

# Nicotine & Mental Health Conversation Guide

Nicotine and mental health are more connected than most parents realize. In fact, 80% of teens first tried a nicotine product to cope with stress, anxiety and other mental health struggles, unknowingly making their mental health worse. This guide gives you the facts, plus real questions to open up the conversation at any age.



## Quick Facts:

- Nicotine changes brain chemistry, and a developing brain is more sensitive to those changes than an adult brain.
- Teens who use nicotine are more likely to report anxiety and depression symptoms than teens who don't.

## Elementary School Starters

1. Why do you think smoke and vapor are bad for you?
2. What do you feel like when you're worried or sad? Did you know nicotine can make those feelings bigger?

## Middle School Starters

1. Have you ever heard that vaping helps you relax? That's actually not true. Do you know what it does to your brain?
2. If you were feeling anxious or stressed, what's something you could try to help with it instead of nicotine?

## High School Starters

1. Why do you think so many people try vaping or nicotine pouches to cope with stress and anxiety?
2. If you were struggling with your mental health, would nicotine be the first thing you'd reach for? Why? What could you do instead?