

# Substance Use and Prevention *journal*



**SpeakUp**  
for teen mental health



This journal was designed in partnership  
with the **Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation**  
and **Henrico Area Mental Health and  
Developmental Services.**

THIS JOURNAL  
BELONGS TO:

This journal is designed for informational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, or provide medical advice. It should not be used as a substitute for professional healthcare or guidance. Always consult with a qualified healthcare provider for any concerns related to your health or well-being.

# Welcome to the Substance Use and Prevention Journal!

This space is dedicated to your journey—your thoughts, emotions, and experiences as you navigate the complexities of substance abuse and addiction. It's natural to face challenges, inner struggles, and moments of uncertainty along the way. This journal is here to support you in exploring your relationship with substances, uncovering the layers of your emotions, and gaining insight into your behaviors.

Through a series of prompts, creative activities, and open pages for reflection, this journal invites you to process, reflect, and grow. Whether you're in the midst of recovery, struggling with a relapse, or simply trying to understand your relationship with substances, each entry is an important part of your healing journey.

Remember, this space is for you to be honest, compassionate with yourself, and to explore how addiction could shape your life—and how you can shape a new, healthy path forward. Every word, every drawing, and every reflection brings you closer to understanding yourself and reclaiming your strength.



## Try out these activities in the journal:

- Tangled Ball of Emotions
- Finding Balance
- Visualize Your Support Squad
- Positive Coping Skill Word Search
- The Ripple Effect
- Therapeutic Coloring

# UNDERSTANDING

## SUBSTANCE USE

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What do you think addiction is, and how does it affect someone's life? Do you think addiction is a choice?

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Why do you think some people choose to use substances, even when they know the risks?

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# TANGLED BALL OF EMOTIONS

The "Tangled Ball of Emotions" has long been used in grief work, typically with spaces filled in by words that describe common feelings. In this version, the ball is blank, allowing you to fill it with your own feelings or responses. Not everyone is comfortable labeling emotions, so if you don't have specific words, you can use color to express how you're coping.



## Examples of Complicated Feelings

Doubt | Anxiety | Dread | Irritation | Frustration | Loneliness | Withdrawal  
Emptiness | Jealousy | Hopelessness | Discouragement | Shame | Self-Doubt  
Heartache | Grief | Disappointment | Resentment | Regret | Denial | Stress

# EXPLORE THE

## ROOT CAUSES

**Identify Your Triggers:** What situations, people, or emotions typically make you feel the urge to use substances? Are there specific patterns you’ve noticed?

*Example: Does stress at school, an argument with a loved one, or feeling overwhelmed lead to negative coping behaviors?*



**Negative Thought Patterns:** What negative thoughts or beliefs arise when you feel the urge to use substances? Do you tell yourself that you deserve it, that it will make you feel better, or that you can't handle things without it?

# FINDING BALANCE

Explore the idea of balance in life and how addiction or substance use disrupts it.

Draw a scale (balance) with "substances" on one side and "healthy activities" on the other. Reflect on how substances might tip the scale in your life, and list healthy activities (e.g., sports, hobbies, art, socializing) that could help restore balance.

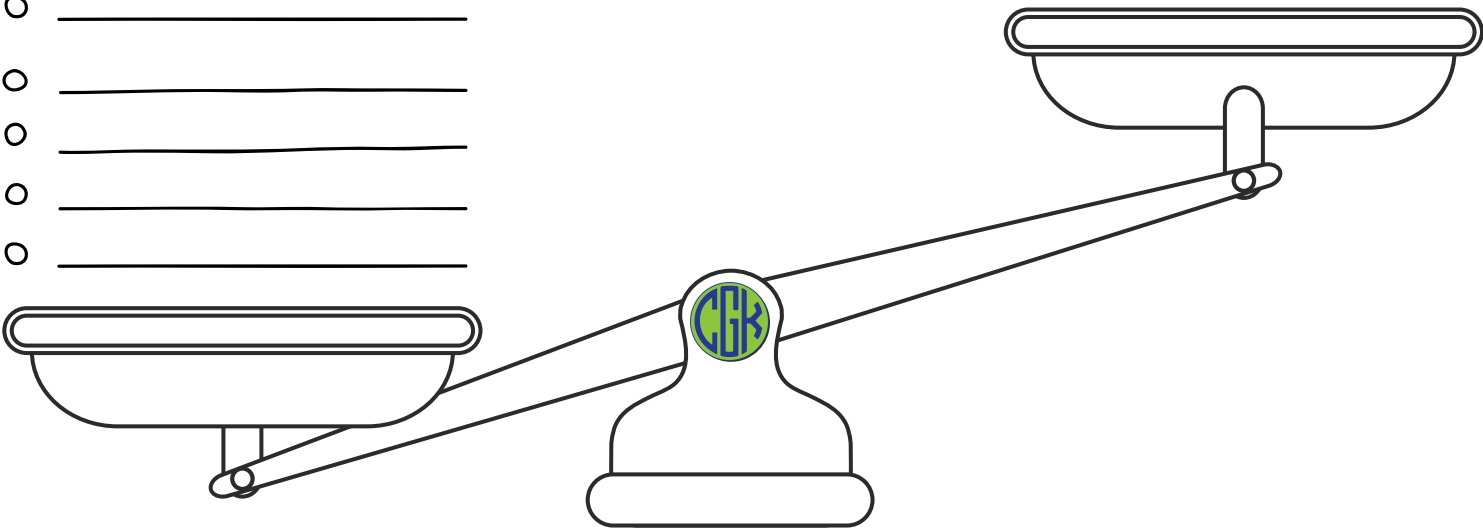
What small changes could you make to restore balance to your life? How would that affect your mental health and well-being?

## NEGATIVE SUBSTANCES

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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## HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
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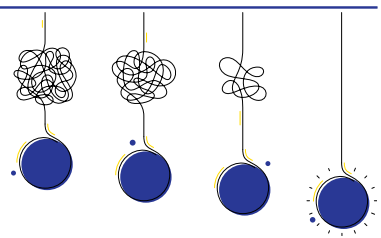


TRIGGERS AND NEGATIVE

COPING SKILLS

**Avoidance of Reality:** When you use substances, what are you trying to avoid or escape from? Is it a difficult conversation, an unresolved issue, or a painful truth you don't want to face? Describe a recent time when using negative coping behaviors like alcohol or drugs helped you avoid dealing with something important. How did you feel afterward?

**Patterns and Consequences:** What are the long-term consequences of turning to substances when you feel triggered? How do these consequences affect your life, relationships, or well-being?





# VISUALIZE YOUR

## SUPPORT SQUAD



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Start by imagining that you are building a "Support Squad"—a group of people who inspire you to make healthy choices and stay on track with your goals. These can be real people you know (family, friends, teachers, mentors) or people you admire from afar (athletes, musicians, public figures).

The center is the heart of your Support Squad. Each additional support layer represents another person in your Support Squad. You can write their names inside or use images or symbols that represent them (e.g., a basketball for an athlete you admire).

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# PRACTICING

## EMPATHY AND SUPPORT

How would you respond to a friend who admitted they were struggling with addiction or substance use?

What are some ways we can help people who are going through tough times without turning to substances?



# POSITIVE COPING SKILL

## WORD SEARCH

e	h	u	m	o	r	r	o	u	t	i	n	e	a	l	p	y	m
y	h	m	o	v	e	m	e	n	t	c	s	b	i	r	w	n	i
g	j	j	o	u	r	n	a	l	i	n	g	u	s	l	t	a	n
m	t	m	s	u	m	e	d	i	t	a	t	i	o	n	w	t	d
p	a	t	i	e	n	c	e	c	a	l	m	n	e	s	s	u	f
p	g	n	y	h	w	c	r	e	a	t	i	v	i	t	y	r	u
b	r	e	a	t	h	i	n	g	e	o	y	o	n	v	l	e	l
s	a	j	r	g	t	h	e	r	a	p	y	p	x	o	t	t	n
m	u	s	i	c	r	p	t	g	r	a	t	i	t	u	d	e	e
v	l	x	l	o	f	j	c	o	n	n	e	c	t	i	o	n	s
r	m	i	a	f	f	i	r	m	a	t	i	o	n	s	u	b	s
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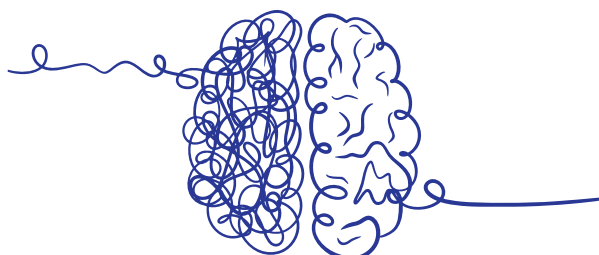
Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

affirmations  
mindfulness  
journaling  
meditation  
connection  
creativity  
compassion

breathing  
gratitude  
calmness  
patience  
movement  
therapy  
routine

nature  
music  
sleep  
humor  
art

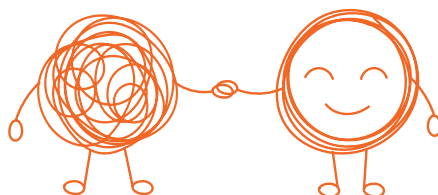


# FINDING POSITIVE

## COPING SKILLS

**Social Pressure and Environment:** Are there certain people or social settings that make it harder for you to resist the urge to use? How does being around certain individuals or places influence your choices? Describe a social situation where you felt the pressure to use substances. What was going on around you?

**Alternative Coping Strategies:** When you recognize these triggers, what healthier ways could you respond instead of using substances? What coping skills or strategies have you tried in the past that helped, even just a little?

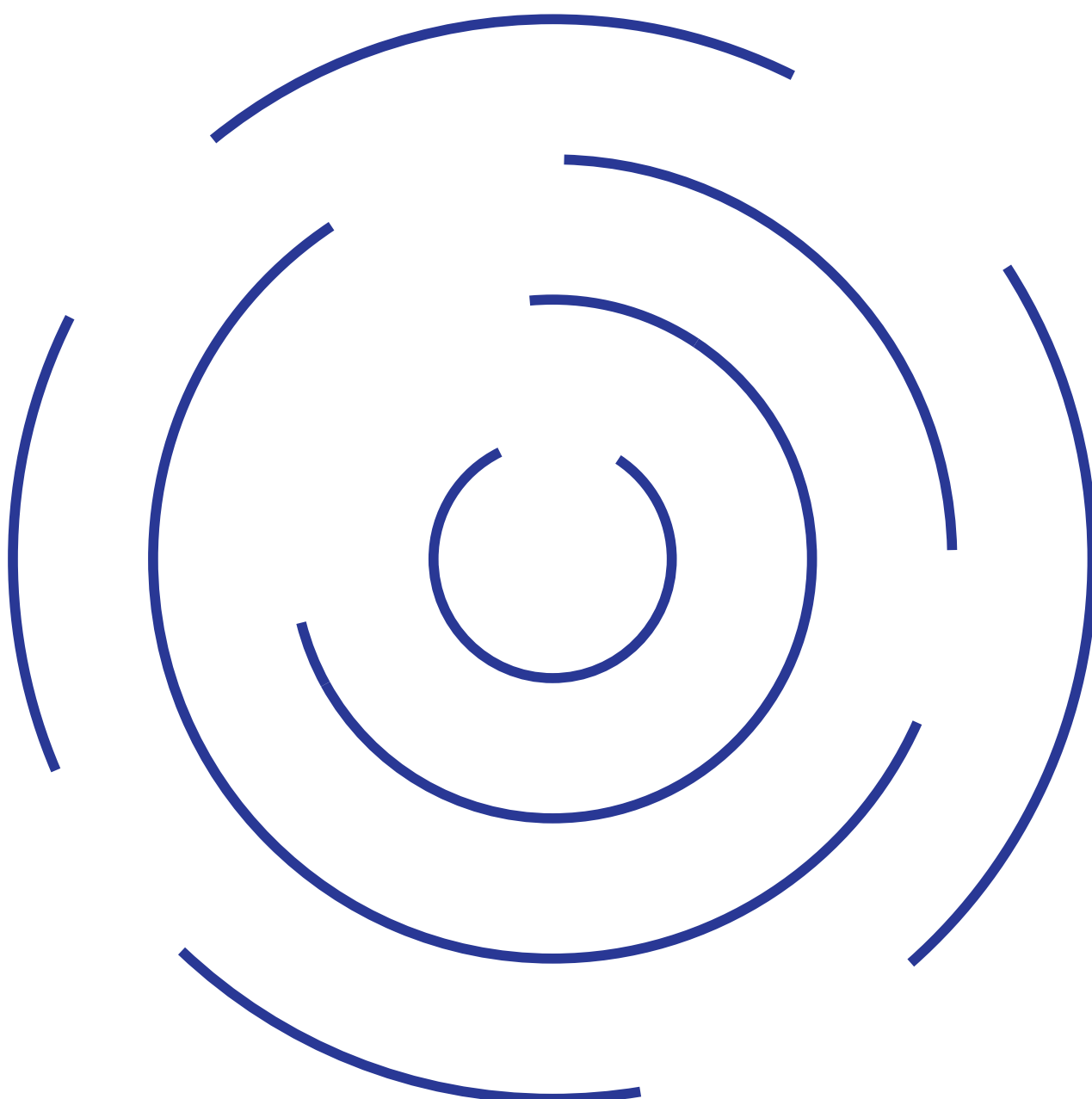


# RIPPLE EFFECT

This circle represents one of your decisions related to staying healthy, avoiding substance use, or making good choices. Write the decision you made inside the circle. For example, you could write "Said no to drugs" or "Stayed substance-free at a party."

Around the central circle, draw several larger circles radiating outward, like ripples in a pond. Each ripple represents the direct impact or outcome of your decision. For example, one ripple might be "Stayed healthy," while another could be "Made my family proud."

For each larger circle, draw more ripples around it. These will represent the indirect effects of your positive decision. Under "Made my family proud," you could add ripples like "Strengthened my relationship with my parents" or "Created a positive example for my younger sibling."



# BEYOND SUBSTANCES

## ADDICTION TAKES MANY FORMS

Addiction isn't limited to just substances or alcohol; it can manifest in many different ways. It can take the form of behaviors, habits, or even attachments to people, activities, or technologies.

Think about your own life: what are some things, outside of substance use, that you might be relying on or over-committed to in ways that could be harmful? How might these patterns be affecting your well-being?

Reflect on how addiction can show up in unexpected areas and what steps you could take to create balance.



# THERAPEUTIC

## COLORING







## Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation

MARCH 16, 2:14 PM

What is substance abuse?

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of substances, which can lead to addiction or negative health and social consequences. Here is a list of substances that might be included in substance abuse:

What kinds of substances are there?

### Alcohol

- Excessive or chronic consumption of alcoholic beverages.

### Tobacco

- Smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco products (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, vapes, smokeless tobacco).

### Cannabis (Marijuana/Weed)

- Use of marijuana for recreational or non-medical purposes.

What about prescription meds?



Enter your message...







Yes! These are some examples:

- Opioids: Prescription painkillers (e.g., oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl).
- Benzodiazepines: Medications for anxiety or sleep disorders (e.g., alprazolam, diazepam).
- Stimulants: Medications for ADHD (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin) used recreationally or without a prescription.
- Barbiturates: Sedatives or anticonvulsants (e.g., phenobarbital).
- Sedative-hypnotics: Used for sleep or anxiety disorders.

What about illicit drugs?

There are several, like

- Cocaine: A stimulant drug derived from the coca plant.
- Heroin: An opioid derived from morphine, typically used intravenously.
- Methamphetamine: A powerful stimulant that affects the central nervous system.
- Ecstasy (MDMA): A synthetic drug that alters mood and perception.
- LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide): A hallucinogenic drug that alters perception, mood, and thought.
- Psilocybin Mushrooms: Mushrooms that contain the hallucinogen psilocybin.
- Fentanyl: A synthetic opioid, often abused in combination with other substances, highly potent.



Enter your message...





What about inhalants?

Yes! Three that come to mind are:

- Solvents: (e.g., paint thinners, glue, gasoline).
- Aerosols: (e.g., spray paints, deodorants, cleaning products).
- Nitrites: Often referred to as "poppers," used recreationally for their psychoactive effects.

Wow! There are so many.

Substances can be abused in various ways, each method impacting the body and mind differently.

This can include vaping, smoking, snorting, injecting, swallowing, bingeing, crushing, eating, or dabbing, among others.

It is important to note that if you or anyone you know is struggling with substance abuse, it is okay to reach out to a trusted adult, like a therapist, friend, or family member. Using substances can have harmful effects and serious outcomes.



Enter your message...



# FILL IN THE BLANK

## REFLECTING ON CHOICES

1. The most important thing I've learned about addiction is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I think it's important for people to talk openly about substance use because \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If I ever felt pressure to use drugs or alcohol, I would \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If someone I care about was struggling with addiction, I would want them to know \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I think the media influences how people view substance use by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I would describe addiction as \_\_\_\_\_ and I think it affects people's lives by \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If I ever found myself in a situation where people were using substances and I didn't want to, I would \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A healthy way I cope with stress is \_\_\_\_\_ and it helps me because \_\_\_\_\_.
9. If I could change one thing about how addiction is treated in my community, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
10. My goals for the future are \_\_\_\_\_ and I believe that staying substance-free will help me because \_\_\_\_\_.



**SAY HELLO TO**

## **CAMERON GALLAGHER**

**Cameron Gallagher dreamed of a world without mental health stigma.** From experience, she knew the extreme difficulty of facing mental health challenges.



Her heart was filled with purpose to raise awareness and encourage open, supportive conversations. Cameron found encouragement through running and relief from her symptoms of anxiety and depression.

At 16, Cameron took the brave step to go public with her mental health journey. She designed a community 5k event for her cause, the SpeakUp5k. To kick off her dream, she set the bold goal of completing the 2014 Shamrock Half Marathon. And that she did.

Steps after crossing the finish line, Cameron collapsed in her parents' arms and died of an undiagnosed heart condition.



The Cameron K. Gallagher (CKG) Foundation organized and hit the ground running in March of 2014. We exist to perpetuate the one dream of one wise and beautiful young girl. **Our goal is to rid the world of mental health stigma, host the SpeakUp5k the world over and provide original, free teen mental health education.** We have achieved a lot. There is more to do.

**Learn more at [www.ckgfoundation.org](http://www.ckgfoundation.org).**



# CHECK OUT THESE TOOLS

## FOR YOUR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY

Access free  
digital mental  
health toolkits:



Call or text  
this number  
if you  
need to:



Learn about  
getting Mental  
Health First  
Aid certified:





# SpeakUp

for teen mental health

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half moon counseling



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