

An effective communication plan uncovers and promotes positive norms as a protective strategy.



The following 3-step social norms framework balances the sharing of important substance information alongside true positive norms.



This framework can be applied to any substance use communication with youth, ranging from general health education to social media messaging to school-wide or public service announcements.



STEP
1

The Opening

Bring attention to true positive norms, such as the actual norms that most youth do not use substances and/or view substances favorably.

STEP
2

The Middle

Share substance-related information while keeping the focus on the positive. Avoid amplifying negative/risk behaviors and scare tactics.

STEP
3

The Closing

Conclude with a final positive norms message.



Challenge

Order the statements below according to the 3 steps above. Disregard any statements inconsistent with the framework. Highlight any positive norms.

1. Fentanyl deaths have spiked among U.S. children and teens.
2. Fentanyl-related overdose deaths in teens tripled from 2019 to 2021, and many of those deaths were due to counterfeit pills.
3. Life-saving overdose reversal medication is easy to learn to administer. Contact us for free training and resources to support you and your loved ones.
4. Unintentional exposure to fentanyl by taking a pill that was believed to be some other medicine such as Vicodin, Xanax, etc. is the most common cause of fentanyl overdose among the youth who take pills not prescribed to them.
5. Most youth do not intentionally take pills not prescribed to them.
6. Most caregivers have rules that prohibit taking pills in ways not prescribed by a doctor.
7. Most youth do not approve of friends taking pills in ways that a doctor has not prescribed.