *Within the grade level:*
 - 1.3 The student will identify specific rules and practices to promote personal safety and socially responsible behaviors.
- *Vertical Progression:*
 - 2.2 The student will identify personal health decisions and health habits that influence health and wellness throughout life.

Resources for Consideration

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th-grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade 2

Students in Grade Two continue to learn about the basic structures and functions of the human body systems. Focusing on preventing illness and disease, the students begin to understand the relationship between health behaviors, choices, and consequences and apply

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decision making skills throughout the day. Students learn about food sources, healthy food and beverage choices, the factors that influence health decisions, the harmful effects of drugs, and how to communicate consideration and respect for others.

Awareness

2.1.e Describe the harmful effects of medicine, alcohol, and tobacco, including poor concentration; impaired balance, vision, and memory; shortness of breath; cancer; lung and heart disease; and changes to the way a person feels, thinks, and acts.

2.3.e Explain why it is dangerous to sniff, taste, or swallow unknown substances.

2.1.g Explain differences between prescription and nonprescription medications.

2.2.g Identify why medicines should only be taken under the supervision of an adult and the importance of childproof caps on medicines.

2.3.g Conduct an assessment of harmful substances in the home with a parent/guardian.

Prevention

2.1.f Identify refusal skills.

2.2.f Describe the use of refusal skills based on good decisions.

2.3.f Demonstrate refusal skills in situations that involve harmful substances with peers and adults.

Understanding the Standard

Medicine that is misused can affect your health. This includes the ability to learn and how a person feels, thinks, and acts. Alcohol and tobacco can also affect overall health.

- Medicine is a drug and should only be taken as directed and with adult supervision.
- Harmful effects can include impaired balance; shortness of breath; increased risk of cancer, lung disease, and heart disease; learning (poor concentration); impaired vision and memory; and changes to how a person feels, thinks, and acts. (1.e)
- No one should smell, sniff, taste, or eat unknown substances, including/especially white powder, because these substances may be harmful. (3.e)
- Notify a parent or adult if there is an unknown substance before smelling, touching, or picking it up. (3.e)

Saying “no” to doing things a person thinks are wrong or unhealthy are referred to as refusal skills. Refusal skills can be verbal or nonverbal.

Refusal Skills (1.f)

Verbal

- Say “no.” There is no substitute for the word “no.” It makes any refusal stronger.
- Repeat the “No.”
- Suggest an alternative (i.e., suggest something else to do instead).
- Use a firm tone of voice: Be strong and business-like.

Nonverbal

- Direct eye contact (look the person in the eyes).
- Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
- Leave (get out of the situation).
- Avoid situations where there may be pressure.

Prescription and nonprescription medications

- People may take medicine to control a known condition or when they are sick or have pain.
- Some medicines are given to a person by a doctor. These are called prescription medications. (1.g)
- Some medicine can be bought at the store, such as aspirin and cough medicine, without visiting the doctor. These are called nonprescription or over-the-counter medications. (1.g)
- It is important to follow the doctor’s orders for prescription medication or the safety regulations printed on nonprescription medicines.
- Medicine should only be used for the illness or problem it is meant for and only for the person it is meant for. Medicine can be harmful to the body if taken incorrectly. It can lead to illness or injury of the body organs. (2.g)
- Many medicines can look similar. For example, an acetaminophen pill may look similar to an allergy pill in color or shape. However, it is important to look at the packaging to ensure you are taking the proper medication at the proper dosage. (2.g)
- Children should only take medicine given to them by a parent/guardian, doctor, nurse, or other trusted adult. Children should not take medication from a friend (peer) or a stranger. (2.g)
- Medications should be locked and kept away from children. Childproof caps on medicine bottles help keep children from taking medication.
- Medications may look like candy, but they are not candy. (3.g)

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students begin to learn how to evaluate the risks and benefits of different substances, make informed choices about their health, and develop strategies to avoid harmful substances. *This is an opportunity for students to walk through their home or classroom and conduct an assessment of different substances they find and identify substances that could be harmful.*
- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** Students begin to understand the effects of substances on their health, identify reliable sources of information, and make evidence-based decisions. *When students are posed with a scenario, they can demonstrate refusal skills as they communicate what they have learned in class.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Medicines can be misused and cause harm to the body; refusal skills can be used to reduce harm when medicines are not needed.

Connections: In Grade Two, students begin to understand the harmful effects of medicines, alcohol, tobacco, and nicotine products and develop refusal skills to avoid these substances. In the previous year, Grade One students learned to relate choices with consequences. This work will continue into Grade Three when students will demonstrate their ability to use what they are learning to improve their personal health.

- **Within the grade level:**
 - 2.2 The student will identify personal health decisions and health habits that influence health and wellness throughout life.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 3.2 The student will demonstrate the ability to use essential health concepts to improve personal health

Resources for Consideration

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade 3

Students in Grade Three learn how healthy habits impact growth and development. They learn to compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy practices as they continue to build and utilize refusal skills and apply their knowledge of health-risk reduction to the promotion of health. Students access valid information and begin to understand the relationship between personal decisions (responsible decision making) and the impact of personal decisions on oneself and others (self-awareness and social awareness).

Awareness

3.1.h Describe proper and improper use of prescription (e.g., taking medication prescribed for someone else) and nonprescription medications.

3.2.h Explain the consequences of disregarding medical recommendations for prescription and nonprescription medications.

3.1.i Identify body systems affected by the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., electronic smoking devices), inhalants, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

3.2.i Analyze the harmful short- and long-term effects of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, common household inhalants, and other drugs on body systems. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

Prevention

3.3.h Create a health message about the proper use of prescription and nonprescription medications.

3.3.i Encourage others to use refusal skills to avoid alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, inhalants, other drugs, and unknown substances.

Understanding the Standard

All drugs (prescription and nonprescription) will affect the body and how it functions. Some effects are helpful, but some are harmful if used incorrectly or at all.

- Some medicines are given to a person by a doctor, or a doctor writes an order, and the person picks the medicine up from a pharmacy/drug store. These are called prescription medications.

- Some medicine, such as aspirin and cough medicine, can be bought at the store without visiting the doctor. These are called nonprescription medications or over-the-counter medications.
- It is important to follow the doctor’s orders for prescription medication or the safety regulations on nonprescription medicines. (1.h)
- Medicine should only be used for the illness or problem it is meant for and only for the person it is meant for. Many medicines can look similar, but each medicine has a unique function and when taken by accident, or in excess, can be harmful to the body. It can lead to illness or injury of body organs. Children should only take medicine given to them by a parent, doctor, nurse, or other trusted adult. Medications may look like candy, but they are not candy. Children should not take medication from a friend (peer) or a stranger. (1.h, 2.h)
- Medications should be in a locked cabinet and kept away from children. Childproof caps on medicine bottles help keep children from taking medication. Parents/guardians should dispose of any unused medications properly.
- Alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, nicotine products, inhalants, and other drugs affect the body and how it functions. They also affect how people think and act. Drugs have short- and long-term effects on the mind and body. With good health, the brain continues developing until 25 years of age. No one should smell, sniff, taste, or eat unknown substances, including/especially white powder, because these substances may be harmful. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*
- Always ask a parent or adult if there is an unknown substance before smelling, touching, or picking it up - Stop! Ask an adult first.

Refusal Skills (3.i)

Verbal

- Say “no.” There is no substitute for the word “no.” It makes any refusal stronger.
- Repeat the refusal.
- Suggest an alternative (suggest something to do instead).
- Build the friendship. Say something to let the person so they know you are his/her friend and want to spend time with them. (This is especially important because a major reason for ineffective refusals is not wanting to hurt the other person’s feelings or make them mad.)
- Use a firm tone of voice: Be strong and business-like.

Nonverbal

- Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
- Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
- Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.
- Leave (get out of the situation).

- Avoid situations where there may be pressure.

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information: Students demonstrate this skill by identifying the effects of substances on the body, comparing and contrasting the differences between prescription and nonprescription medicines, and communicating messages that advocate for themselves or others on the appropriate use of medications. *This is an opportunity to have students create a skit, poster, or other product in Language Arts or in Music to communicate the use of appropriate medications to their classmates.*

Developing and Using Social Skills: Students demonstrate this skill by creating health messages about proper medication use, role-playing effective refusal skills and encouraging others to do the same. *This is an opportunity for students to work with their peers to develop a public service announcement (PSA) to promote positive ways to handle stress rather than turning to drugs or alcohol.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Medicines can be helpful to a person; however, if safety rules are not followed medicines can cause harm to the body.

Connections: In Grade Three students begin to demonstrate their ability to use what they are learning to improve their personal health. The previous year, students in Grade Two, reflected on the harmful effects of medicines, alcohol, tobacco, and nicotine products and began to develop refusal skills to avoid these. This work will continue into Grade Four, as students examine the factors that influence substance use decisions.

- **Within the grade level:**
 - 3.1.i Identify body systems affected by the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., electronic smoking devices), inhalants, and other drugs.
 - 3.2.i Analyze the harmful short- and long-term effects of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, common household inhalants, and other drugs on body systems.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 4.1.h Compare the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.
 - 4.2.h Examine factors that can influence an individual's decision to use or avoid alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

Resources and activities for Consideration:

- Compare and contrast prescription and nonprescription drugs. (1.h)
- Create a health message for the proper use of and consequences of improper use of prescription and nonprescription medications. (2.h, 3.h)
- Choose one substance, draw an outline of the human body, and label the effect of the substance on different body parts/systems. (1.i)
- Role-play effective refusal skills. (3.i)
- Create an antidrug message that illustrates the consequences of drug use, includes an appropriate message about prescription or over-the-counter medication, and may include how to use refusal skills. (2.i, 3.i)

Additional resources:

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th-grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade 4

Students in Graded Four learn and apply health skills to the following health areas: disease prevention, nutrition, healthy relationships, and drug abuse prevention, including alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances. Students distinguish fact from fiction and set simple goals for promoting personal health and preventing disease. Students assume personal responsibility for helping promote health at school and in the community, which aligns with responsible decision making as a critical part of healthy social and emotional development.

Awareness

4.1.h Compare the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

4.2.h Examine factors that can influence an individual's decision to use or avoid alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

4.3.h Determine the importance of resistance/refusal skills in saying no to alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

Prevention

4.1.i Identify effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to resist/refuse alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

4.2.i Describe the effects of peer pressure on use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

4.3.i Demonstrate effective refusal skills for situations involving peer pressure to use harmful substances.

Understanding the Standard

All drugs (medicines and medications) will affect the body and how it functions. The brain continues developing until roughly 25 years of age.

- Alcohol, drugs, cannabis, insufficient physical activity, and poor nutrition affect brain development. Drugs that are misused or abused have negative and sometimes lasting effects on body systems.
- No one should smell, sniff, taste, or eat unknown substances, including/especially white powder, as these substances may be harmful.
- Always ask a parent or adult about the composition of an unknown substance before smelling, touching, or picking it up. Stop! Ask First.

The adage that “everyone is doing it” is incorrect. It is important to be able to say no and create a safe and drug-free environment. (2.h)

- Reason’s people use: Curiosity, peer pressure, a desire to fit in with friends, a desire to be liked, to appear older, avoid conflict, to experiment, seeing others doing it, having easy access to it, being influenced by social media, using to control weight, and looking cool.
- A peer is someone in your own age group.
- Peer pressure is the feeling that someone your own age is pushing you toward making a certain choice, good or bad. (2.i)

Research shows using refusal skills is one of the best ways to prevent substance abuse. (3.h)

- Reasons people avoid: They get involved in activities, talk to trusted adults, practice how to say no, set goals to achieve, understand the consequences, and make a conscious choice not to start.

Refusal Skills (1.i)

- Verbal
 - o Say “no.” There is no substitute for the word “no.” It makes any refusal stronger.
 - o Repeat the refusal.
 - o Suggest an alternative (suggest something to do instead).

- o Build the friendship. Say something to let the person know you are their friend and want to spend time with them. This is especially important because a major reason for ineffective refusals is not wanting to hurt the other person’s feelings or make them mad.
- o Use a firm tone of voice: Be strong and business-like.
- Nonverbal
 - o Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
 - o Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
 - o Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.
 - o Leave (get out of the situation).
 - o Avoid situations where there may be pressure.

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will compare consequences of poor decisions and examine those factors that contribute to good decision making. *This is an opportunity for students to analyze the consequences of their choices in peer pressure situations.*
- **Developing and Using Social Skills:** Students will benefit from practicing verbal and non-verbal communication skills to resist peer pressure. *This is an opportunity for students to engage in group discussions and practice their communication skills with their peers.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Medicines can be helpful to a person; however, if safety rules are not followed medicines can cause harm to the body.

Connections: In Grade Four, as students examine the factors that influence substance use decisions including peer pressure and curiosity, they will practice refusal skills and improve their communication skills. The previous year, Grade Three students identified the effects that substances such as cannabis, tobacco, alcohol, and drugs can have on their bodies and worked on their refusal skills to avoid these substances. In Grade Five, students will demonstrate responsibility for developing personal health habits and practicing behaviors that promote an active, healthy lifestyle.

- **Within the grade level:**
 - o 4.2.i Describe the effects of peer pressure on use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

- 4.3.i Demonstrate effective refusal skills for situations involving peer pressure to use harmful substances.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 5.1.i Analyze the effects of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs on relationships with family, peers, and other individuals.
 - 5.2.i Describe effective communication skills to request assistance in situations where alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs are being abused.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- Create a chart with body organs/systems listed and identify harmful substances and how they affect the organ/system. (1.h)
- Describe reasons why students may start using drugs, include a description of peer pressure. (2.h, 2.i)
- List reasons why students avoid using drugs. (3.h)
- Create a positive message about refusing drugs or alcohol; include a slogan or catchphrase that can empower others and write a brief summary about the picture. (3.i)
- Apply and justify use of refusal/resistance skills to a variety of situations. (1.i, 2.i, 3.i)

Additional resources:

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade 5

Students in Grade Five learn strategies to distinguish reliable and unreliable health information and resources. Emphasis is placed on demonstrating interpersonal skills, assuming responsibility for personal health habits, and practicing behaviors that promote active, healthy lifestyles. Students analyze the influences of advertising and various media on personal and community health.

Awareness

5.1.i Analyze the effects of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs on relationships with family, peers, and other individuals. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

5.2.i Describe effective communication skills to request assistance in situations where alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs are being abused. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

5.3.i Encourage others not to use alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, or other harmful drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

Prevention

5.1.j Explain the connection between mental health and substance use.

5.2.j Describe how to get help and assistance with mental health and substance use concerns.

5.3.j Identify prevention resources and strategies for avoiding alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other drugs.

Understanding the Standard

Relationships with friends, family, and others can be negatively affected by substance use because of secrecy, lies, and the effects of substance use disorders.

- A substance use disorder occurs when a person's use of alcohol or another substance (drug) leads to health issues or problems at work, school, or home. (1.i)
- All drugs (medicines, medications, and illicit drugs) will affect the body and how it functions. Drugs can change the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. In addition to the physical and psychological harmful effects of substance abuse, it also affects relationships with peers, families, and others. (1.i)
- Once a person has a drug addiction, they usually have a single focus: using the substance. Relationships can become secondary to the addiction. People may become secretive about where they are going, who they are with, and what they are doing. The secrecy and lies affect trust, respect, honesty, and loyalty. There are drugs that are known to cause anger and violence. These issues may lead to frustration, anger, or violence in relationships between the non-substance user and the substance user. (1.i)
- Use resistance and refusal skills to counter peer pressure to use drugs. (2.i)

Refusal Skills

Verbal

- Say "no." There is no substitute for the word "no." It makes any refusal stronger.

- Repeat the refusal.
- Suggest an alternative (suggest something to do instead).
 - Build the friendship. Say something to let the person know you are his/her friend and want to spend time with them. (This is especially important because a major reason for ineffective refusals is not wanting to hurt the other person’s feelings or make them mad.)
 - Use a firm tone of voice. Be strong and business-like.

Nonverbal

- Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
- Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
- Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.
- Leave (get out of the situation).
- Avoid situations where there may be pressure.
 - If you are in a situation where substances are being used: (2.i)
 - If possible and safe to do so, leave the situation.
 - Pretend to get a text/message that you have to call home or go home for a family emergency.
 - Have parents, trusted adults, and friends you can call for help.
 - Create a code word with a parent, good friend, or trusted adult that you can use to help get out of a situation involving drug use that is uncomfortable.

Many individuals who develop substance use disorders (SUDs) are also diagnosed with mental disorders and vice versa. ([National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)) Compassion and understanding about the disease of SUD and mental disorders is important in getting people the help they need.

- Multiple national population surveys have found that about half of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience a substance use disorder and vice versa. (1.j)
- Although drug use and addiction can happen at any time during a person’s life, drug use typically starts in adolescence, a period when the first signs of mental illness commonly appear. (1.j)
- Having a mental disorder in childhood or adolescence can increase the risk of later drug use and the development of an SUD. Some research has found that mental illness may precede an SUD. (1.j)
- Help and resources are available for mental health disorders and SUDs. Talk with a parent, trusted adult at school, home, or in the community if you have concerns about yourself, a friend, or a loved one. (2.j)
 - Parents can help access the health care and resources needed.

- School counselors, school nurses, psychologists, and social workers can also help with accessing community services. In Virginia, Community Services Boards throughout the state can be accessed for information and treatment.

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will think carefully about making informed choices about their health, including drug use and other risky behaviors. By thinking carefully about their options, students can make decisions that promote their well-being. *This is an opportunity for students to analyze their consequences of their actions when presented with different situations.*
- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** Students will learn about healthy living and how to distinguish between good and bad information. *This is an opportunity for students to review different information that is presented and determine its reliability.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Reliable sources of health information are crucial for making informed decisions about prescription and non-prescription medications to avoid potential harm.

Connections: In Grade Five, students will demonstrate responsibility for developing personal health habits and practicing behaviors that promote an active, healthy lifestyle. The previous year, Grade Four students examined the factors that influence substance use decisions, practiced their refusal skills, and improved their communication skills. In Grade 6, students will develop personal strategies and skills to advocate for personal, social, and community health (6.3).

- **Within the grade level:**
 - 5.2.j Describe how to get help and assistance with mental health and substance use concerns.
 - 5.3.j Identify prevention resources and strategies for avoiding alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other drugs.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 6.1.j Define addiction and substance use disorder.
 - 6.3.j Describe the types of support available at school and in the community for substance use disorders.
 - 6.1.k Identify different types of opioids.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- Use problem solving skills to analyze different scenarios involving pressure to use substances or situations where substances are being used.
- Explain how drugs can be harmful, how to avoid the situation or get help leaving a situation, what refusal skills can be used, and how to be a leader in those situations to encourage others not to use. (1.i, 2.i, 3.i)
- Describe the stages of addiction. (1.j)
- Explain the relationship between substance use and mental health. (1.j)
- Develop a list of trusted adults and resources for help and assistance with concerns about mental health or substance use. (2.j, 3.j)

Additional resources:

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.

Grade Six

Students in Grade Six develop more sophistication in understanding health issues and practicing health skills. They apply physical, emotional, social, and environmental health skills and strategies to improve or maintain personal and family health. Students begin to understand health issues and concerns and the relationship between choices and consequences. They understand how to be a positive role model and the impact of positive and negative peer pressure. Students demonstrate injury-prevention behaviors at school and elsewhere.

Awareness

- 6.1.h Differentiate between proper use and misuse of prescription and nonprescription medications.
- 6.2.h Evaluate the influence of media and marketing techniques on prescription, nonprescription, and unregulated medication choices.
- 6.3.h Describe where to access accurate information on the proper use of prescription, nonprescription, and unregulated medications.
- 6.1.j Define addiction and substance use disorder.
- 6.2.j Describe characteristics of substance use disorder.
- 6.3.j Describe the types of support available at school and in the community for substance use disorders.

Virginia Department of Education Health Standards of Learning Instructional Guide (2024)

6.1.k Identify different types of opioids.

6.2.k Differentiate between legal and illegal drugs that fall into the opioid category.

6.3.k Describe the dangers of opioids in the home and the community impact of the national opioid epidemic.

Prevention

6.1.i Recognize social influences/influencers on both the reduction and promotion of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, and other drugs.

6.1.1 Explain the importance of accepting responsibility for personal actions to avoid risk-taking behaviors related to substance use.

6.2.1 Analyze family and peer pressure as influences on the use and nonuse of opioids, alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other drugs.

6.3.1 Identify mental and health professionals and explain their role in preventing the use/abuse of prescription opioids and other drugs.

Understanding the Standard

All drugs (medicines, medications, and illicit drugs) affect the body and how it functions. Some effects are helpful, but some are harmful if used incorrectly or at all.

- Prescription medications require a doctor/health care provider order.
- Nonprescription medications or over-the-counter medications, such as aspirin and cough medicine, can be bought at the store without visiting the doctor.
- Unregulated medications may include vitamins and supplements (herbal, dietary). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is not authorized to review dietary supplement products for safety and effectiveness before they are marketed; therefore, dietary supplements are not subject to the strict standards governing the sale of prescription and nonprescription drugs.
- Proper drug use: It is important to follow doctor's orders for prescription medication or the safety regulations on nonprescription medicines. Medicine should only be used for the illness or problem it is meant for and only for the person it is meant for. Medicine can be harmful to the body if taken incorrectly. It can lead to illness or injury of the body organs. Many medicines can look similar, but each medicine has a unique function and when taken by accident, or in excess, can be harmful to the body. (1.h)
- Children should only take medicine given to them by a parent, doctor, nurse, or other trusted adult, not from a peer or a stranger. (1.h)

- Drug misuse: When a person is prescribed a drug but does not follow directions on the label, it is considered drug misuse. Prescription drug misuse can include taking the incorrect dose, taking a dose at the wrong time, forgetting to take a dose, and stopping medicine too soon (Institute for Safe Medication Practices). (1.h)
- Drug abuse: The use of a medication without a prescription in a way other than as prescribed or for the experience or feelings created when taking the medicine is drug abuse ([National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)). For example, when a person takes a prescription drug to feel good or “get high.” (1.h)
- Review persuasive tactics from Disease Prevention/Health Promotion content. (2.h)
- Accurate information about prescription, nonprescription, and unregulated medications can be accessed from health care providers, FDA, and National Institutes of Health (NIH) MedlinePlus. (3.h)

Social learning is considered the most important single factor in addiction. It includes patterns of use in the addict’s family or subculture, peer pressure, and advertising or media influence.

- Influences include other people (peers, parents, and adults), popular media (make it seem like it is OK/cool), for escape and self-medication (manage stress or regulate their lives without a healthy outlet), boredom, rebellion, instant gratification (shortcut to happiness), lack of confidence, and misinformation about the risks of drug use. (1.i)
- Social status is important to students. Students may use drugs to fit in, impress new friends, or to be social. ([Teenagers and Drugs](#)) There is particular concern during transitions—elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and relocating/moving. (1.i)
- Prevention may include the effects of alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, and drug use on things students personally care about and personal short- and long-term goals. Protective factors include supportive parents, a strong parent-child bond, parental monitoring, self-control, engaging in healthy activities, friends/peers who support nonuse, academic competence, and strong neighborhood attachment. ([Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents](#)) (1.i)

The preferred term for drug addiction is substance use disorder (SUD). Compassion and understanding about this disease are important in helping people access resources for assistance.

- Drug addiction/SUD/substance abuse disorder is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered a brain disorder because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs. ([National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)) SUD/substance abuse disorder is characterized by symptoms such as excessive use of a substance, difficulty limiting its use, craving, impaired social and interpersonal functioning, a need for increased amounts of the substance to achieve the same effects, and withdrawal symptoms upon discontinuance. (1.j, 2.j)

- Support available for substance use disorders include (3.j)
 - School (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, school nurses, substance abuse counselors).
 - Community (Community Services Board, health care providers, SAMHSA’s National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP, National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, behavioral health treatment centers and services ([FindTreatment](#)); and recovery and recovery support services.

The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious national crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare. ([Opioid Overdose Crisis](#))

- All opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Regular use—even as prescribed by a doctor—can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to addiction, overdose incidents, and deaths. Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others ([Prescription Opioids Drug Facts](#)). Pain medications may be prescribed for sports injuries, dental work, or surgery. Opioids are highly addictive and should only be taken under a doctor’s care. (1.k, 2.k)
- National opioid epidemic (3.k)
 - In 2016, the federal government declared opioid addiction a public health emergency.
 - From 1999-2019, nearly 500,000 people died from an overdose involving any opioid, including prescription and illicit opioids. ([Understanding the Epidemic](#))
 - The economic burden of opioid use disorder and fatal opioid overdose in Virginia in 2023 alone was estimated to be \$5 billion ([VDH, 2023](#)), with a majority of the costs attributed to reduced quality of life from opioid use disorder and the value of life lost due to fatal opioid overdose. ([Health Topics – Opioid Overdose](#))
 - Review prescription/nonprescription precautions.
 - Keeping pain medications/opioids in the home can lead to an increased risk of theft and accidental poisoning. Prescription opioids and all medications should be in a locked container or safely disposed (do not flush leftover medication; check with the local Community Services Board for national take-back days and information about safe disposal of medications).
 - Parents and children can talk with physicians about non-opioid pain options for surgical procedures or other medical needs.

Students need to be aware of the social effects that influence the use and nonuse of substances in order to make healthy decisions to avoid risk-taking behaviors related to substance use.

- Research has found that students possess the knowledge, values, and processing efficiency to evaluate risky decisions as competently as adults; however, students are particularly sensitive to social stimuli (acceptance, fitting in, pressure) and this may affect their capacity to “put the brakes on” acting impulsively. (1.1)
- Review influences and protective factors for use and nonuse of drugs (see 1.i). (2.1)
- In addition to parents, there are health professionals that can help students make healthy decisions to avoid risk-taking behaviors related to substance use. (3.1)
 - School counselors, school nurses, psychologists, social workers.
 - School substance abuse counselors.
 - Health care providers.
 - Community Services Board staff and resources for community prevention initiatives.
 - National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** Students learn to critically evaluate the harmful effects of drugs, analyze persuasive tactics, and weigh the long-term consequences of drug use against personal goals by gaining knowledge about different drugs, their effects, and safe usage, accessing reliable health information sources, and understanding the opioid epidemic. *This is an opportunity for students to engage in a thought-provoking debate about the dangers of opioids while gaining a deeper understanding of complex issues surrounding drug use.*
- **Regulating Emotions and Building Resilience:** Students learn how drugs can be used to cope with emotions, learn healthy coping strategies, and seek support for mental health by following prescribed medication instructions, avoiding secondhand smoke, and seeking help for substance use disorders. *This is an opportunity for students to reflect on healthy coping strategies through journaling and learning to understand their emotions as it pertains to stressful situations, they find themselves in.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Reliable sources of health information are crucial for making informed decisions about prescription medications and opioids to avoid potential harm.

Connections: In Grade Six, students develop personal strategies and skills to advocate for personal, social, and community health. The previous year, Grade Five students demonstrated responsibility for developing personal health habits and practicing behaviors that promote an active, healthy lifestyle. In Grade 7, will use decision-making skills to promote health and wellness for themselves and their community.

- ***Within the grade level:***
 - 6.1.j Define addiction and substance use disorder.
 - 6.3.j Describe the types of support available at school and in the community for substance use disorders.
- ***Vertical Progression:***
 - 7.1.k Explain the link between addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; chronic disease; and engaging in risky behaviors.
 - 7.2.1 Explain the purpose of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and differentiate between FDA-approved and non-FDA-approved substances.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- List appropriate use and misuse of prescription, nonprescription/over-the-counter, and unregulated medications (1.h);
- Identify marketing techniques and influences on medication choice and where to access accurate information (2.h, 3.h);
- Respond to the statement, “but everyone is doing it (taking drugs)”; include what influences students in positive and negative ways Regarding substance use and how students can be leaders in prevention (1.i, 1.l, 2.1);
- Create a conversation (written or oral) with a peer that may be thinking about or has started using drugs and explain addiction, substance use disorder, and resources for help and assistance (1.j);
- Create a fact sheet to explain the opioid crisis to a parent or peer (1.k, 2.k, 3.k);
- List mental and health professionals that can help with preventing the use/misuse of substances and how they can help (3.l).

Additional resources:

- [Botvin LifeSkills Training \(LST\)](#) is an evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention program for students K-12 that is uniquely designed to be flexible and interactive, with e-versions available for online delivery. The LST program has been extensively tested and proven effective at reducing tobacco, alcohol, opioid, and illicit drug use by as much as 80%. Long-term follow-up studies also show that it produces prevention effects that are durable and long-lasting.

- [Preventing and Reducing Youth and Young Adult Substance Misuse: Schools, Students, Families](#) from the U.S. Department of Education provides resources and training on how schools can help youths with substance misuse and create safe learning environments.
- [Too Good for Drugs](#) is a universal K-12 prevention education program designed to mitigate the risk factors and enhance protective factors related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) use.
- [#GoOpenVa](#) – is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
- [Health Smart Virginia](#) – is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.

Grade 7

Students in Grade 7 generate and choose positive alternatives to risky behaviors. They use skills to resist peer pressure and manage stress and anxiety. Students are able to relate health choices to alertness, feelings, and performance at school or during physical activity. Students model their learning as they exhibit a healthy lifestyle, interpret health information, and promote good health.

Awareness

7.1.k Explain the link between addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; chronic disease; and engaging in risky behaviors. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

7.2.k Understand that addiction is a compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit- forming substance.

7.1.1 Define prescriptions, controlled substances, nicotine vaping products, hemp, and marijuana-derived cannabidiol (CBD) products, and explain their uses. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

7.2.1 Explain the purpose of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and differentiate between FDA-approved and non-FDA-approved substances.

7.2.m Identify short term, social and negative consequences of engaging in risky behaviors, including the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

Prevention

7.1.m Identify the types of behavior associated with drug use and abuse that reflect positive norms (e.g., drug use is not cool, drunken driving is stupid, most teens do not use drugs).

7.3.k Identify ways to participate in school and community efforts to promote a drug-free lifestyle.

7.3.m Identify and demonstrate strategies and skills for avoiding alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other harmful substances (e.g., effective refusal skills).

Understanding the Standard

Drug addiction is a chronic disease. Drug use is linked to risky behaviors such as needle sharing and can also weaken the immune system. This combination greatly increases the likelihood of contracting human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis, and other infectious diseases ([Health Consequences of Drug Use](#)).

- Drugs that may cause cancer include alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, tobacco, and steroids. (Young adult males who use marijuana/cannabis and began their use during adolescence are at risk for an aggressive form of testicular cancer.) Most drugs can have adverse cardiovascular effects, ranging from abnormal heart rate to heart attack. Drug use can lead to respiratory problems. Smoking cigarettes, marijuana/cannabis, and crack cocaine can cause bronchitis, emphysema, lung damage, and lung cancer. The use of some drugs, such as opioids, may cause breathing to slow, block air from entering the lungs, or make asthma symptoms worse. ([Health Consequences of Drug Use](#)) Alcohol can cause stroke, high blood pressure, cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), and cancer ([Alcohol's Effect on the Body](#)). (1.k) *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*
- Addiction is a compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance. The preferred term for drug addiction is substance use disorder (SUD) or substance abuse disorder. Drug addiction/SUD is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. ([Understanding Drug Use](#)) (2.k)
- Drug addiction/SUD is considered a brain disorder because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs. These changes to the brain affect how a person thinks (impairs judgment) and acts, which can lead to risky behaviors that may cause chronic disease, viral infections, and injury to

self and others (e.g., driving under the influence, engaging in violent/aggressive behaviors, or engaging in illegal behaviors to obtain money for or to obtain the drug). Compassion and understanding about SUD are important for people to obtain the treatment needed for the disorder. (2.k)

All drugs (i.e., medicines, medications, and illicit drugs) will affect the body and how it functions. Some effects are helpful, but some are harmful if used incorrectly or at all.

- Prescription medications require a doctor's order to obtain. They are used to treat a specific illness or condition. (1.1)
- Controlled substances are drugs that require permission from a doctor to use. In legal terms, controlled substances are regulated under federal law with legal consequences for illegal use and distribution ([The Controlled Substances Act DEA](#)). (1.1)
- FDA ([Food and Drug Administration](#)): Protects public health by ensuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, and medical devices, and by ensuring the safety of the nation's food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. FDA also has responsibility for regulating the manufacturing, marketing, and distribution of tobacco products to protect public health and to reduce tobacco use by minors. (2.1)
 - To get a drug approved, drug manufacturers must conduct lab, animal, and human clinical testing and submit their data to FDA. FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) is comprised of a team of physicians, statisticians, chemists, pharmacologists, and other scientists who review the company's data and proposed labeling. FDA approval of a drug means that data on the drug's effects have been reviewed by CDER and the drug is determined to provide benefits that outweigh its known and potential risks for the intended population. (All drugs/medications have side effects.) All medications must receive FDA approval; however, there are some over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements that do not require FDA approval to be sold. This includes but is not limited to vitamins and certain weight-loss supplements. ([FDA Dietary Supplements](#))

Social norms are the behaviors, attitudes, and/or standards that the majority of people in a group think are acceptable or unacceptable (the norm).

- What people do is influenced by what they think their peers are doing. If people think a certain behavior is typical or the norm, they are more likely to participate in it because they believe most are doing it and they want to belong. However, sometimes a norm or behavior is misread or misperceived, and people think that their peers engage in risky behavior much more than they really do. Example misconceptions: All the cool students use drugs, everyone drinks and drives, and drugs will not harm you if you do it just once. Correcting misconception and establishing drug-free social norms may include messaging and facts: Drug use is not cool, drunken driving is foolish and may lead to injury and death, most students do not use drugs, and the consequences of first-time/one-time drug use. (1.m)
- Short-term effects of substance use can range from changes in appetite, wakefulness, heart rate, blood pressure, and/or mood, to heart attack, stroke, psychosis, overdose, and even death. These health effects may occur after just one use. These effects often depend on the specific drug or drugs used, how they are taken, how much is taken, the person's health, and other factors. Between March 2019 and

March 2021, the United States saw an increase in drug overdose deaths by 29.6 percent, while Virginia saw a 39 percent increase.

([National Center for Health Statistics](#))

- Drug use can also have indirect effects on the people who are taking drugs and on those around them. This can include affecting a person’s nutrition; sleep; decision-making and impulsivity; and risk for trauma, violence, injury, and communicable diseases. ([Health Consequences of Drug Misuse](#)) (2.m)
- Strategies and skills for avoiding alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other harmful substances: having personal goals for current and future pursuits; engaging in family, school, and/or community activities; having trusted adults to talk with; having the confidence, skill, and positive self-image/self-esteem to say “No”; and engaging with peers/friends that are supportive of a drug-free lifestyle. Parents and children can talk with physicians about non-opioid pain options for surgical procedures or other medical needs. (3.m)

Refusal Skills (3.m)

- Verbal
 - Say “no.” There is no substitute for the word “no.” It makes any refusal stronger.
 - Repeat the refusal.
 - Suggest an alternative (suggest something to do instead).
 - Build the friendship (say something to let the person know you are his/her friend and want to spend time with him/her.) This is especially important because a major reason for ineffective refusals is not wanting to hurt the other person’s feelings or make him/her mad.
 - Use a firm tone of voice. Be strong and business-like.
- Nonverbal
 - Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
 - Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
 - Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.
 - Leave (get out of the situation).
 - Avoid situations where there may be pressure.

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will evaluate short-term and long-term consequences of drug use, distinguish between reliable and unreliable information sources, and make informed choices about their health and wellness. *This is an opportunity for students to reflect on the short-term and long-term consequences of drug use by creating mindmaps or flowcharts to help them distinguish the differences.*
- **Regulating Emotions and Building Resilience:** Students will develop healthy coping strategies to manage emotional distress and build positive coping strategies to overcome challenges and resist the temptation to use drugs or alcohol. *This is an opportunity for students to practice mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation, to develop healthy coping strategies for managing emotional distress and build positive coping strategies to overcome challenges and resist the temptation to use drugs or alcohol.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Drug addiction is a chronic disease and drug use is linked to risky behaviors.

Connections: In Grade Seven, students practice using their decision-making skills to manage their stress and promote health and wellness for themselves and their community. The previous year, Grade Six students developed personal strategies and skills to advocate for personal, social, and community health. In Grade Eight, students demonstrate understanding of the link between family history and health risks, how to evaluate health choices, and the application of health literacy to improve their personal, family, and community well-being.

- **Within the grade level:**
 - 7.1.k Explain the link between addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; chronic disease; and engaging in risky behaviors.
 - 7.3.k Identify ways to participate in school and community efforts to promote a drug-free lifestyle.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 8.1.i Describe the short- and long-term health issues and effects on the brain related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, and other drugs, including inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, methamphetamines, opiates, steroids, and performance-enhancing drugs.
 - 8.1.j Research the signs, symptoms, and causes of addiction and the impact of substance use disorder on relationships and behavior.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- Role-play situations in which refusal skills should be used. (2.m)
- [Responding to an Overdose Toolkit](#)
- [Overdose prevention and response \(English\)](#)
- [Overdose prevention and response \(Spanish\)](#)

Additional resources:

- [#GoOpenVa](#) – is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
 - [Drug Abuse Board Game](#)
 - [Lessons on Reducing Risky Behaviors.](#)
- The [Just Think Twice Website](#) from the DEA’s website includes facts and information about fentanyl and other opioids, as well as a variety of other substances for middle school students.
- [Opioids: What You Need to Know](#) is the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s lessons focused on what opioids are, their potential dangers, and how to use opioids safely. It includes an adapted version for grades 4-6.
- [PreVenture](#) is an evidence-based prevention program for youth ages 12-18 that uses personality-focused interventions to promote mental health and reduce the risk of substance use.
- [This is Not About Drugs](#) (TINAD) is a youth education program for students in grades 6-12 addresses youth substance use with an emphasis on opioids (prescription pain medication, fentanyl and heroin).
- The [Tips for Teens: The Truth About Opioids Fact Sheet](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides facts about opioids and describes short- and long-term effects and lists signs of opioid use. The fact sheet helps to dispel common myths about opioids.
- [Virginia Rules](#) is an educational program especially designed to help instructors, parents, and students understand the laws that apply to them in their everyday lives. Information includes violations and penalties regarding possession, sale, distribution, or manufacturing of opioids in the school setting. It features lessons designed for middle and high school students.
- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.

Grade Eight

Students in Graded Eight develop an understanding of the origins and causes of diseases, including the relationship between family history and certain health risks. They begin to relate short- and long-term consequences of health choices and apply health skills to specific personal, family, and community health concerns. Students develop the skills needed to discern relationships among all components of health and wellness and apply these skills to knowledgeably scrutinize consumer information.

Awareness

8.1.i Describe the short- and long-term health issues and effects on the brain related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, and other drugs, including inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, stimulants, methamphetamines, opiates, steroids, and performance-enhancing drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

8.2.i Analyze the social, economic, and family and peer pressure influences on the use of tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., e-cigarettes), alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. *The focus of this document is on prescription and non-prescription medications as a foundation for opioid awareness and prevention.*

8.1.j Research the signs, symptoms, and causes of addiction and the impact of substance use disorder on relationships and behavior.

Prevention

8.2.j Have and express positive norms regarding why most teenagers do not use alcohol, tobacco, prescription opioids, or other drugs (e.g., do not think use and abuse are acceptable or appropriate).

8.3.i Design persuasive advertising to eliminate drug use.

8.3.j Create a campaign that emphasizes the importance of prevention and early identification of drug use disorder.

Understanding the Standard

Drugs can alter important brain areas that are necessary for life-sustaining functions and can drive the compulsive drug use that marks addiction.

([Introducing the Human Brain](#))

- Health effects (1.i) (information about drug effects are from [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) unless otherwise specified):

- Short-term effects of substance use can range from changes in appetite, wakefulness, heart rate, blood pressure, motor coordination, impaired judgment, and/or mood to unconsciousness, heart attack, stroke, psychosis (hallucinations and delusions), overdose, and even death. These health effects may occur after just one use. These effects often depend on the specific drug or drugs used, how they are taken, how much is taken, the person's health, and other factors.
- Long-term effects: Most drugs can have adverse cardiovascular effects, ranging from abnormal heart rate to heart attack. Drug use can lead to respiratory problems. The use of some drugs, such as opioids, may cause breathing to slow, block air from entering the lungs, or make asthma symptoms worse.
 - Abuse of prescription stimulants can increase heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature. Stimulant medications can decrease sleep and appetite, and abuse can lead to malnutrition and its consequences.
 - Brain effects. Drugs interfere with the way neurons send, receive, and process signals via neurotransmitters. (1.i)
 - Opioids can affect parts of the brain such as the brain stem. The brain stem controls basic functions critical to life, such as heart rate, breathing, and sleeping.

Beyond the harmful consequences for the person with the addiction, drug use can cause serious health problems for others. Some of the more severe consequences of addiction (1.i):

- Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS): A mother's substance use or medication use during pregnancy can cause her baby to go into withdrawal after it is born. Symptoms will differ depending on the substance used but may include tremors, problems with sleeping and feeding, and even seizures. Some drug-exposed children will have developmental problems with behavior, attention, and thinking.
- Injection of drugs accounts for one in ten cases of HIV. Injection drug use is also a major factor in the spread of hepatitis C and can be the cause of endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart and heart valves) and cellulitis (inflammation of tissue).
- The use of illicit drugs or the misuse of prescription drugs can make driving a car unsafe, just like driving after drinking alcohol. Drugged driving puts the driver, passengers, and others who share the road at risk.
- Influences on substance use (2.i):
 - Peers: to fit in, to feel good, to feel better (relieve mental health disorders, stress, physical pain –“self-medicate”), to do better (use stimulants or performance-enhancing drugs), to experiment.
 - Family: Drug/substance use in the household increases the likelihood a student will use drugs. Research found that a healthy person was at a higher risk if a sibling or spouse abused drugs. A student's inherited genetic vulnerability; personality traits like poor impulse control or a high need for excitement; mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and beliefs such as drugs are “cool” or harmless make it more likely that a student will use drugs.
 - Social: Being around people who use drugs, may start to feel like everyone is doing it and like it is no big deal.

- Media influence: People on TV talk about drugs a lot. Drugs are in the news and joked about on programs. Drug culture may be glorified on programs, social media, and video gaming applications without showing the consequences.

Over time, drug use can lead to addiction, a devastating brain disease. People can't stop using drugs even when they really want to, and even after it causes consequences to their health and other parts of their lives.

- The preferred term for drug addiction is substance use disorder or substance abuse disorder. Addiction is a compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance. Drug addiction/substance use disorder is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. ([Understanding Drug Use and Addiction](#)) (1.j)
- Drug addiction/substance use disorder is considered a brain disorder because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs. Smoking a drug or injecting it into a vein increases its addictive potential. These changes to the brain affect how a person thinks (impairs judgment) and acts, which can lead to risky behaviors that may cause chronic disease, viral infections, and injury to self and others (driving under the influence, engaging in violent/aggressive behaviors, or engaging in illegal behaviors to obtain money for or to obtain the drug). (1.j)
- Indications that someone has a developing drug problem: (1.j)
 - Hanging out with different friends.
 - Not caring about their appearance.
 - Getting worse grades in school.
 - Missing classes or skipping school.
 - Losing interest in their favorite activities.
 - Getting in trouble in school or with the law.
 - Having different eating or sleeping habits.
 - Having more problems with family members and friends.
- Social norms are the behaviors, attitudes, and/or standards that the majority of people in a group think are acceptable or unacceptable. What people do is influenced by what they think their peers are doing. If people think a certain behavior is typical or the norm, they are more likely to participate in it because they believe most are doing it and they want to belong. However, sometimes a norm or behavior is misread or misperceived, and people think that their peers engage in risky behavior much more than they really do. (2.j)
- Misconceptions include:
 - Everyone uses drugs.
 - Everyone drinks and drives.
 - Drugs will not harm you if you do them just once.

- Marijuana is safe because it is legal in Virginia.

Early identification of substance use disorder is important because there are treatments to help manage addiction, but there is no cure. It is a chronic disease, meaning it lasts a long time and needs to be managed with regular treatment. If people follow treatment plans, they can go for many years leading healthy lives. It can be similar to other chronic conditions that people learn to manage, like diabetes or heart disease. (3.j)

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will evaluate the risks and benefits of drug use and make informed decisions based on reliable information. *When presented with this information, students can develop a ‘choose your own adventure’ game that teaches them the impacts of their decisions on their health and well-being.*
- **Regulating Emotions and Building Resilience:** Students will develop healthy coping strategies to manage emotional distress and resist the temptation to use drugs as a coping mechanism. *This is an opportunity for students to reflect on how incorporating physical activity and mindfulness into their daily routines can help them cope with their stress and avoid turning to drugs or alcohol to handle their stress.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Opioids can disrupt essential brain functions, leading to compulsive drug use and addiction.

Connections: In Grade Eight, students demonstrate understanding of the link between family history and health risks, how to evaluate health choices, and the application of health literacy to improve their personal, family, and community well-being. The previous year, Grade Seven students used decision-making skills to promote health and wellness for themselves and their community and reflect on positive ways to handle stress. In Grade Nine, students will integrate health concepts, skills, and behaviors to plan for a healthy future.

- **Within the grade level:**
 - 8.1.j Research the signs, symptoms, and causes of addiction and the impact of substance use disorder on relationships and behavior.
- **Vertical Progression:**
 - 9.3.h Promote ways to encourage reporting peer substance use to trusted adults (e.g., parents, teachers, coaches, doctors).
 - 9.1.j Explain facts about opioids and why teens are more vulnerable to heroin and prescription opioids.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- Identify positive and negative stressors and the potential physical and psychological responses;
- Practice and promote stress-management skills;
- Apply refusal or negotiation skills to different risky situations and explain why the selected skill set was beneficial to the situation (1.n, 2.n).

Additional Resources:

- [#GoOpenVa](#) - is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
 - [Drug Abuse Board Game](#);
 - [Lessons on Reducing Risky Behaviors](#).
- The [Just Think Twice Website](#) from the DEA's website includes facts and information about fentanyl and other opioids, as well as a variety of other substances for middle school students.
- [Opioids: What You Need to Know](#) is the National Institute on Drug Abuse's lessons focused on what opioids are, their potential dangers, and how to use opioids safely. It includes an adapted version for grades 4-6.
- [PreVenture](#) is an evidence-based prevention program for youth ages 12-18 that uses personality-focused interventions to promote mental health and reduce the risk of substance use.
- [This is Not About Drugs](#) (TINAD) is a youth education program for students in grades 6-12 addresses youth substance use with an emphasis on opioids (prescription pain medication, fentanyl, and heroin).
- The [Tips for Teens: The Truth About Opioids Fact Sheet](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides facts about opioids and describes short- and long-term effects and lists signs of opioid use. The fact sheet helps to dispel common myths about opioids.
- [Virginia Rules](#) is an educational program especially designed to help instructors, parents, and students understand the laws that apply to them in their everyday lives. Information includes violations and penalties regarding possession, sale, distribution, or manufacturing of opioids in the school setting. It features lessons designed for middle and high school students.
- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can

have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.

Grade Nine

Students in Grade Nine integrate a variety of health concepts, skills, and behaviors to plan for their personal, lifelong health goals (self-management and responsible decision making). These include awareness and consequences of risky behaviors, disease prevention, overall wellness, and identification of community health resources (social awareness and responsible decision making). Students demonstrate competence in their knowledge and skills. They see themselves as having an active role in creating a healthy lifestyle for themselves, for their families, and for the community (relationship skills and responsible decision making).

Awareness

- 9.1.h Explain how alcohol and other drugs increase the risk of injury.
- 9.2.h Evaluate the effects of alcohol and other drugs on human body systems, brain function, and behavior, and describe health benefits associated with abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- 9.3.h Promote ways to encourage reporting peer substance use to trusted adults (e.g., parents, teachers, coaches, doctors).
- 9.1.j Explain facts about opioids and why teens are more vulnerable to heroin and prescription opioids.
- 9.2.j Analyze and draw inferences about behaviors connected to addiction and mental health.

Prevention

- 9.2.i Develop a set of personal standards to resist the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances and behaviors.
- 9.3.i Develop a personal plan to prevent substance use.
- 9.3.j Research consequences of drug abuse, including stealing to support a drug habit, arrest, prosecution, and jail.

Understanding the Standard

Using drugs or alcohol may result in individuals taking greater risks that negatively affect the individual. Additional information can be found at [Information on drug effects obtained from NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

Using drugs or alcohol may result in individuals taking greater risks that negatively affect the individual. Additional information can be found at [Information on drug effects obtained from NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

- Risk of injury: The use of alcohol and other drugs impairs brain function and may increase risk-taking behaviors leading to increased injury. Alcohol and drug use may result in injury due to impaired coordination, impaired neurocognitive performance, and impaired ability to recognize and respond to hazards. Additionally, people who are impaired due to alcohol or other drugs are more likely to be hurt more seriously than if they hadn't been using these substances. (1.h)
- Many factors influence how drugs affect the body, brain, and behavior, including the kind of drug taken, how much of the drug is taken, how often the drug is used, what other food, drugs, or substances are used at the same time, and individual body size and chemistry. (2.h)
- Drugs may intensify or dull the senses, alter the sense of alertness, and may decrease physical pain. Drugs may also affect the ability to learn, solve complex problems, plan ahead, and affect motor coordination. Drug use may lead to aggressive behavior, extreme mood swings, paranoia, delusional behavior, and a feeling of invincibility. (2.h)
- Drugs may alter the brain by affecting cognition (learning and memory), emotion, and perception of pain. Drugs interfere with the way neurons send, receive, and process signals via neurotransmitters. This can lead to abnormal messages being sent, can amplify or disrupt the normal communication between neurons, and reinforces the desire to use drugs. Over time, drug use can lead to addiction, a devastating brain disease—when people can't stop using drugs even when they really want to. (2.h)
- Specific information on the effects of alcohol and other drugs on body systems, brain, and behavior may be found at NIDA ([National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)). (2.h)
- Outside of medications from a pharmacy or hospital, drugs obtained in other ways may include additional or more potent ingredients that make the drug more harmful. (2.h)
- Getting help: Drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to. Fortunately, researchers know more than ever about how drugs affect the brain and have found treatments that can help people recover from drug addiction and lead productive lives. (3.h)

Resistance skills:

Nonverbal (2.i)

- Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
- Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
- Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.

- Leave (get out of the situation).
- Avoid situations where there may be pressure.

Opioids are among the most addictive drugs. Opioid misuse has become a nationwide public health crisis. [Information on drug effects obtained from NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) [Information on drug effects obtained from NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

- Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin (not a medication), synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and many others. (1.j)
- All opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the body and brain. Opioids block pain messages sent from the body to the brain, which is why they are prescribed for serious injuries or illnesses. Regular use—even as prescribed by a doctor—can lead to dependence and, when misused, opioid pain relievers can lead to addiction, overdose incidents, and deaths. In the short term, the release of dopamine into the body can make some people feel really relaxed and happy. But it can also cause more harmful effects, like extreme sleepiness, confusion, nausea, vomiting, and constipation. Over time, opioids can lead to insomnia, muscle pain, heart infections, pneumonia, and addiction. Note: Parents and children can talk with physicians about non-opioid pain options for surgical procedures or other medical needs.
- Outside of medications from a pharmacy or hospital, drugs obtained in other ways may include additional ingredients that make the drug more harmful. (1.j)
- Using drugs, especially early in life, increases mortality and the likelihood of addiction, can lead to poor grades, a decreased level of performance in sports, and affect relationships with friends and family. Opioids alter judgment, which can cause risky behaviors. (1.j)
- Heroin is a dangerous drug that can be injected, sniffed, snorted, or smoked, but is most often used by injecting it directly into a vein with a needle. The chemical makeup of heroin is the same as that of pain relievers, and both can be addictive and cause deadly opioid overdoses. (1.j)
- Students who use prescription opioids to get high are more likely to start using heroin by high school graduation. (1.j)
- [Research](#) now suggests that the human brain is still maturing during the time between childhood and adulthood. The developing brain may help explain why students sometimes make decisions that are risky and can lead to safety or health concerns, including unique vulnerabilities to drug abuse and that drug use during adolescence may significantly increase a young person’s risk for developing a substance use disorder later in life. (1.j)

- Many individuals who develop substance use disorders are also diagnosed with mental health disorders, and vice versa. Multiple national population surveys have found that about half of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience a substance use disorder and vice versa. Research suggests that students with substance use disorders also have high rates of co-occurring mental illness; over 60% of students in community-based substance use disorder treatment programs also meet diagnostic criteria for another mental illness. (2.j)
- Help and resources are available for mental health and substance use disorders. Talk with a parent, a trusted adult at school, home, or in the community if you have concerns for yourself, friend, or loved one.
 - Parents can help access the health care and resources needed.
 - School counselors, school nurses, psychologists, and social workers can also help with accessing community services.
 - In Virginia, the Community Services Boards in many areas of the state can be accessed for information and treatment.
 - National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.
- In addition to the health effects, substance use and misuse can lead to risky behaviors (e.g., stealing for money to buy drugs) and involvement with law enforcement and the judicial system. Types of drug crimes include possession, sale or distribution, and manufacturing. The type of controlled substance and the type of drug crime determine legal penalties, to include fines and imprisonment. Legal penalties may affect a person’s future. Note: Teachers should also review their school division’s Students Rights and Responsibilities. (3.j)
- Under [Code of Virginia §18.2-251.03](#), someone who seeks or obtains emergency medical attention for himself or for another individual because of a drug- or alcohol-related overdose in progress may be protected from being convicted for certain possession or intoxication crimes if the person reports an overdose to a firefighter, EMS personnel, or a law enforcement officer (most commonly by calling 911 for emergency medical response). To be eligible for this “affirmative defense,” the person reporting the overdose must identify themselves as being the one who reported the overdose. (3.j)
- Under [Code of Virginia §18.2-251.03](#), someone who seeks or obtains emergency medical attention for himself or for another individual because of a drug- or alcohol-related overdose in progress may be protected from being convicted for certain possession or intoxication crimes if the person reports an overdose to a firefighter, EMS personnel, or a law enforcement officer (most commonly by calling 911 for emergency medical response). To be eligible for this “affirmative defense,” the person reporting the overdose must identify themselves as being the one who reported the overdose. (3.j)
- Note: Naloxone is a prescription medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. It is an opioid antagonist—meaning that it binds to opioid receptors and can reverse and block the effects of other opioids. It can quickly restore normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped as a result of overdosing with heroin or prescription opioid pain medications. Naloxone is used by

paramedics, emergency room doctors, and other specially trained first responders. Revive! is a free one-hour training offered in Virginia for members of the community to administer [Naloxone; information available at VDH](#) and local health departments. More information is available at [Naloxone information available at VDH](#) and through local health departments. Naloxone can be purchased in many pharmacies in Virginia without bringing in a prescription from a physician. A common brand of naloxone is Narcan.

- In 2024, [Code of Virginia § 22.1-206.01](#) was added to include that each public secondary school that includes grades nine through 12 will include a program of instruction concerning opioid overdose prevention and reversal.
- Getting help: Drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to. Fortunately, researchers know more than ever about how drugs affect the brain and have found treatments that can help people recover from drug addiction and lead productive lives. (3.h)
- Help and resources are available for mental health and substance use disorders. Talk with a parent, a trusted adult at school, home, or in the community if you have concerns for yourself, friend, or loved one.
 - Parents can help access the health care and resources needed.
 - School counselors, school nurses, psychologists, and social workers can also help with accessing community services.
 - In Virginia, the Community Services Boards in many areas of the state can be accessed for information and treatment.
 - National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will evaluate the risks and consequences of drug use and make informed choices about their health and well-being. *This is an opportunity for students to practice how to perform hands-only CPR and how to use naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose.*
- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** Students will gather accurate information about drugs from reliable sources and understand the potential consequences of their use. *This is an opportunity for students to analyze a variety of information pertaining to the dangers of opioid use and misuse and determine ways to protect themselves and others from harm.*
- **Regulating Emotions and Building Resilience:** Students will develop healthy coping strategies to manage emotional distress and avoid turning to drugs as a coping mechanism. *This is an opportunity for students to create a visual chart of mind map listing various healthy coping strategies such as physical activity, creative outlets, or seeking help or social support when needed.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Addiction to opioids is characterized by compulsive drug use, driven by changes in vital brain areas, including the reward system and decision-making centers.

Connections: In Grade Nine, students explain that drug, and particularly opioid use, leads to injuries and impacts body systems and behaviors. In Grade Ten, students will research trends and factors that lead to drug use and evaluate the causal relationship between tobacco, alcohol, inhalant, and other drug use and chronic disease.

- *Within the grade level:*
 - 9.1.j Explain facts about opioids and why teens are more vulnerable to heroin and prescription opioids.
 - Develop a set of personal standards to resist the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances and behaviors.
- *Vertical Progression:*
 - 10.1.g Research trends and factors that contribute to teen use/abuse and non-substance use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., e-cigarettes), opioids, and other drugs and their impact on the community.
 - 10.3.g Demonstrate assertive communication skills to resist pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Resources and Activities for Consideration

- Research the effects of alcohol and other drugs on body systems, brain function, and behavior, and how these effects can increase the risk of injury (2.h, 1.h);
- Research national and state data on the frequency and number of injuries that occur when individuals are impaired by alcohol or drugs (1.h);
- Promote the health benefits of abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and promote seeking help for self and others (2.h, 3.h);
- Identify resources available for teens and youth for help with addiction (3.h);
- Develop personal strategies and a plan to prevent substance use and to resist substance use; apply personal strategies to a variety of role-play situations (2.i, 3.i).

Additional Resources

- [Classroom Resources, Lessons, and Activities](#) contains lessons, activities, and drug facts from the National Institute of Health to educate teens about the effects and consequences of drug use.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can

have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.

- [#GoOpenVa](#) - is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
 - [Prescription Drug Safety Lessons](#)
 - [Dangers of Opioids](#)
 - [Lessons on Reducing Risky Behaviors](#)
- [Pathways to Safer Opioid Use](#) is a new, interactive training that teaches healthcare providers how to implement opioid-related recommendations from the HHS [National Action Plan for Adverse Drug Event Prevention](#).
- [Substance Use Disorders and Opioid Addiction in School Communities](#) is a nine module training series from the Virginia Department of Education that provides school divisions and relevant stakeholders with important information on opioid overdose prevention, effective approaches, and access to care.
- The [Substance Use Prevention Resources for Youth and College Students](#) site provides substance use prevention resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- The [Virginia Fentanyl Awareness One-Sheet](#) is a result of the 2024 General Assembly passing [HB1473](#) requiring the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Health to work collaboratively to develop a fentanyl education and awareness informational one-sheet and make this resource available to each school board for distribution to all grade 9-12 students within the first two weeks of the 2024-2025 school year.
- The [Fentanyl Facts](#) and [Fentanyl One-Pager](#) were released by the National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse ([NCAPDA](#)) and share statistics related to opioid involved overdoses and deaths and information on what Fentanyl is and the dangers it poses.
- The [Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's Fentanyl Prevention Lesson & On Demand Webinar of Best Practices](#) was initially developed by practitioners from the Warren County Community Health Coalition. It has been revised by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth with support from researchers at Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University, and East Tennessee State University.
- [How to Use Naloxone Nasal Spray](#)
- [Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Virginia Department of Education](#)
- [Prevent Overdose: Empowering Youth to Save Lives](#)
- [Fentanyl & Opioid Awareness Prevention Lesson](#)
- [Resources for further exploration into the opioid crisis](#)
 - [Flyers and infographics](#)

- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.

Overdose Reversal Training

- The [REVIVE! Teen Module](#) from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) is designed to help students understand the real risks of opioids. The module aims to break the stigma around opioid overdoses and start conversations about prevention and preparedness in an event of an opioid overdose.
- [REVIVE!](#) is the Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education (OONE) program for the Commonwealth of Virginia. REVIVE! provides training on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency using naloxone.
- The [American Red Cross](#) provides courses that include opioid overdose response and naloxone administration as part of their first aid, CPR, and AED training programs.
- [The DOPE Project](#) and [The Next Distro](#) provide grassroots-level training and resources on opioid overdose prevention and naloxone distribution. These organizations often tailor their training to the needs of specific communities.
- The [Get Naloxone Now](#) online resource offers free, interactive training programs on recognizing and responding to opioid overdoses, as well as how to administer naloxone.
- The [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#) provides educational materials and resources on naloxone and opioid overdose, including research-based information and guides for responders.

Grade Ten

Students in Grade Ten demonstrate comprehensive health and wellness knowledge and skills. Their behaviors reflect a conceptual understanding of the issues associated with maintaining good personal health. They serve the community through the practice of health-enhancing behaviors that promote wellness throughout life (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, and relationship skills).

Awareness

10.1.g Research trends and factors that contribute to teen use/abuse and non-substance use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products (e.g., e-cigarettes), opioids, and other drugs and their impact on the community.

10.2.g Explain reasons why teenagers use or avoid drugs or alcohol and how positive role models can influence that decision.

10.3.g Demonstrate assertive communication skills to resist pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

10.1.h Evaluate the causal relationship between tobacco, alcohol, inhalant, and other drug use and chronic disease.

Prevention

10.2.h Evaluate the protective factors needed to reduce or prevent risk-taking behaviors, acts of violence, and substance use.

10.3.i Encourage responsible teen driving behaviors, and practice using refusal and negotiation skills to avoid riding in a car with someone who has been using alcohol or other drugs.

Understanding the Standard

Every day we make choices that affect our health. People take drugs for many different reasons, such as dealing with life’s challenges, escaping reality, relieving pain, or trying to fit in. ([Start a Conversation](#))

- For information on current drug use behavior trends:
 - [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance \(YRBS\)](#): The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors six categories of health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults. (1.g)
 - [Monitoring the Future National Survey](#) (Grades Eight, Ten, and Twelve): Monitoring the Future is an annual drug use survey of eighth-, tenth-, and twelfth-grade students conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Results from the survey are released each fall. (1.g)
- Influences on substance use (2.g):
 - Peers: To fit in, to feel good, to feel better (relieve mental health disorders, stress, physical pain -“self-medicate”), to do better (use stimulants or performance-enhancing drugs), to experiment.
 - Family: Drug use in the household increases the likelihood a student will use drugs. Research found that a healthy person was at a higher risk if a sibling or spouse abused drugs. A student’s inherited genetic vulnerability; personality traits like poor impulse control or a high need for excitement; mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and beliefs such as that drugs are “cool” or harmless make it more likely that a student will use drugs.

- Social: Students who are around other students who use drugs may have the false impression that everyone their age is using drugs.
- Media: People on various media (e.g., movies, streamed shows, music, video gaming) talk and joke about drugs and may glorify drug culture without showing the consequences.
- Academic Pressure: High levels of stress related to academic performance can lead some students to use substances as a means of coping or escaping from the pressure.
- Students may engage in risky behaviors not because they want to or do not know whether something is an unhealthy or unsafe choice but because they do not know how to respond, are afraid of losing a friend, looking uncool, or being left out. Practicing and using assertive communication, refusal, and negotiation skills can help students with peer pressure situations and help build confidence and strength. (2.g)
- Assertive communication skills include listening to others' views and responding appropriately, accepting responsibility, expressing appreciation, admitting mistakes and apologizing, maintaining self-control, acting as an equal to others, using "I" statements, practicing saying "no," remaining calm, rehearsing what you will say, making eye contact, maintaining an upright posture, and maintaining a neutral or positive facial expression. (3.g)

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. ([Drug Misuse and Addiction](#))

- Substance use disorder and chronic disease: Drugs that may cause cancer include alcohol, tobacco, steroids, and marijuana/cannabis. (Young adult males who use marijuana/cannabis and began use during adolescence are at risk for an aggressive form of testicular cancer.) Most drugs can have adverse cardiovascular effects, ranging from an abnormal heart rate to a heart attack. Drug use can lead to respiratory problems. Smoking cigarettes, marijuana/cannabis, or crack cocaine can cause bronchitis, emphysema, lung damage, and lung cancer. The use of some drugs, such as opioids, may cause breathing to slow, block air from entering the lungs, or make asthma symptoms worse. Alcohol use can cause stroke, high blood pressure, cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), and cancer ([Alcohol's Effect on the Body](#)). (1.h)
- Protective factors to reduce risk-taking behaviors are high personal integrity, performing community service, having teachers recognize good work, having community adults to talk to, participating in extracurricular activities, and having parents available for help. Having three protective factors is essential to reducing risk. (2.h)

Information from [National Highway Traffic Safety Agency](#) unless otherwise indicated:

- Drug-impaired driving: Many substances can impair driving, including alcohol, some over-the-counter and prescription drugs, and illegal drugs. Alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, and other drugs impair the ability to drive because they slow coordination, judgment, and reaction times. Cocaine and methamphetamine can make drivers more aggressive and reckless. Using two or more drugs at a time, including alcohol, can amplify the impairing effects of each drug a person has consumed. Some prescription and over-the-counter medicines can

cause extreme drowsiness, dizziness, and other side effects. Read and follow all warning labels before driving, and note that warnings against “operating heavy machinery” include driving a vehicle. (1.i)

- Research has shown that factors that help to keep students safe include parental involvement, a minimum legal drinking age, zero tolerance laws, and graduated driver licensing systems. These proven steps can protect the lives of young drivers and everyone who shares the road with them. ([Teen Drinking and Driving](#)) (2.i)

Refusal skills (3.i)

Verbal

- Say “no.” There is no substitute for the word “no.” It makes any refusal stronger.
- Repeat the refusal.
- Suggest an alternative (suggest something to do instead).
- Build the friendship (say something to let the person know you are their friend and want to spend time with them). This is especially important because a major reason for ineffective refusals is not wanting to make them mad.
- Use a firm tone of voice. Be strong and business-like.

Nonverbal

- Direct eye contact (look the person in the face).
- Serious expression (use your best “I mean it” face).
- Hands-off hands (put your hands up in front of you when you refuse). This is especially useful in situations involving physical pressure.
- Leave (get out of the situation).
- Avoid situations where there may be pressure.
- Negotiation skills (3.i)
 - State what you need.
 - Listen and clarify.
 - Identify other perspectives.
 - Determine common ground.
 - Elicit an agreement.

Skills in Practice

While the four healthy lifestyle practices are expected to be embedded in each standard, the Skills in Practice highlight the most prevalent practice in relation to the content presented.

- **Critical Thinking and Decision Making:** Students will analyze longitudinal data to detect shifts in usage patterns and correlate them with external factors like impaired driving. *This is an opportunity for students to analyze data from a specific period of time to determine the number of opioid-related overdoses and deaths in their community, in Virginia, and throughout the United States.*
- **Acquiring, Evaluating, and Communicating Health Information:** Students will evaluate reliable sources of health information such as peer-reviewed journals, official health organizations (e.g., WHO, CDC), and established medical institutions based on their credentials, reputation, and the qualifications of the authors. *This is an opportunity for students to conduct a scavenger hunt to identify reliable sources of health information on various topics, evaluate the credibility of the sources, and present their findings to the class.*
- **Practicing Healthy Behaviors:** Students will create a set of driving rules and expectations such as no texting while driving, refraining from using alcohol, tobacco, opioids, and other drugs, maintaining a curfew, seatbelt safety, and limiting the number of passengers. *This is an opportunity for students to create a podcast or a public service announcement (PSA) to promote safe driving practices, including avoiding distractions, refraining from substance use, and ensuring passenger safety.*

Concepts and Connections

Concepts: Addiction to opioids is characterized by compulsive drug use, driven by changes in vital brain areas, including the reward system and decision-making centers.

Connections: In Grade Ten, students will promote responsible driving and practicing refusal and negotiation skills to avoid unsafe situations such as riding with impaired drivers. The previous year Grade Nine students will integrate health concepts, skills, and behaviors to plan for a healthy future.

- *Within the grade level:*
 - 10.3.g Demonstrate assertive communication skills to resist pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- *Vertical Progression:* N/A

Resources for Consideration

- [Classroom Resources, Lessons, and Activities](#) contains lessons, activities, and drug facts from the National Institute of Health to educate

students about the effects and consequences of drug use.

- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures.
- [#GoOpenVa](#) - is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
 - [Prescription Drug Safety Lessons](#);
 - [Dangers of Opioids](#);
 - [Lessons on Reducing Risky Behaviors](#)
- [Pathways to Safer Opioid Use](#) is a new, interactive training that teaches healthcare providers how to implement opioid-related recommendations from the HHS [National Action Plan for Adverse Drug Event Prevention](#).
- [Substance Use Disorders and Opioid Addiction in School Communities](#) is a nine module training series from the Virginia Department of Education that provides school divisions and relevant stakeholders with important information on opioid overdose prevention, effective approaches, and access to care.
- The [Substance Use Prevention Resources for Youth and College Students](#) site provides substance use prevention resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- The [Virginia Fentanyl Awareness One-Sheet](#) is a result of the 2024 General Assembly passing [HB1473](#) requiring the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Department of Health to work collaboratively to develop a fentanyl education and awareness informational one-sheet and make this resource available to each school board for distribution to all grade 9-12 students within the first two weeks of the 2024-2025 school year.
- The [Fentanyl Facts](#) and [Fentanyl One-Pager](#) were released by the National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse ([NCAPDA](#)) and share statistics related to opioid involved overdoses and deaths and information on what Fentanyl is and the dangers it poses.
- The [Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's Fentanyl Prevention Lesson & On Demand Webinar of Best Practices](#) was initially developed by practitioners from the Warren County Community Health Coalition. It has been revised by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth with support from researchers at Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University, and East Tennessee State University.
- [How to Use Naloxone Nasal Spray](#)
- [Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Virginia Department of Education](#)

- [Prevent Overdose: Empowering Youth to Save Lives](#)
- [Fentanyl & Opioid Awareness Prevention Lesson](#)
- [Resources for further exploration into the opioid crisis](#)
 - [Flyers and infographics](#)
- [#GoOpenVa](#) - is a platform dedicated to open educational resources for Virginia teachers. It offers resources on various topics, including health education.
- [Health Smart Virginia](#) - is a website that provides health education resources for Kindergarten through 12th grade students. The website offers resources on a variety of topics including social, emotional, physical, and environmental health. Some of the featured issues covered on the website are mental health, trauma, and substance abuse prevention.
- [EverFi](#) is a newly updated digital youth-led course that educates students in grades 8-12 about the potential dangers of misusing prescription medications, including fentanyl. The course, developed in partnership with Truth Initiative, explores the impact misuse can have on students' physical and mental health, relationships, communities, and futures. Overdose Reversal Training
- The [REVIVE! Teen Module](#) from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) is designed to help students understand the real risks of opioids. The module aims to break the stigma around opioid overdoses and start conversations about prevention and preparedness in an event of an opioid overdose.
- [REVIVE!](#) is the Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education (OONE) program for the Commonwealth of Virginia. REVIVE! provides training on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency using naloxone.
- The [American Red Cross](#) provides courses that include opioid overdose response and naloxone administration as part of their first aid, CPR, and AED training programs.
- [The DOPE Project](#) and [The Next Distro](#) provide grassroots-level training and resources on opioid overdose prevention and naloxone distribution. These organizations often tailor their training to the needs of specific communities.
- The [Get Naloxone Now](#) online resource offers free, interactive training programs on recognizing and responding to opioid overdoses, as well as how to administer naloxone.
- The [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#) provides educational materials and resources on naloxone and opioid overdose, including research-based information and guides for responders