

SHINE FACT SHEET: SHINE LAUNCH, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet is developed to provide relevant information regarding drugs and substance abuse, particularly amongst young people.

The National Youth Development Agency Act¹ defines youth as any person between the ages of 14 to 35. South Africa is not only dealing with a challenge of substance abuse amongst youth as defined by the NYDA Act, but also of drugs and alcohol abuse in the early adolescence stage.² In 2022, the South African Anxiety and Depression Group (SADAG) found that the average age for drug dependency in SA is 12, whilst half of the country's teenagers also used alcohol. This ought to be concerning to us all. At age 12 many physical, mental, emotional, and social changes happen, this is also the age when teens are likely to face peer pressure, eating disorders and are allowed more independence.³

The South African Human Rights Commission's SHINE effort is centered around positive dialogue at all levels. It encourages self reflection, dialogue in the home, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue.



Social Harmony National Effort



@SAHRCommission



YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

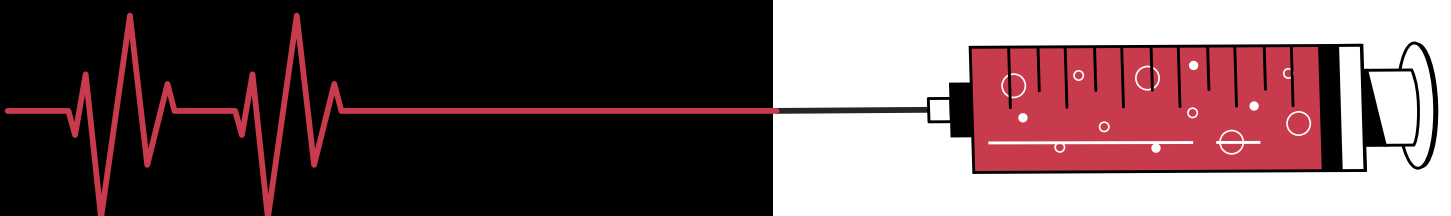
- The low cost of certain drugs and alcohol make it easier for young people to have access to them this is due to peer pressure, stress, feelings of low self-worth and/or unemployment.
- Drug dealers are increasingly targeting young people, enticing them with drugs for 'recreational purposes'.
- Access to and exposure to social media platforms have created an environment in which adolescents and young adults may be exposed to and influenced by alcohol-related content.⁴
- A home environment where drugs and alcohol are used or readily available can also be a contributing factor in young people abusing substances.
- A study conducted in a rural community in the Free State, South Africa, found that the prevalence of substance abuse was 47%, with alcohol consumption, cigarette and dagga smoking being the most common substances used.

¹ Act 54 of 2008

² The early adolescence stage is the

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/adolescence.html>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4432862/>





REASONS FOR ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH DEPENDENCY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Some of the reasons include⁵:
 - Peer pressure.
 - Trauma and Stress.
 - Mental health issues.
 - Lack of parental supervision and support.
 - Lack of education and awareness on the dangers of drug and alcohol dependency.
- Addressing youth drug and alcohol use in South Africa requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, education, and access to healthcare services and resources. By investing in prevention programs and early intervention, we can help reduce the burden of substance use disorders on the healthcare system and promote healthier behaviors among young people.



EFFECTS OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ABUSE ON THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- Increased healthcare costs
- Youth drugs and alcohol use can lead to a range of health problems for young people such as depression, anxiety disorders, and STIs⁶, which in turn place pressure on the resources of the healthcare system.
- Drugs and alcohol abuse is a major contributor to an escalation of health and socio-economic problems, which affect the individual, families, communities and the broader society.⁷
- Increased risk of infectious diseases.
- Long-term health consequences.



GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- The National Department of Health published a Health Sector Drug Master Plan aimed at achieving the goals of an illicit drug-free country.⁸
- The Health Sector Drug Master Plan outlines strategic activities that the health sector will implement in response to substance abuse. The goal of the Drug Master Plan is to:
 - ensure the availability of and access to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances exclusively for medicinal and scientific purpose while preventing their diversion and misuse.
 - provide accessible and affordable evidence-based prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services for substance use disorders.
 - minimise the adverse public health and social consequences of narcotic and psychoactive substances.



WHERE TO GET HELP FOR DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

- The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA)
 - SANCA provides highly effective primary and secondary prevention services as well as comprehensive treatment programmes for chemically dependent people and their families.
 - SANCA has various substance abuse preventative interventions, specifically tailored for the different adolescence and youth age groups. <https://www.sancanational.info/prevention>.
- The South African Depression and Anxiety Group
 - They have practical resources for families and teenagers to help with stress, teens suicide, anxiety and substance abuse.
 - <https://www.sadag.org/>
- Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Helpline
 - 0800 12 13 14
 - 32312 for SMS

³ Substance abuse among high school learners in a rural education district in the Free State province, South Africa, Mokoena K. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4432862/>

⁵ This is not an exhaustive list.

⁷ South African National Department of Health, Health Sector Drug Master Plan, 2019-2025

⁸ Vision of the Health Sector Drug Master Plan 2019 - 2025

