

# SCREENAGERS UNDER THE INFLUENCE

## Parent handout to continue the conversation

*"In our technology revolution, the amount of exposure teens have to substances via shows, ads, social media, and so forth is unprecedented. Mental health issues and substance use are linked, and teens need opportunities to gain skills to handle challenging emotions and discuss issues related to substances. Screenagers Under The Influence provides exactly that. This film, along with the two other Screenagers films, offers a way for youth and adults to discuss issues and solutions.*

*Moreover, we believe that establishing a routine of weekly short talks to discuss the positives and risks of our tech revolution, including substance-related topics, is vital. That's why we are in our 7th year of Tech Talk Tuesdays, the free Screenagers Blog that has helped thousands of families have productive conversations. We hope you'll join us."*

**— Co-directors Delaney Ruston, MD, and Lisa Tabb**

### VAPING

It is good to refer to vapes as e-cigarettes because that is what they are.

- 90% of smokers start before 18.
- Flavors and high nicotine concentrations are banned in most countries, but not the US.
- One vape pen has as much nicotine as a whole pack of cigarettes.

**Parenting Tips:** Discuss ways in which industries like e-cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis, and others target youth. If you discover that your child is vaping or using other substances, limit how much you talk about your concerns. The goal is to maintain connection, and over-discussing our worries strains the relationship.

### ALCOHOL

A common belief is that there are ways to teach young people to drink responsibly. People also believe that teens want to drink because it is forbidden. However, research argues against these beliefs. For example:

- In France, where the drinking age is lower, 15-year-olds report binge drinking 3 times more than in the US.
- Studies show that allowing teens to drink socially at home predicts increased drinking in college.

**Parenting Tips:** Data shows that when parents have conversations with their kids about why they do not want them to drink, youth are more likely to make healthier choices. Also, when teens feel safe talking with parents about issues related to use (i.e., they believe they won't be shamed or harshly punished), this correlates with better overall outcomes for teens. Walking the line between not being overly permissive while remaining approachable takes ongoing work, and often seeking advice from others, such as counselors or other parents, is essential.

### CANNABIS

- Higher THC concentrations are linked to an increased risk of frequent use and brain changes.
- Dr. Yasmin Hurd found visible changes in the neurons of rats that were exposed three times a week to cannabis during their adolescence compared to rats that were not exposed.
- MRIs of human teen brains show concerning changes in cortical thickness in weed users vs. non-users.

**Parenting Tips:** The goal is not to try and control our kids but to help kids understand the risks of illicit substances. Weed is illegal for anyone under 21. Talk about emerging science.

### FENTANYL

A deadly epidemic involving this highly-dangerous synthetic drug is happening right now. Given the risk that any non-prescribed pill or powder can be laced with fentanyl, these must never be taken.

**Parenting Tips:** Discuss ways Fentanyl is reaching youth, why one pill can kill, and the importance of Narcan.

**VISIT SCREENAGERSMOVIE.COM for more tips and resources and to sign up for the Screenagers Blog!**

*\*For references on the data cited above, please email [info@screenagersmovie.com](mailto:info@screenagersmovie.com)*

## MORE RESOURCES FROM SCREENAGERS

### TECH TALK TUESDAYS

Access a library of over 450 blogs from Screenagers' filmmaker Dr. Delaney Ruston, containing a wealth of information and advice for families. Sign up to receive this every Tuesday via email.



[www.screenagersmovie.com/blog](http://www.screenagersmovie.com/blog)

### THE SCREENAGERS PODCAST

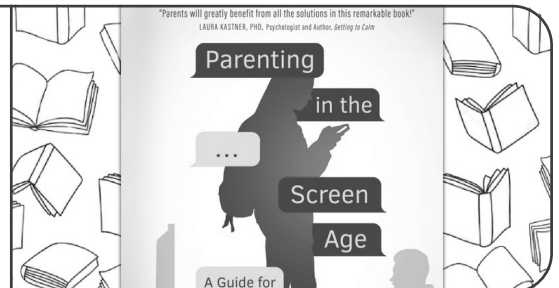
Join Dr. Ruston and guests every 2 weeks for the Screenagers Podcast, where they explore in more detail the topics of our movies - Screen Time, Mental Health, Substances and much more.



[www.screenagersmovie.com/podcast](http://www.screenagersmovie.com/podcast)

### BOOK - PARENTING IN THE SCREEN AGE

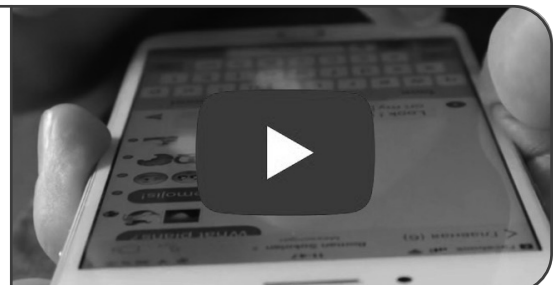
Written to help parent have calmer and more productive conversations with youth about tech and its impact upon their health, happiness and development. Read a free preview of the book at:



[www.screenagersmovie.com/book](http://www.screenagersmovie.com/book)

### SCREENAGERS ON YOUTUBE

We publish new videos every week, featuring the experts from our movies, giving new and valuable parenting advice that wasn't in our movies, along with other resources.



[youtube.com/@Screenagers\\_Movie](https://youtube.com/@Screenagers_Movie)



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