



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services

Combat Heroin
and Prescription
Drug Abuse

New York State
**Combat Heroin and Prescription
Drug Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit**

Discussion Guide

The New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit was developed to assist individuals (parents, spouses, siblings, teachers, coaches, counselors, probation officers, etc.) with initiating conversations about heroin and opioid abuse. Information, resources, and supports are available so no one needs to be alone in the fight to combat heroin and opioid abuse. Recognizing that addiction is not exclusive to heroin and opioids, this information may be applicable for alcohol and other drugs, also addressed in this toolkit.

Sample Ways to Use this Toolkit:

Sometimes individuals are uncomfortable and unsure about how to approach the topics of addiction and substance abuse. This toolkit is intended to offer assistance by including:

- Guidance for addressing these topics at a community forum
- Sample talking points for adults to use when having these conversations with youth
- Links to additional information to facilitate healthy and productive conversations
- The Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 1: Talking with the Community. This is for use at community forums, PTA meetings, teacher trainings, etc.
- The New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 2: Talking with Young People. This is a video to help start the conversation between an adult and a young person, or group of young people, such as Parent/Child, Teacher/Student, Coach/Team, etc.

Both videos include real New Yorkers sharing their experiences regarding substance use disorder. The video geared towards adults conveys the denial that many families experience along with important information about addiction, how adults can assist someone struggling, and how/where to access help. It also includes a suggested action step to view the second video with a child or group of young people.

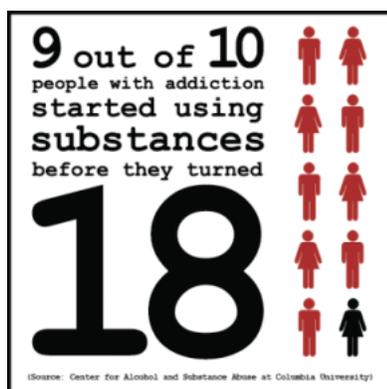
The videos were created to assist facilitators in initiating and engaging in meaningful conversations about substance use at community forums, in classrooms, on athletic fields, in the car, or at the kitchen table. The clips encourage these conversations to raise awareness about the dangerous use of heroin and opioids, including prescription drug abuse. Talking points for various audiences are provided as guidance to support the viewing of the videos and to assist with discussion. It is recommended that “addiction (dependence)” and “tolerance” are terms/concepts that are clarified for the viewers and that each clip is viewed in its entirety. The videos can be found using the following links:

Part 1: The New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 1: Talking with the Community. This is an adult-targeted video to show at community forums, PTA meetings, teacher trainings, etc. Approximately 17 minutes with the action step of using Part 2.

Part 2: The New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 2: Talking with Young People. This is a video to help start the conversation between an adult and a young person, or group of young people, such as Parent/Child, Teacher/Student, Coach/Team, etc. Approximately 13 minutes.

Often, the most challenging part of the conversation is starting it. Parents, educators, and the community will benefit from the information and resources provided in this toolkit. When appropriate, professional assessments and referrals for assessment and treatment may be necessary. Individuals may want to consider the following points of reflection when preparing to have a conversation about drugs and/or alcohol.

- Take a personal, non-judgmental inventory of your own use of alcohol/tobacco/prescription medicines/ other drugs, etc.
- Did a trusted adult talk with you about the dangers of drug or alcohol use? How did you learn this information?
- Do you feel comfortable talking to young people about alcohol and/or drug use?
- What do you know about alcohol or drug misuse?
- What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable when talking about alcohol or drug misuse?
- What resources can you use to gather more information about the topic?
- Do you think your son/ daughter/student would ever use drugs? Remember there is not a demographic profile of people who become addicted to drugs or alcohol.
- Do you know if any of your child's friends have experimented with substances?
- Are there any related local statistics or new events in your community that are alarming you?
- Is your child always supervised after school or when at a friend's house, the mall, a movie, a concert, etc.?
- What do you think are some signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol use?
- How would you approach a young person if you suspected s/he of using drugs/alcohol?
- Do you know about the 9-1-1 Good Samaritan Law in NYS?
- Do you know about resources offering support to adults (and others) with a loved one with an addiction?
- Be aware and ask your child about new or different peer groups, changes in performance at school, increased or decreased appetite or weight, levels of lethargy, changes in the medicine cabinet (e.g. missing pill bottles or pills from bottles), missing objects around the household, spoons with burn marks, evidence of drug paraphernalia, missing belts and shoe laces, etc. Know warning signs of drug use and use a medicine inventory tool such as this one: www.oasas.ny.gov/publications/pdf/MedicineCabBrochure.pdf.



Talking Points for Starting the Conversation

At a community forum:

1. View the Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 1: Talking with the Community.
2. Start the program by asking attendees what substances they believe young people (or adults) are currently using. After a few ideas have been shared, ask if anyone in the audience has heard of some of the new or trending substances that have not been mentioned; the responses are often surprising and serve to engage the audience.
3. Recognize that participants/attendees may need an opportunity to voice their concerns about the substance use/abuse issues in their particular community or family. Acknowledge that drug addiction is a perilous circumstance and that hope is essential and possible. With the support of loved ones and the resources available, people can recover. This is why today's event is important.
4. Be prepared for immediate referrals. If the content resonates with the attendees, people may ask for resources or seek help for themselves or a loved one right there at the forum. Have the contact information for local treatment centers on hand, such as NYS OASAS Addiction Treatment Centers www.oasas.ny.gov/atc/directory.cfm, the NYS OASAS Treatment Provider Directory www.oasas.ny.gov/providerDirectory/index.cfm or the 24 hour, 7 day a week referral NYS HOPEline: 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369), or text HOPENY or the shortcode 467369.

Ask Attendees

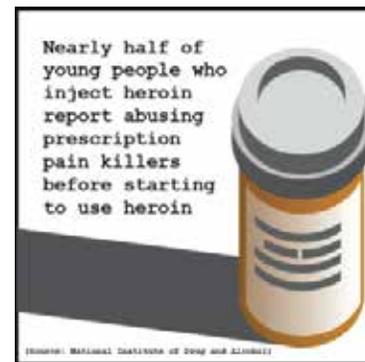
1. Are you familiar with the progression from experimenting with alcohol and marijuana to prescription opioid drugs to heroin and other drugs?
2. Are there services or tools that would be helpful if you were looking for support for your child/friend/sibling/parent?
3. Has the child of concern exhibited behavioral changes at home or in school (study habits, grades, emotions, anger levels, sleep schedule, and/or peer circles)?
4. Are you aware of policies in your child's school regarding the administration of naloxone (Narcan®) in an emergency?
5. Ask parents whether they would take legal action concerning their son/daughter's (dangerous or illegal) actions. Talk to parents about the influences of legal and long-term consequences and how they can serve as a motivator for treatment.
6. Are you familiar with treatment services available in your community? Would you be comfortable contacting them if the need arose in your family?

Access the accompanying document for this topic, Guidelines for Discussing Substance Abuse and Addiction at Community Forums at www.CombatHeroin.ny.gov

With a friend:

If young people are concerned about a friend's substance use, they should voice those concerns to the friend. Peers are powerful influences. We frequently encourage young people to support their friends' healthy choices and not to encourage destructive decisions. If the person who may be using substances is not willing to discuss the issue, the concerned friend should talk with a trusted adult (such as the parent of the young person or someone at school). Many young people feel like talking to a trusted adult would be "snitching"; in these cases, we suggest presenting the following scenario: Would you rather have your friend be upset with you for talking to an adult about their concerns, or would you rather have to attend your friend's funeral because s/he died of an overdose?

Although some may feel this is grim, it reflects the reality of the serious, and life-threatening risks that young people who abuse substances face. Should there be questions here to use with a friend?



With a sibling:

If a young person presents a concern about a sibling's use, it should definitely be addressed. A sibling's substance use may affect individuals in several different ways: it may make them sad, worried, or angry.

1. Is everything okay? Are you okay? (Be specific rather than general, and use a supportive, rather than an accusatory tone).
2. Let him/her know you (saw the commercials, heard the news, etc.) and started thinking about him/her because you care. Ask if s/he can relate to the information (in the commercials, ads, news) at all.
3. Ask your sibling if s/he thinks there is a problem. Communicate that you want to support your sibling no matter what is said.
4. You are really scaring me and making me feel _____. I worry about _____. What can I do to help you?
5. I care about you. I do not like how this is impacting the family; what can we do to make this better? How can I help?

With a child/youth/teen/young adult:

Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns about substance abuse with their children long before their children give them a reason to be concerned; this is preventive. Children should be well aware of their parent's/caregiver's feelings about drugs and alcohol, and their expectations for healthy decisions, as well as consequences for choosing to use substances while accessing parent/caregiver resources (e.g. housing, financial support, etc.). Also, consider the influence of trauma (e.g. events, situations, experiences, score on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) survey, mental health concerns, and other risk factors for abusing Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD).

1. Do they ever talk to you about...at school? These are not clear?
2. Does anyone in your class...?
3. I have been noticing something (on the news, on the radio, on social media, in the neighborhood, etc.) that I want to talk with you about.
4. Ask them if they've seen the Combat Heroin commercials. Tell them you have and they got you thinking. Does your child know any friends who use heroin? What do they think about heroin? Is it easy to get? What about prescription drugs or other substances? After asking some neutral questions, ask if s/he has even tried such substances. Ask if s/he would be comfortable sharing that information with you.
5. Do they know about the 9-1-1 Good Samaritan Law in NYS? And what protections it provides for people who call 9-1-1 in an emergency, including in an overdose situation?
6. Be straightforward about what you have heard is going on in school and/or the community. Ask the young person if he/she is seeing/hearing this as well. It is good for the young person to realize that parents talk to one another.
7. It is helpful if you ask the young person specific questions rather than general questions, as it shows that you are aware and interested in what is going on in his/her life.
8. If a substantial change (in friends, habits, hobbies, academic performance, etc.) is evident, address it directly. Talk in a straightforward way about what you are noticing, and ask why these changes are happening. Avoid accusations.
9. Although it's important for young people to understand the extensive use of prescription opioids and heroin and how it impacts the body/brain, it is also key to discuss what conditions might exist that put people at risk for drug use, abuse, and addiction. Are the young people aware of why a person may try a drug, why they may continue to use drugs, and why some people are more at risk for addiction?
10. What are the protective factors students need to think about and look for in their lives? What are the risk factors that are out of their control versus those they can have some influence over? The discussions and questions about alcohol/drugs should come naturally as part of a discussion about chemicals; how they impact the body, the brain, our lives; why people use them; how addiction works; and the negative impact dependence has in all areas, short-and long-term.

Age-Sensitive Ideas to Use *During* the Conversation

The videos present information and stories from real New Yorkers that can be emotional for many. Please preview the clips before sharing them with children, youth, young adults, college students, (video 2) or at a community forum (video 1). Use judgment based on the target audience and context.

Elementary School Age

Having this important discussion early is important for prevention. For this age group, a video is not recommended. However, topics that focus on prevention and proper medication administration (including vitamins, vaccines, etc.) are encouraged. If you are interested in learning more about prevalent risk and protective factors related to the early onset of substance abuse in children, visit:

www.drugabuse.gov/publications/preventing-drug-abuse-among-children-adolescents/chapter-1-risk-factors-protective-factors/what-are-risk-factors

- Medicine is intended to be helpful and can be used when your doctor, healthcare professional, or parent/guardian provide it to you.
- Sometimes, a doctor will prescribe a medicine for you if you are sick. The medicine should only be used by you.
- Sharing medicine can be very dangerous, even if it's from your family's medicine cabinet.
- Make the distinction between medicine and paraphernalia that might be used to maintain good health (e.g. insulin injections for students with Juvenile (Type 1) Diabetes, blood sugar monitoring and testing with needles) and substances that, when taken incorrectly, can be harmful (e.g. unhygienic needles, too much of a prescribed medicine, someone else's medicine, etc.).
- Encourage young people to reach out to a trusted adult with questions or concerns.

Discussion: What do you know about drug use?

This open-ended question will give you a general idea about where the child stands with his/her knowledge and experience with drug use. With this baseline, caring adults can get a sense of the level of accuracy the child has about drug use, the dangers, etc. and may provide clues as to when/how/from whom the information was learned and its accuracy.

Discussion: Why do you think sharing medicine can be dangerous?

Children may see adults, siblings, or others smoking or taking drugs. They may be unaware of how this may affect their body. Sometimes, adults and others may decide to take someone else's medicine because they want to know what it is like. This can be very dangerous and is not healthy because the person is ingesting substances meant to treat a condition s/he does not have. This can wreak havoc on the person from a physiological perspective and can even be life-threatening.

Discussion: If you see someone taking another person's medicine, what could you do?

Acceptable: Ask the person how s/he hopes to benefit from taking the medication. If it's to address a physical or mental symptom, offer to get an adult to help the person find resources to get more personalized assistance.

Unacceptable: Call the person a “druggie” and spread rumors about the person.

Discussion: If someone asks you to have some of your medicine, what could you do?

Acceptable: Explain that the medication was prescribed just for you and that sharing it would be harmful. Offer to get an adult to help the person find resources for him/her specifically.

Unacceptable: Accuse the person of being a drug addict who wants to use you for your prescriptions.

Youth Under 14 Years Old

View The New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Opioid Abuse Kitchen Table Toolkit; Part 2: Talking with Young People. This can be used with the following questions for discussion. This can be the age when young people start experimenting with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Research suggests that a person’s brain is not fully developed until age 25. Brains that are not fully developed, as in the case of children and adolescents, are more susceptible to long-term damage from alcohol and drugs. Decision-making can be developmentally influenced due to the fact that the pre-frontal cortex within the frontal lobe, which is responsible for reasoning and logic, is still developing.

Be careful not to get too personal; young people may be reluctant to share, or they may over-share and delve into areas for which there should be a trained addiction and/or mental health professional present.

It is also important to refrain from sharing specific details about names of prescription medications or other drugs, as you do not want to encourage youth to investigate the household medicine cabinet.

- What have you seen or heard about this substance (in school, community, media, online)?
- Do you worry about anyone you know at school or at home who uses alcohol or other drugs?
- What do you see/hear/smell/notice that gives you an indication that someone might need help? What would be some warning signs that something might be wrong?
- Why is smoking, drinking, and drug use destructive for teens specifically? Why is smoking, drinking, and drug use harmful for anyone?
- Why do you think some teens drink, smoke, or do drugs even though they know it’s bad for them?
- What are some ways we can help someone who we suspect (or know) is using drugs?
- How would you respond to someone (friend, family member or other) who asked you to try drugs? (Role play)
- How do you think a person’s decision to use drugs and alcohol would impact his/her relationship with parents, siblings, friends, etc.?

- Why do you think people who misuse drugs are willing to give up things, people, relationships, health, and aspirations that were once important to them to keep using drugs?
- Would you talk to a trusted adult if you were worried about your own, or a friend's, drug or alcohol use? What messages do you think you'd want to give? How might you communicate them?
- What are some things you can say or do if you are in a situation where you are offered drugs or alcohol?

High School Youth (Between 14-18 Years Old)

The second video can be used with the following questions for discussion.

Open the discussion with a fact or a statistic regarding drug use within their age group (such as those pictured below); local statistics can be very influential. (This will make it easier and more identifiable for the youth to engage in an open and candid discussion. Knowing information about the concern, and that they are not the only ones dealing with the pressure, should start to break down barriers.)

- Do you know of people who take other people's prescription drugs? (Encourage participation by asking the youth to indicate yes or no rather than naming specific people.)
- Do your parents talk to you about alcohol or drug use?
- Why do you think some teens drink, smoke, and do drugs even though they know it's bad for them?
- Is it common or rare within your social/peer groups to drink/smoke/use drugs? If using this question, be prepared to show local statistics. Teens generally over-estimate the use of these substances in their school and for others in the same age range.
- What expectations do you have about how drugs or alcohol will make you feel or act?
- What do you think would help to make people NOT want to use drugs or drink?
- Do you think alcohol and marijuana can lead to other drug use?
- What do you think people who are addicted to heroin started using first?
- Do you see alcohol and marijuana as less dangerous than street drugs? What about prescription medications? What is it about these items that makes you think that?
- Do you think it would be difficult to be a teenager and not use alcohol or marijuana recreationally? Why or why not?
- Why do you think young people who abuse drugs and alcohol face legal consequences?
- Do you believe those legal consequences encourage or inhibit young people from seeking help?
- What have you heard about the 9-1-1 Good Samaritan Law in NYS?

Engaging Opening Statements:

- “Why are we here today?”
- “How do you feel about (insert name) death from heroin?” (Can be linked to events in the news, school/community incidents, etc.)
- “I hear a lot of rumors about drug use in our school/community. What do you think?”

AVOID questions that are punitive, come from an authoritarian place, or seem condescending. Don't say any of the following to youth:

- “I hear you have been doing drugs; what’s going on with that?”
- “Why would you ever try something stupid like that?”
- “Why aren’t your parents supervising you properly?”
- “Do you realize this is destroying your family?”
- “Who are you trying to impress?”

College Age (Young Adult) *The following questions can be used for discussion about the second video.

How many people have experimented with drugs? You can have students respond with an estimate of how many they believe have experimented and then how many they know have experimented. It may be interesting to compare those two figures because youth tend to over-estimate the prevalence of these behaviors.

- Ask in a group setting: do you use alcohol or other drugs? If so, how often? If not, what has been a protective factor for you in your good decision to stay sober?
- Have you or any of your friends missed class or been late to class due to being hungover? Has drinking or drug use affected your grades? Or do you know classmates whose academics, or involvement in sports or activities, have been affected by alcohol and drug use?
- Have you used Alcohol, Tobacco or Other Drugs (ATOD) in the past but stopped using them on your own? How did you do that? If not, what kind of help would be effective for stopping?
- Is it common or rare in your social network for people to drink/smoke/use drugs?
- If you wanted to right now, how long would it take you to get prescription drugs to use? (Either from a doctor or illegally.)
- If you've tried alcohol or drugs, have you continued or stopped using? Why did you continue? Why did you stop? Be sure you know the young adult reasonably well to ask these personal questions.
- Is it socially accepted to use prescription medications for recreation?
- Do you believe the abuse of alcohol and marijuana is a problem among college-age students? Why or why not? What about other drugs?
- If you were concerned about a friend's use, would you discuss it with them? What would you say? What about with their parent or another person close to them?

- What are your thoughts about how Greek life affects the pressure to use substances such as at fraternity/sorority parties and initiation activities? What about sports teams? Tailgating?
- How are people staying safe in situations where Alcohol, Tobacco or Other Drugs (ATOD) may be accessible?
- What has been your experience with evidence-based programs and practices (EBPs) in schools/colleges around these issues (e.g. Teen Intervene; Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws, EUDL; etc.)?
- What resources are available to you to prevent use or get help for use with treatment?
- What does recovery mean to you?
- What have you heard about the 9-1-1 Good Samaritan Law in NYS?

Engaging Opening Statements:

- “Why are we here today?”
- “How do you feel about (insert name) death from heroin?” (Can be linked to events in the news, school/community incidents, etc.)
- “I’ve heard rumors about drug use in our school/community. What do you think?”

Resources to Supplement the Conversation

Al-Anon

www.al-anon.org/

New York State Combat Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse

www.CombatHeroin.ny.gov

Good Samaritan Law

www.health.ny.gov/publications/0230.pdf

Some individuals may fear that police will respond to a 911 call and there will be criminal charges for themselves or for the person who overdosed. Those fears should NEVER keep anyone from calling 911 immediately. It may be a matter of life or death. In September 2011, the 911 Good Samaritan Law went into effect in New York State to address fears about a legal police response to an overdose situation. This law provides significant legal protection against criminal charges and prosecution for possession of controlled substances, as well as possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. This protection applies to both the person seeking assistance in good faith, as well as to the person who has overdosed. Class A-1 drug felonies, as well as sale or intent to sell controlled substances, are not covered by the law.

Heroin and Opioid Overdose Prevention Trainings in NYS

www.oasas.ny.gov/atc/ATCherointraining.cfm

HOPEline (1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369); text HOPENY or 467369)

www.oasas.ny.gov/accesshelp/

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse website

www.oasas.ny.gov

- o **Prevention** - www.oasas.ny.gov/prevention/index.cfm
- o **Treatment** - www.oasas.ny.gov/treatment/index.cfm
- o **Recovery** - www.oasas.ny.gov/recovery/index.cfm

NYS OASAS Addiction Treatment Provider Directory

www.oasas.ny.gov/ProviderDirectory/index.cfm

NYS OASAS Addiction Treatment Centers (ATCs)

www.oasas.ny.gov/atc/directory.cfm

Prevention Resource Centers (PRCs) for Community Coalitions

www.oasas.ny.gov/prevention/CC/PRC/index.cfm

Talk2Prevent website

<http://talk2prevent.ny.gov/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Opioid-Overdose-Prevention-Toolkit-Updated-2014/SMA14-4742>

Young People in Recovery

<http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org/>

Friends of Recovery – New York

www.for-ny.org/

Nar-Anon

www.nar-anon.org/naranon



Find help and hope

for alcoholism, drug abuse or problem gambling

Call or Text

1-877-8-HOPENY

Text: HOPENY (467369) **1-877-846-7369**

Available 24 hours / 7 days



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services

www.oasas.ny.gov

School-Focused Information

- **Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals (DITEP):**

https://troopers.ny.gov/Schools_and_Communities/Programs/Drug_Recognition/

This multi-day training is offered free-of-charge and is geared towards educators, school nurses, school resource officers, counselors, youth workers, principals, and law enforcement personnel. The goal of this training is to enhance the competence and confidence of such professionals in evaluating symptoms associated with drug use as opposed to illness in order to document suspected drug use through the use of diagnostic procedures to determine what types of drugs are likely to be causing impairment. To request a training for your school or district, visit <http://www.safeny.ny.gov/>.

- **NYSED Student Support Services: School Health Education**

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/schoolhealth/schoolhealtheducation/>

- **NYSED Learning Standards for Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences at Three Levels**

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/schoolhealth/schoolhealtheducation/healthPEFACSLearningStandards.pdf>

- **NYSED Guidance Document for Achieving the New York State Standards in Health Education**

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/GuidanceDocument4.25.update.pdf>

- **New York State Assembly Legislation Regarding ATOD, including Heroin and Opioids (June 2014)**

<http://www.nysenate.gov/legislation>

- **NYSED Guidance Document on Opioid Prevention Measures Provides New York State Education Department (NYSED), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), and Harm Reduction Coalition guidance and training for schools electing to participate as opioid antagonist recipients as defined by Public Health Law §3309.**

[http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/files/filesystem/guidance on opioid overdose prevention in the schools final.pdf](http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/files/filesystem/guidance%20on%20opioid%20overdose%20prevention%20in%20the%20schools%20final.pdf)

- **NYSED Memo on Information for Schools Regarding New Law on Opioid Overdose Prevention (August 2015)**

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/NewLawOpioidOverdosePreventMemo.pdf>

Looking Ahead: From NYSED in partnership with OASAS

Health Education Standards Modernization Supplemental Guidance Document- will include functional knowledge content regarding heroin and opioids as well as an instructional resource packet with a developmentally-sensitive instructional framework and resources for teaching children, youth, and teens about the dangers of Heroin and Opioids (anticipated release: January 2016)

A Guidance Document to Assist Schools in Creating an Instructional and Supportive Framework for Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Education and Prevention- will include information regarding Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (EBP) related to preventing substance abuse and other youth problem behaviors (anticipated release: July 2016)