



## Know the Science

## Be Dopamine Wise

### MISSION

To equip youth with science- and facts-based knowledge about drugs and addiction to empower them to make healthy and sensible choices.

### VISION

Engage and train young people to be drug and addiction education leaders to provide resources and raise awareness of addictive substances and drug overdose in youth communities.

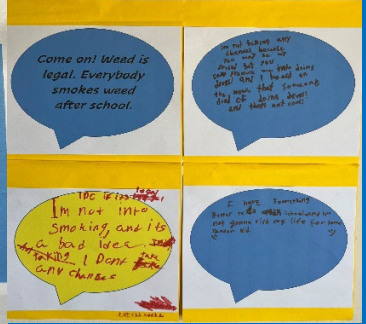
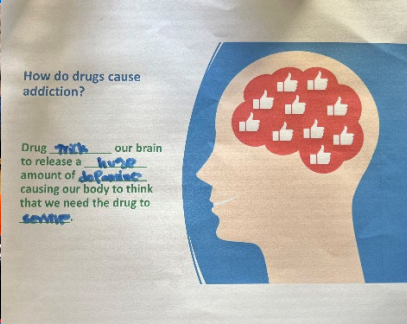
### ABOUT THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND FENTANYL CRISIS

Fentanyl has become the leading cause of death for ages 18 to 45 in the US according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Overdose deaths exceeded deaths from gun violence and car accidents combined in 2020. Overdose death in adolescents aged 14 to 18 years went up by 94% from 2019 to 2020, of which deaths from illicit fentanyl and synthetics had gone up by 168%. In California, opioid-related deaths in the 15 to 19 age group almost tripled during the same period. The Department of Justice reported that fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine, was found in most of the counterfeit pills that were seized in 2021, the primary driver of the recent increase in U.S. overdose deaths.

One pill can kill.

### OUR APPROACH

We take a science- and facts-based approach toward drug education. We believe that understanding the effects of drugs on the brain and the possible adverse consequences will promote healthy and sensible choices in youth. We aim to raise awareness among youth about the prevalence, potential consequences, and science behind drug use and addiction.



## WHAT WE DO

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

We have developed a science-based drug and addiction education program curriculum that consists of engaging content and activities for middle schoolers. Our curriculum covers how addiction happens as a result of changes in the brain; the dangers and potential consequences of drug use, such as overdose; facts regarding illicit drugs; and overdose case studies to raise awareness.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In partnership with local youth programs and community organizations, we deliver interactive drug and addiction education sessions to youth and families in the community. Since launching in July 2022, we have delivered 4 interactive drug education sessions to Boys and Girls Club in San Francisco to over 100 middle schoolers, including youth in the Tenderloin district.

### PLANS FOR 2023

- Recruit and train high school students to be Youth Drug Education Leaders in local communities.
- Deliver drug and addiction education to summer youth programs in the bay area.
- Develop education curriculum to target elementary school students and families with school-age children.
- Launch partnership programs with local libraries and PTAs to host drug and addiction awareness events.
- Secure funding from grants and donation to develop and produce age-group specific drug education curricula that can be used by youth programs to raise awareness of the current fentanyl public health crisis.



## OUR STORY

My name is Cherise, a high school senior in the San Francisco Bay Area and the founder of *Youth Drug and Addiction Education Initiative* (YDAEI). I was inspired to start YDAEI after learning about the neuroscience of drug addiction in a Neuropsychology elective I took in my sophomore year of high school. It gave me a new perspective and understanding of how addiction develops in the brain without one's self-awareness when addictive substances interrupt the natural reward system for survival, and why substance use can be so dangerous, especially with illicit fentanyl, a synthetic substance that is the 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine, contaminating the illicit drug supply leading to a sharp increase in accidental overdoses among all age groups, including youth.

In contrast to the drug education I received in elementary school, where drug education was a school spirit week tangentially related to the general message of "Say no to drugs", I found that the science concept behind addiction was way more effective and easy to understand. Reflecting on my own experience of drug education in elementary and middle school, I saw the need for knowledge-based drug education to help youth understand drug addiction to make wise and healthy personal choices. That was when I decided to form YDAEI: to empower kids with the knowledge to understand how addictive substances work to combat the growing number of youth overdoses we have seen in recent years.

We are a registered 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Your generous donations will help support our work in expanding early drug education to youth to prevent substance use and overdoses. All funds received are used to off-set the expenses and costs of the YDAEI services and programs.

## RESOURCES

- 📖 [Fentanyl Tainted Pills Bought on Social Media Cause Youth Drug Deaths to Soar \(NY Times\)](#)
- 📖 [DEA Warns of Brightly-Colored Fentanyl Used to Target Young Americans](#)
- 📖 [Drug use beliefs found to be strongest predictor of youth substance use \(ScienceDaily\)](#)
- 📖 [Fentanyl is a public health crisis in San Francisco. These stories show why it's so difficult for victims to escape its grip \(sfchronicle.com\)](#)
- 📖 [Chasing the Dragon: The Life of an Opiate Addict — FBI](#)