

HOPE AND HEALING: A DISCUSSION WITH WEST VIRGINIA'S YOUTH DISCUSSION GUIDE

Essential Question: What are the complex interconnections between teen addiction, mental health challenges, and societal pressures in the digital age, and how can we foster resilience and hope among today's youth?

Supporting Questions:

- How does the pervasive influence of social media exacerbate teen addiction, anxiety, and depression, and what strategies can be implemented to promote healthier digital habits?
- In what ways does bullying contribute to the cycle of substance abuse and mental health struggles among teens, and how can communities foster a culture of empathy and support to break this cycle?

Use the following before, while, and after viewing suggestions for engaging students with this resource and activities related to this topic.

Before Viewing

1. Have students read the background reading. You may ask students to answer the essential question during a class discussion or as a short writing assignment.
2. Have students journal their experiences, thoughts, and feelings regarding the topics covered in the documentary, including addiction, mental health challenges, social media use, or bullying, and consider how these issues have impacted themselves or those around them.
3. Encourage students to write down questions or areas of curiosity about these topics to help guide their viewing experience, encouraging active engagement and critical thinking.

While Viewing

Have students watch and listen carefully for key points in the video that help answer the following questions. If you wish, you can ask students to take notes as they watch.

1. What was the goal of this documentary?
2. If you were a part of this discussion panel, what reasons would you provide as to why teens turn to drugs, alcohol, and self-harm?
3. A study released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 2.55 million U.S. middle and high school students reported current (past 30-day) e-cigarette use in 2022. What solutions could you propose to decrease teen e-cigarette use in your community?
4. In what ways are specific groups experiencing bullying within your school and community?
5. What steps could be taken to improve knowledge and awareness about the overdose-reversal drug Naloxone?

After Viewing

1. What were your key takeaways from viewing this documentary?
2. How do the personal stories and experiences of the individuals featured in the documentary illustrate the interconnectedness of teen addiction, mental health struggles, and social pressures?
3. Describe the positive outcomes and transformations that can occur when individuals have the courage to seek help and support.

Taking It Further

1. You may assign the students an independent student activity. For example, they could write letters to community leaders, including school principals, the local police department, and the mayor, describing the challenges that teens face and suggesting ways to provide more resources and support.
2. Assign students to create a brochure that focuses on one of the key topics discussed in the documentary. They could research and include statistics and ways to receive help.
3. Ask students to write a reflective essay providing creative solutions to some of the problems teens face today. The essay could be divided into categories, such as "To Parents," "To Teachers," and "To Community Stakeholders."