

# BEING THE MVP:

## WHEN TO TALK TO YOUR ATHLETE

If you notice any of the following:

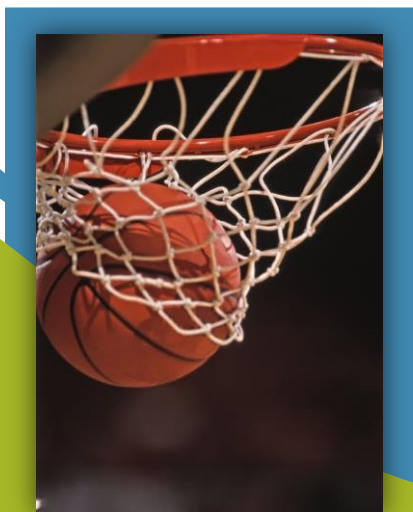
- Change in athletic performance
- Change in appetite
- New friend group
- Grades suffering
- Different attitude regarding their sport
- Finding drugs or paraphernalia in the locker room
- Anxiety over an injury



**Westmoreland County Drug  
Overdose Task Force  
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1. Reardon, C. L., & Creado, S. (2014). Drug abuse in athletes. *Substance abuse and rehabilitation*, 5, 95.
2. Office of Adolescent Health. (2019, May 1). Pennsylvania Adolescent Substance Abuse Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/national-and-state-data-sheets/adolescents-and-substance-abuse/pennsylvania/index.html>.
3. Veliz, P., Schulenberg, J., Patrick, M., Kloska, D., McCabe, S. E., & Zarrett, N. (2017). Competitive sports participation in high school and subsequent substance use in young adulthood: Assessing differences based on level of contact. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 52(2), 240–259
4. Elizabeth, M. (2014, August 4). Abuse of prescription painkillers on the rise among high school athletes: Survey. Retrieved from <https://health.usnews.com/health-news/articles/2014/08/04/abuse-of-prescription-painkillers-on-the-rise-among-high-school-athletes-survey>



# THE PLAYBOOK

**A COACH'S GUIDE TO  
ADDRESSING DRUG  
USE**

## ***“HEY COACH...”***

While your athlete may be a key player on the field, it's important to realize that you may be a key player in your athlete's life.

### **LEADER, ROLE MODEL.**

Your athletes trust you. You have the potential to make a bigger impression on them than their parents and academic teachers. Often, you may be the first one to notice subtle changes in an athlete if they start abusing drugs. Additionally, you have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of your athletes by enforcing your school district or organizations policies related to drug use. Let's commit to taking an active role in our athletes' lives – both on & off the field. Remember, they chose you.

## **A HIGH STAKES GAME**

An athlete might be using drugs for a variety of reasons. They may be hoping to enhance their performance, cope with a physical injury, or self-medicate a mental illness. (1)

### **PA STATS**

According to the 2017 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey for Pennsylvania (2):

11% of HS students used e-cigarettes or vaped

13% of HS students binge drank

33% of HS students used marijuana

3% of HS students misused pain relievers

### **WHY ATHLETES?**

Athletes might be more susceptible to drug abuse. Students that engage in high contact sports are 1.8x more likely to binge drink and smoke marijuana than their non-athlete peers (3). While being on a team can foster camaraderie, it may give way to increased peer pressure. The NIDA reports that prescription drug abuse is on the rise due to an over prescription from doctors for sport injuries. 12% of male student athletes and 8% of female student athletes admitted to self-medicating on prescription painkillers (4).

You can help your athletes by clearing up misconceptions about drugs and alcohol, keeping an open line of communication, and confront athletes in a non-threatening way if you think they might be using.



## **KNOW THE PLAY**

If a student is found to possess drugs or be under the influence on school property, it is your responsibility to follow the policy developed by your school district or organization.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information and educational resources, please visit

<https://www.getinwestmoreland.info/>.

For information on treatment and insurance for drug and alcohol treatment, call

1-800-668-4357 (Get-Help).

