

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: NIDA Risk and Protective Factors of Substance Use Disorders

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), risk factors for substance use and substance use disorders (SUDs) can include a person's genes, other individual characteristics, and aspects of their social environment, and the impact of these factors can change at different stages of a person's life. Generally, the more risk factors a person has—such as early-life trauma, chronic stress, a family history of addiction, or peers who use drugs—the greater the chances that they will use substances and develop a SUD.

The presence of multiple risk factors are not inevitable. Other factors can help protect someone from using substances and developing a SUD. Protective factors include individual traits like optimism and environmental influences like healthy family and peer relationships and financial stability. Researchers maintain that many risk and protective factors are not a result of choices an individual person makes, but rather are a facet of their inherited genetics, family, life circumstances, and other aspects of their biology and environment and a better understanding these factors is critical to developing prevention strategies that lessen the impact of risk factors and bolster or introduce new protective factors.

Examples of factors that may influence a person's likelihood of drug use, misuse, or of developing a substance use disorder include:

Individual Factors

- **Age at substance use initiation:** Drug use at a young age can influence brain development and behavior in ways that increase the likelihood of going on to use other drugs and developing a substance use disorder. Consequently, people who start to use substances as children and young adolescents are more likely to develop a substance use disorder than are those who first use substances in late adolescence or young adulthood. For this reason, most prevention programs focus on preventing or delaying substance use.
- **Genetics:** Inherited biological factors can play a significant role in a person's likelihood of using substances and of developing a substance use disorder.

Family Factors

- **Family relationships:** Research shows that growing up in a supportive, stable family environment versus one associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) like

trauma, abuse and neglect can impact a person's likelihood of problem drug use and of developing substance use disorders later in life. A higher level of parental involvement and young people's perceptions that parents are aware of their activities have also been found to be protective.

- Parental substance use and attitudes: Whether parents use drugs or alcohol and their level of permissiveness or acceptance of substance use influence whether a child or adolescent is likely to use substances.

Community

- School: Studies show certain aspects of a school environment—such as how often other students use drugs and how connected students feel to their classmates—can influence whether students use or avoid substances.
- Peers: Whether an individual's peers use drugs or disapprove of substance use is a major influence on whether that individual will use substances, particularly during youth.
- Neighborhood: Research shows that living in a neighborhood with high levels of poverty or violence is associated with a higher likelihood of using substances. Positive community relationships and environments have been associated with less substance use and less progression from substance use to substance use disorders.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): NIDA is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug use and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy, improve practice, and advance addiction science. For more information about NIDA and its programs, visit www.nida.nih.gov.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention awareness campaigns entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," to educate and update the community regarding alcohol, prescription and illicit drug use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more at www.safeglencove.org.