

Substance Use Prevention Judging Form

Films in this category should explore the reasons behind why young people may (or may not) choose to use substances, talk about how to spot and respond to an overdose, and share healthy ways to cope with tough times and stress. The best entries won't just talk about facts and statistics, but tell a compelling story that makes others feel and think differently about substance use, addiction, and the power of influence.

1. Overall, how well does the film communicate a message about substance use prevention?: (0-30)

The following prompts were provided to youth to help with the messaging of their film. A film does not need to respond to one of the specific prompts to score top points, as long as the film is about substance use prevention.

The Power of Influence:

The film can share a message to a friend, sibling, or even your younger self about the things you want them to think about before they make the choice to drink alcohol, vape, or use other substances.

The Truth Unfiltered:

The film can use real voices or interviews to uncover the “why” and “why not” young people choose to use substances such as alcohol, vapes, cannabis, or others.

Get the Facts, Save a Life:

The film can share information about the dangers of fentanyl, how to spot and respond to an opioid overdose, and encourage young people to look out for their friends.

Coping My Way:

The film can creatively explore what “coping my way” can look like, or what barriers might be preventing a young person from using a healthy coping strategy instead of an unhealthy one such as substance use.

How to Help A Friend: The film can share information about the warning signs of problematic use, how to start a conversation with a friend, and supporting a friend by checking in, spending time together, and reminding them they are not alone (we asked youth to consider that substance use disorder is a health condition and simply quitting isn't always a choice).



YOUTH CREATING CHANGE



2. How well does the film include actions that someone can take?: (0-10)

Possible actions could include:

- Critically thinking about choices related to substance use
- Supporting a friend
- Learning warning signs
- Responding to an overdose
- Modeling how to avoid peer pressure
- Showing healthy choices
- Coping strategies as alternatives to substance use

It doesn't have to be one of the actions above, and it doesn't have to be the focus of the film, but every film should include information about what someone can do to help themselves or help a friend, Creatively telling a story that encourages someone to reflect/think about the choice of using substances is considered an action.

3. How *creatively* does the film tell an educational, relatable, and hopeful story about substance use prevention? (0-20)

The film should be educational and hopeful, and tell a story that explores personal experiences, emotions, choices, or inspiring messages of recovery and prevention. Instead of projects that simply say: "It's bad for you, don't do it", we asked youth to dig deeper, to unfilter the truth.

4. Does the film use person-first language when talking about people who use drugs? Y/N or Not Applicable (Yes or N/A = 5, N = 0)

The language that we use to talk about substance use is important. Stigmatizing language, whether used intentionally or unintentionally, can create a space that may be unwelcoming. Many common phrases used to talk about people who use drugs imply stigma, judgment, and shame.

*For example: Instead of using words like "addict/user/substance abuser/drug abuser/drunk -> Use: "person with substance use disorder, person with opioid use disorder, person in recovery, person who previously used drugs".



5. How well does the film use respectful and supportive visuals to tell a story about substance use? (0-15)

(Reminder: If a film doesn't include any visuals related to substance use, then the film would still receive full points).

Films should avoid showing real images or videos of alcohol, vape pens, pills, or other drugs. Instead, use creative visuals like metaphors, symbols, or symbolism (animations, graphics, blurred props, a red plastic cup) to get their message across.

Films shouldn't make drugs look cool or exciting—slow-motion shots of smoke, flashy music, or dramatic close-ups can accidentally glamorize substance use. In films about overdose or fentanyl, youth were asked to focus on how a friend can recognize the warning signs and take action, not on the overdose itself.

6. How technically well-produced is the film? Consider focus, exposure, audio clarity, use of graphics and/or special effects, good pacing, flow, etc. (0-10)

7. How well does the film provide a clear and effective narrative/script that is easy to understand and makes sense? (0-10)