16 and Recovering
screening toolkit and discussion guide
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The “16 and Recovering” screening toolkit is a resource to empower communities across the country to host virtual screenings of the series, in an effort to change the narrative around substance misuse and recovery.

You can use your screening to:

- Start conversations and change perceptions around substance use disorders
- Increase help-seeking and promote accessible pathways to treatment
- Empower your network to address substance use at a community level

Thank you to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, for collaboration and input on this guide.

This guide is not intended to provide medical or mental health advice. If you have any concerns about your health or those of your screening attendees, please contact a physician or other medical professional.
about the series

An intimate, four-part documentary series, “16 and Recovering,” follows the triumphs and challenges of students attending a Recovery High School in Beverly, Massachusetts. With unprecedented access over the course of a school year, the series follows the lives of students on the road to graduation who must also navigate substance use and mental health disorders.
tips for organizing
a virtual screening
tips for organizing a virtual screening

You don’t have to be an expert on substance use and recovery to host a screening of “16 and Recovering” and start conversations virtually or in your community — this guide can help you lead a successful event!

Below are some suggestions to help you get started.

step 1
Set a date and time for your screening, and identify the screening technology you’ll use (more on that below!)

step 2
Identify your intended audience and send out invitations. Leverage communication tools like: email newsletters, social media, press releases, and event listings.

Request a customizable invitation and marketing materials by filling out the form at this link.

step 3
Establish a plan to produce the screening, including roles and responsibilities related to outreach, run-of-show, panel conversation/remarks, and technology logistics.

For virtual screenings, we recommend establishing a technology host who will have access to a stable and reliable internet connection. This person can stream the series using your preferred platform and troubleshoot any tech needs if they arise during the screening. Ideally, this would be someone who does not have a speaking or facilitation role during the screening.

step 4
Plan your post-screening conversation. Identify speakers/panelists and curate moderator questions and talking points.

- For tips on curating your conversation, check out the discussion guide on page 15.

Identify how you will provide emotional health and substance use disorder resources for event attendees (head to 16andrecovering.com for resources).

step 5
Establish a call-to-action. Make sure to end your discussion with a concrete plan of action for creating change in your community!
tips for organizing a virtual screening
facilitation resources

be prepared
Talking about substance use disorders and recovery can be tough; make sure you’re prepared and aware of the emotional impact that these conversations might have.

consider different engagement tactics
In addition to traditional panel and screening formats, consider:

leveraging ice breakers
Offer attendees the opportunity to get to know each other and feel comfortable by starting the event with questions or an activity. Consider using ice breakers whenever you notice energy getting low.

guiding conversation
Instead of asking “who has something to say about this,” encourage participants to share in a go-around manner or in small groups. Establish a balance between encouraging people to speak out, and giving attendees the space to react and process.

acknowledge diversity of experience
Be mindful that everyone attending your event has various experiences and might be coming to the table with different perspectives; encourage the expression of diverse viewpoints.

minimize external distractions
Encourage your guests to consider their location and surroundings for the duration of the event to help retain focus.
tips for organizing a virtual screening

screening technology

In order to host your virtual screening of “16 and Recovering,” below are a list of platforms you might consider for your event.

**shindig**
This digital event-hosting platform will allow you to stream the series, and allows presenters to engage with the audience.

**features include:**
Q&A management tools, customizable widgets, and backgrounds.

**vimeo livestream**
This hosting platform will allow you to stream the series and host a panel conversation.

**features include:**
presentation with up to 6 speakers, audience polling, text-based Q&A, audience chat, and graphic overlays.

**note**
This feature does not include the ability for video communication between presenter and audience, outside of the chat function. If you choose this platform, you might need an additional platform for extended audience engagement.

**zoom**
This hosting platform will allow you to stream content and for presenters to engage with the audience.

**features include:**
chat, raise hand, Q&A, and live polling

**note**
The Webinar feature is recommended for virtual screening events.

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ViacomCBS does not endorse, and will not provide assistance with respect to, the suggested screening technology.
tips for organizing a virtual screening
social media toolkit

Hashtag: #16AndRecovering
Twitter Handle: @16AndRecovering

sample twitter copy
MTV is giving you an unprecedented look at one year inside Northshore Recovery High School. @16andRecovering premieres Tuesday, Sept 1 at 9/8c on @MTV.

sample facebook copy
1 in 7 young adults need treatment for addiction. Join @MTV as they take a look at one year inside a recovery high school. 16 and Recovering premieres Tuesday, Sept. 1st at 9/8c.

sample instagram copy
This is the pain of addiction. This is the power of recovery. @MTV’s four-part limited series, #16andRecovering, premieres Tuesday, Sept. 1st at 9/8c.

tune-in info
Tune-in: Premieres Sept. 1st at 9/8c on MTV

optional cta to add to posts
To take action and find resources on substance use disorders and emotional health, visit 16andRecovering.com.
background
substance use disorders

When talking about substance use, our words matter. Language can perpetuate bias and false perceptions of substance use disorders. For people who are struggling, this stigma can reduce willingness to seek treatment, cause additional emotional distress, and even influence interactions with healthcare providers.

The following list identifies recommended terms to reduce stigma and negative bias when talking about substance use disorders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>instead of</th>
<th>use</th>
<th>because</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>addict</td>
<td>Person with a substance use disorder:</td>
<td>Using person-first language shows that SUD is an illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>user</td>
<td>· Person with an opioid use disorder (OUD) or person with opioid addiction</td>
<td>Using these words shows that a person with a SUD “has” a problem/illness, rather than “is” the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substance or drug abuser</td>
<td>· Person with alcohol use disorder</td>
<td>The terms to avoid elicit negative associations, punitive attitudes, and individual blame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junkie</td>
<td>Unhealthy, harmful, or hazardous alcohol abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcoholic</td>
<td>Person in recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drunk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>former addict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reformed addict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addicted baby</td>
<td>Baby born to a parent who used drugs while pregnant</td>
<td>Babies cannot be born with addiction because addiction is a behavioral disorder—they are simply born manifesting a withdrawal syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baby with signs of withdrawal from prenatal drug exposure</td>
<td>Using person-first language can reduce stigma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newborn exposed to substances</td>
<td>Use of medical terminology (the same way you would for other illnesses) can help reduce stigma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baby with neonatal abstinence syndrome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habit</td>
<td>Substance use disorder</td>
<td>“Habit” implies that a person is choosing to use substances or can choose to stop. This implication is inaccurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drug addiction</td>
<td>Describing a substance use disorder as a habit makes the illness seem less serious than it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abuse</td>
<td>For illicit drugs:</td>
<td>The term “abuse” was found to have a high association with negative judgments and punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Use</td>
<td>Use outside of the parameters of how medications were prescribed is misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For prescription medications, used other than prescribed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Misuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instead of</td>
<td>use</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opioid substitution replacement therapy</td>
<td>Medication treatment for opioid use disorder</td>
<td>It refers to medication as an adjust to other forms of opioid use disorder treatment, when medication can stand alone as a treatment for OUD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medications for opioid use disorder</td>
<td>It is a misconception that medications merely “substitute” one drug for another; medications can reduce withdrawal symptoms and drug cravings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean</td>
<td>Being in remission or recovery</td>
<td>Use of medical terminology (the same way you would for other illnesses) can help reduce stigma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstinent from drugs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not drinking or taking drugs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing negative on a drug screen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
what are some contributing factors for substance use disorders?

- Genetic predisposition to addictive behaviors
- Mental health conditions (depression, anxiety disorders)
- Early and/or chronic use
- Changes to the brain due to chronic drug/alcohol use
- Upbringing and childhood development
- Family behavior around drugs and alcohol
- Perceptions of drug and alcohol use
- Trauma
- Availability to drugs and alcohol
- Situations and opportunities (peer pressure)
- Lack of healthy coping skills
- Lack of connectedness/purpose
- Loneliness and lack of a support system

why might some people engage in drug use?

To feel good: Drugs can produce intense feelings of pleasure. This initial euphoria is followed by other effects, which differ with the type of drug used.

To feel better: Some people who suffer from social anxiety, stress, and depression start using drugs to feel better. Stress can play a major role in starting and continuing drug use as well as relapse (return to drug use) in patients recovering from addiction.

To do better: Some people feel pressure to improve their focus in school or at work or their sports abilities. This pressure can play a role in trying or continuing to use drugs.

Curiosity and social pressure: During adolescence, young people may be particularly at risk because of social factors like peer pressure.
Individuals with mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia are at increased risk for substance use disorder.

Individuals with a substance use disorder are often diagnosed with mental health disorders. Some people develop mental health problems related to their compulsive drug use, and some people take drugs in an attempt to alleviate symptoms of underlying mental health challenges.

For more information on treatment models and terminology, visit 16andrecovering.com/get-informed.
The following questions can be used to start conversations around the series as a whole, or any individual episode.

### pre-screening discussion questions

1. What do you think is the relationship between mental health issues and substance use disorders?
2. How can schools and communities promote safety and reduce harm?
3. Can anyone share an example of what the process of recovery looks like?
4. What does resilience mean to you, and to your community?
5. In your experience, why is it so important to shift attitudes around substance use?

### post-screening discussion questions

1. What are your first reactions after watching the series?  
   · Was there a moment in the series that really stuck with you?
2. After watching the series, how might have your perceptions of those living with substance use disorder changed?
3. What is the most important thing you learned from the series?
4. After seeing “16 and Recovering,” do you believe schools and societal structures need to change how they address substance use disorders? Why or why not?  
   · If you think these structures need to change, in what ways should they change?
5. Changing laws is one way to achieve social change, can you share some ideas on how communities might protect and help people with substance use disorders or those in recovery?
6. What are some ideas for how schools and communities can prevent substance use or develop pathways to intervene at an earlier stage?
7. How can schools and communities challenge misperceptions surrounding substance use disorders?
8. Have you seen any positive examples of how to reach out to people with substance use disorders, and provide support during what might be a difficult recovery?

### keep the conversation going

The discussion doesn’t need to end here — there are a several ways that you might be able to support those with a substance use disorder, from connecting a loved one with resources and treatment options, to challenging your own biases, to advocating for change in your schools and communities. For resources and ways to get involved, head to [16andrecovering.com](http://16andrecovering.com).
episode 1
1. What are some signs that someone you know might have a substance use disorder?

2. How does this episode push back against misconceptions that surround substance use, particularly among young people?
episode 1
questions for students

1. How do the experiences of the students at Northshore Recovery High School compare to those of your own and students at your school?

2. Do administrators, teachers, or counselors talk about substance use disorders on campus? If so, how?
   · If not, why do you think that is?

3. When sharing her experiences in relation to her peers, Alba shares her desire to belong and fit in. Do you feel like this is common among your peers?
   · What might happen when one feels like an outsider?
   · What are ways that you might be able to counter negative feelings and the impact that comes with feeling like one does not belong?

4. A theme in the series is the lack of structures of support for students dealing with substance use disorders and emotional health issues in what Michelle calls “traditional schools.” What are some ways that schools might build better support structures for students?
episode 1
questions for educators

1. How do the experiences of the students at Northshore Recovery High School compare to those of your own and students at your school?

2. How is the relationship between teachers and students at Northshore Recovery High School compared to those at your school? What are some of the reasons that they might differ?

3. To what extent are teachers trained to support the emotional needs of students who are navigating substance misuse?
   · Is anyone else on campus trained?
   · What might be some barriers to training?

4. Do administrators, teachers, or counselors talk about substance use disorders on your campus?

5. Throughout the episode, Michelle mentions building more structures of support to help students thrive; what systems of support currently exist at your school?
   · What might be missing and why?
   · How might one go about building out systems of support at your school?

6. Do you think punitive policies play a role in preventing young people from getting help when they need it?

7. How can barriers to treatment be overcome?

8. Throughout the film, Michelle conveys the importance of finding a solution and treatment plan that fits each student; how could this framework fit into your school?

9. What additional strategies can your school and classroom adopt in order to reduce the number of students who struggle with substance use disorders in your community?
1. How do the students at Northshore Recovery High School compare to your own kids?
   · What similarities and differences do you see?

2. Have you talked to your children or their friends about drug use and substance use disorders?
   · If so, how are those conversations framed?

3. Have you talked to your children about taking care of their mental health?
   · If so, do you ever discuss daily mental health care or past trauma?

4. Currently, what are the ways in which your child can get emotional support if they are dealing with an issue?

5. How might you encourage your children to adopt help-seeking behaviors?

6. How does your child’s school navigate mental health and substance use disorders?
   · Do their policies leave you confident that your child is supported?
   · If not, what conversations might you have with school administrators to ensure your child’s community is healthy?
episode 1
questions for community groups

1. How do the experiences of people in the Northshore Recovery High School community compare to those in your community?

2. How do local schools address mental health or substance use?

3. How does your community support the emotional needs of young people?

4. Who in your community is trained to support the emotional needs of those navigating substance use? How can groups like First Responders (police, EMTs), school administrators, and religious leaders be better equipped to support young people who are struggling?

5. Throughout the episode, Michelle mentions building more structures of support to help students thrive. What systems of support currently exist in your community? How do people access these resources?
   - What might be missing?

6. How can you start to address substance use disorders in your community?
definitions

restorative justice:
“A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by or revealed by law-breaking behavior. It is accomplished through a cooperative process that [includes all parties involved]”

zero-tolerance policies
“School [and community] discipline policies that mandate predetermined consequences, typically severe, punitive, and exclusionary (e.g., out of school suspension), in response to misbehavior, regardless of the context or rational for that behavior”

sources
Restorative Justice Policies
Zero Tolerance Policies
episode 2
questions for students

1. The characters in the series talk a lot about punishment and consequences, what forms of punishment do you see in your community (in spaces like your home, in school)?
   · Do you feel like this punishment model has any long-term consequences?
   · Does this model make you uncomfortable asking for help?

2. If you’ve done something that’s perceived to be “wrong,” do you feel like you have a second chance?
   · Why do you think that is?

3. A lot of schools have zero-tolerance policies, do you feel like you and your peers benefit from this model? Why or why not?

4. In the episode, Joey talks a lot about music as a form of creative expression. What are some of your outlets for expression? How can these outlets support emotional health?

5. Who might you reach out to if you’re having a problem, and why?

6. When Michelle asks Joey, “what do you need to stay sober?” his response was “lots of love.” What are some ways that you and your friends might be able to build a culture of kindness and peer support, to encourage students to reach out for support when needed?
episode 2
questions for educators

1. What programs do you have in place that provide emotional support to students?

2. How does the “trauma history” of individual students inform your approach?

3. As an educator, how can you build your community to make space for students navigating trauma?

4. What might be the hardest part of navigating trauma in the classroom?
   - How might you be able to work against some of the challenges?

5. Michelle brings up the concept of second chances throughout the series. Is this something that resonates with your school’s administration and policies?
   - Michelle also acknowledges that giving second chances can be difficult; how can you work with students to find solutions that will help them?

6. A common theme emerging in education spaces is the concept of restorative justice. Schools across the country are working to shift away from zero-tolerance policies and adapt restorative justice strategies. What could restorative justice look like in your school?
   - Are there ways to slowly implement strategies that shift away from zero-tolerance policies?
episode 2
questions for parents

1. In the episode, Joey talks a lot about music as a form of creative expression. What are some of your outlets for expression?  
   · What are some avenues of expression for your child?

2. What healthy coping strategies can your family implement to help deal with times of stress or hardship?

3. How can parents proactively address substance use with their children?
episode 2
questions for community groups

1. Do issues of substance misuse and mental health come up in your community? Where?
   · Do you feel like these issues are talked about candidly?
   · If not, how can you start to talk about these issues in your community?

2. The characters in the series talk a lot about punishment and consequences; what forms of punishment do you see in your community?
   · Do you think this model prevents community members from reaching out for help?

3. What programs do you have in place that provide emotional support to people in your community?

4. When Michelle asks Joey, “what do you need to stay sober?” his response was “lots of love.” What are some ways that you and your friends might be able to build a culture of kindness and peer support, to encourage students to reach out for support when needed?
episode 3
questions for students

1. What was your reaction to the episode?
2. Do you know someone who is struggling? What steps could you take to help them?
3. Do you know someone in recovery? How might you support them?
4. This episode was tragic. Do you feel you have support if this happened to someone you know? Do you have the resources to help you?
5. Supporting your friends during challenging times can be tough. What are some ways in which you can balance your needs and well-being alongside your friends’ needs?
6. Has your community dealt with a loss? If so, how did people support each other during that time?
7. What are some places or resources that you might suggest to friends who are experiencing loss or grief?
8. What are some coping strategies for those who might be dealing with grief or a loss?
9. In what ways can you encourage your community to advocate for systems that better protect your peers?
episode 3
questions for parents

1. What was your reaction to the episode?

2. As a parent, it’s natural to want to protect your child from harm, but sometimes factors outside your control can negatively impact them. How might you navigate that tension?
   - How might you react and cope when outside factors cause harm to you and your child?

3. Do you talk about your feelings with your child? If so, how and to what extent?

4. What are some tactics parents can use to encourage their children to express their feelings, especially in times of stress, grief, or loss?

5. What are some tools parents can use when discussing loss or grief with their children?

6. How do you deal with having a teenager that might be resistant to change? If you did successfully navigate something like this, what was the most helpful?

7. How might parents help their children build resilience to cope with grief?

8. What can parents do to model healthy coping methods?
1. Various teachers at Northshore Recovery Shore High share how big of a responsibility it can be to work with vulnerable students. What are some challenges of working with vulnerable students?
   - Do you feel like you have been trained and have the resources to support all your students?
   - If not, what are some resources that could help you learn techniques, so you are better equipped to support all your students in their learning process?
   - Do educators in your community receive training or guidance on how to work with students while they are dealing with a crisis?

2. Does your school district have processes and resources to support your students when dealing with grief or loss? If so, what are they?

3. What might be some additional ways teachers could support students dealing with grief or loss?

4. Mary, the school’s art teacher, talks about the challenges of supporting students when in crisis and the emotional toll it takes on teachers. Is this an experience you can relate to or see amongst your peers?
   - If so, what are some coping methods you might suggest to your network in order to take care of yourself when supporting various students and their needs?

5. How can educators cultivate a culture of peer-support in their classrooms, so students can support each other?
episode 3
questions for community groups

1. How do your community structures and governance bodies compare to those seen in the series?

2. Does your community have resources for those grieving? What are they?

3. Do you think your medical and legal institutions would respond the same way as ones depicted in the series?

4. Does your community have structures in place that support people with substance use disorders that are not mentioned in the film? What are they, and how do they help tackle these problems in your community?

5. Do the first responders and emergency room medics in your community have training on how to navigate and support people with substance use disorders?
   · For many with substance use disorders and mental health conditions, waiting on insurance companies can have life or death consequences. How might your community work to support those who are navigating these processes?
   · Are there any programs that might be able to provide real-time support?

6. Michelle mentions that many institutions are not equipped to handle relapse, which statistics show are likely on the path to recovery. How might your community begin to create support structures for intervention for those in recovery who may relapse?
episode 4
questions for students

1. What moments do you look forward to throughout the school year?
2. What are some stressful moments and what makes them stressful?
   · How might you prepare to tackle that stress?
3. Change can be scary. In what ways can you take care of yourself during a transition?
   · Right now, how are you coping with changes due to COVID-19?
4. In this episode, both Abbie and Emily try to help their friends despite struggling themselves. What are ways you might be able to check-in with yourself before helping others?
   · If you don’t have the capacity to help, how might you still support?
1. What are some stressful coming-of-age moments that you can help prepare your child for?
   · What are ways in which you might prepare them for these moments?

2. What are ways parents might be able to empower their child to persevere during challenging times?

3. Who is in your child’s support network right now?
   · If you’re unable to support your child, who might be able to?

4. How can you guide your child in building a support system that will continue into adulthood?
episode 4
questions for educators

1. What moments do students look forward to throughout the school year?
2. What are some stressful moments and what makes them stressful?
   · What can educators do to provide resources and skills that allow their students to tackle stress?
3. How might educators help students who do not have support structures at home find support?
4. What feelings arise when your students are seniors and are about to graduate?
episode 4
questions for community groups

1. Johnny and many other students at Northshore Recovery High don’t have parents that they can turn to for support. In what ways can community groups fill that gap?

2. Community organizers often play a caretaker role for those in their community. How might you suggest to organizers that they check-in with themselves and balance their needs, while supporting others?
   - What resources might you consider providing to organizers so they can take care of themselves?
   - How might you encourage a community advocate, who does not have the capacity to help, to continue to show support?

3. What are ways in which your group can connect people who may be struggling with resources?
resources

find resources and get involved
To take action and find resources on substance use disorders and emotional health, visit 16andRecovering.com.

get help now
If you are in emotional distress, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for a 24/7, free and confidential conversation or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

find treatment
For information on treatment options and nearby licensed providers that specialize in treating substance use disorders and addiction, call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visit www.findtreatment.gov.

support youth
The icanhelp program is a school and community-based initiative that trains individuals who interact with young people to connect with and support those who need help. To learn more and get involved, visit icanhelp.me.

learn more
For additional resources for teens, parents, and educators, head to drugabuse.gov or teens.drugabuse.gov.