

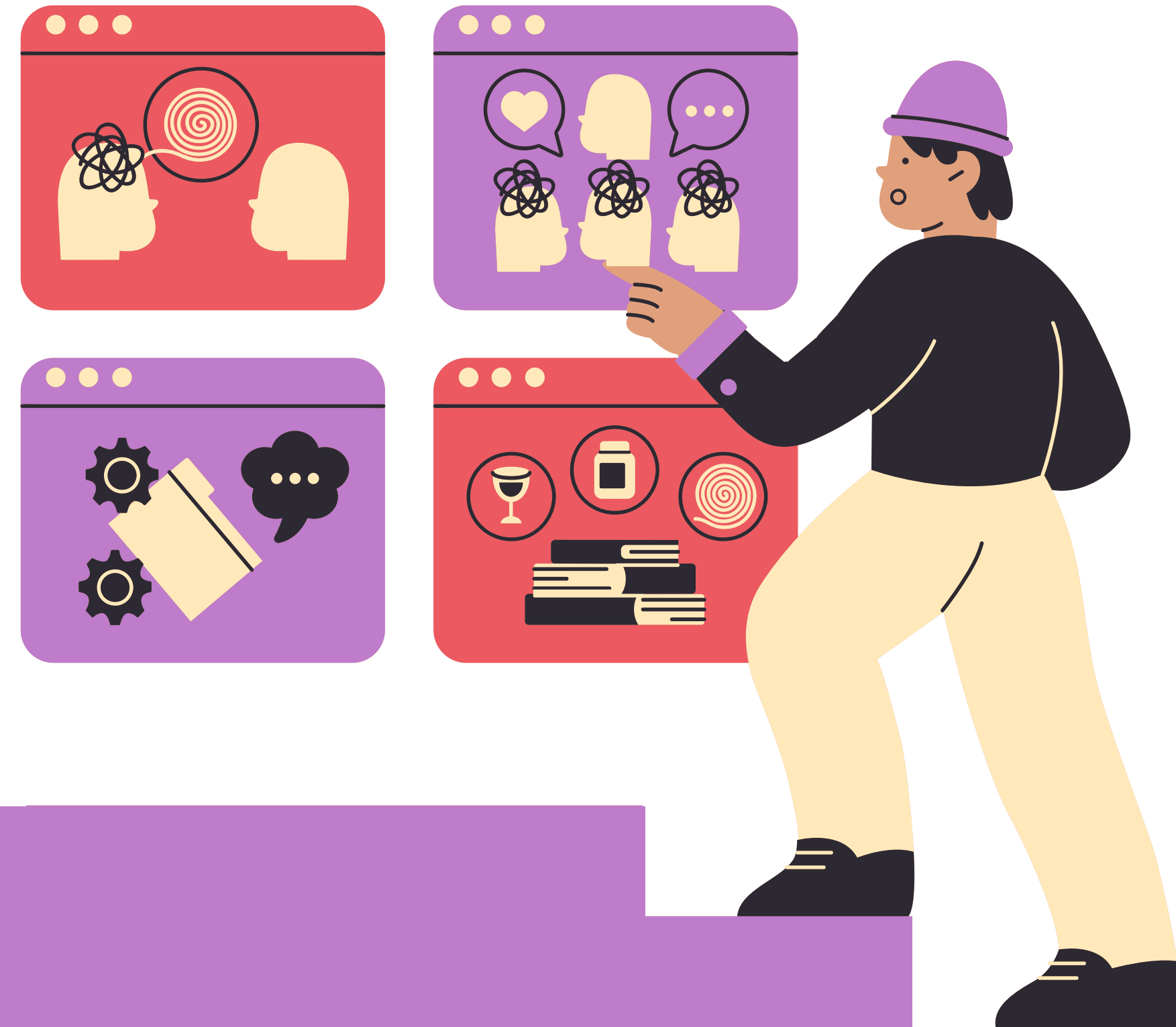
Manhattan University
Counseling & Psychological
Services

Substance Use Support for Our College Students



What do we mean by substance use?

Substance use is when a person engages in some type of drug, drink or chemical that alters our mood, emotions or mental state. Substances like weed, alcohol and various pills may come to mind. Another example could be cigarettes or coffee.





Creating Awareness About Substance Use Is Important!

Raising Awareness

Students may be trying substances for the first time, or continuing substance use in college. What is most important, is creating safety and awareness by reflecting on our substance use. Sometimes substances can be used for reasons like having fun, other times, it can be used as a way to change our mood, to be able to get through something stressful. Noticing how this affects you throughout the week can be helpful to observe.

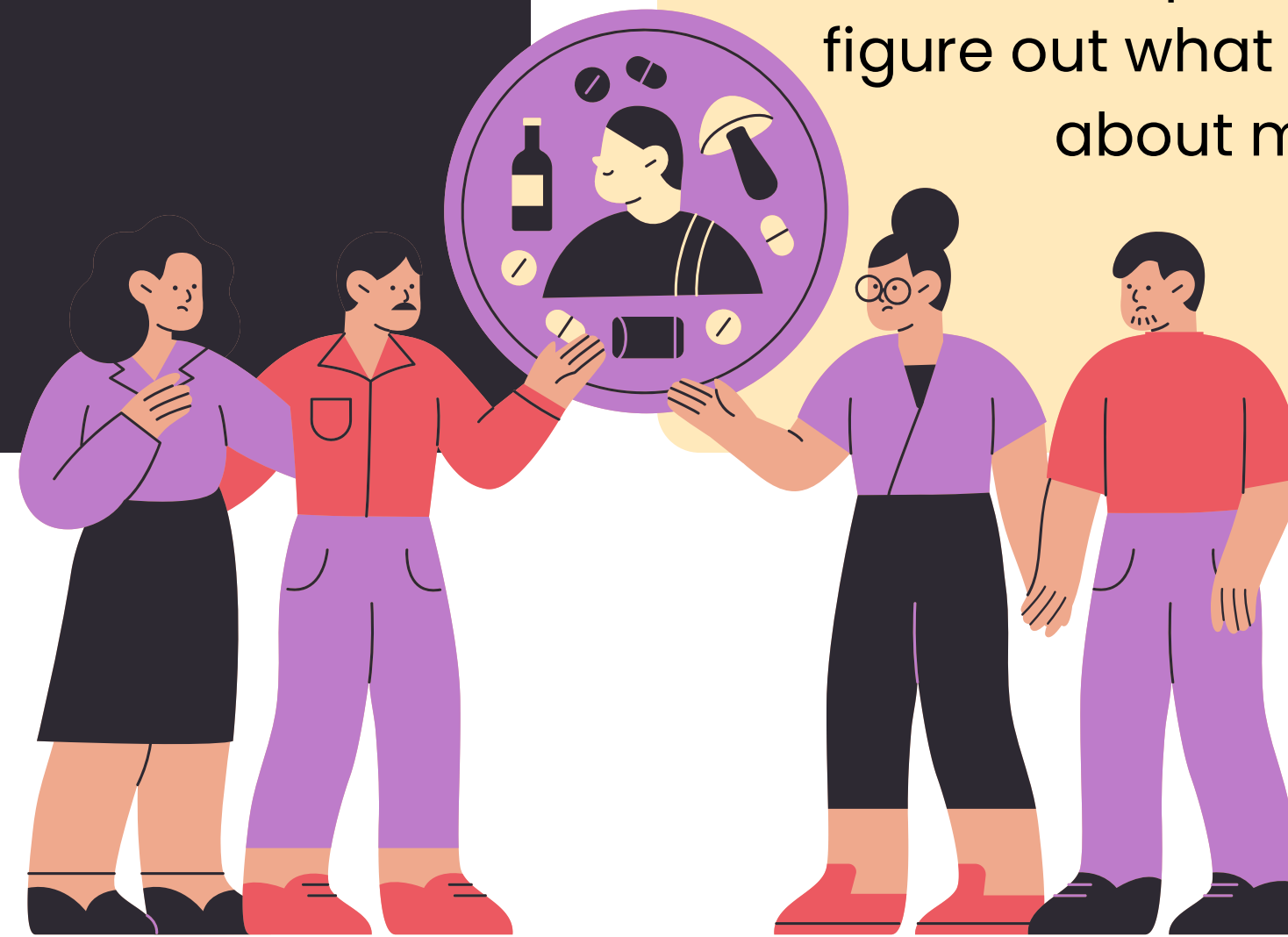


Creating Safety

When smoking a joint or drinking for the first time, it is important to think about the setting we're in, as well as the mood we are feeling. It's important to be with people that we trust, as well as an environment that we know.

Seeking Support

If a student is feeling that their substance use is beginning to impact their day to day life, preventing that person from doing what they need or want to do, the counseling center is a confidential space to be able to explore and figure out what that student wants to do about making a change.



Noticeable increase in frequency or amount

If you or a friend start to use a substance daily and more of it, this may be a sign that there has been an increase in stress and may benefit from additional support.

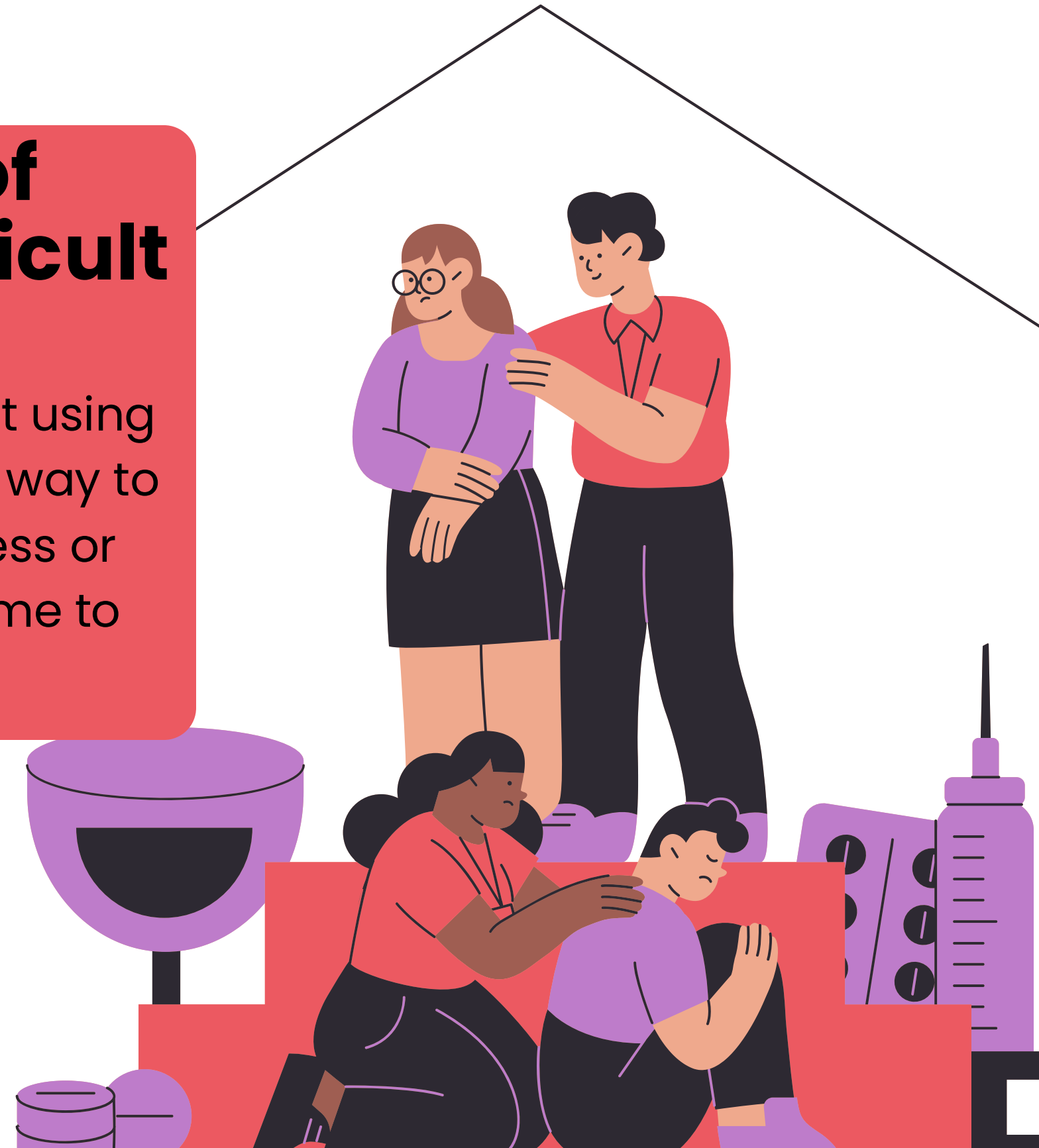
Decreasing motivation in daily tasks

If you or a friend are finding it hard to do things like getting out of bed, taking a shower, getting school work done and are using substances instead of those needs, it may be time to seek support.

Substance Use Concerns: What does substance *misuse* look like?

Only way of managing difficult feelings

If you or a friend feel that using a substance is the main way to deal with anger, sadness or loneliness, it may be time to seek support.



How can the counseling center help?

- 1) Providing take away flyers on how to use substances with more awareness and increased safety.
- 2) Providing a support group facilitated by a clinician.
- 3) Providing short or long term individual counseling that can address goals and concerns about substance use in a professional way.



Fears & Myths of Substance Use Counseling

01. “You’re going to judge me.”

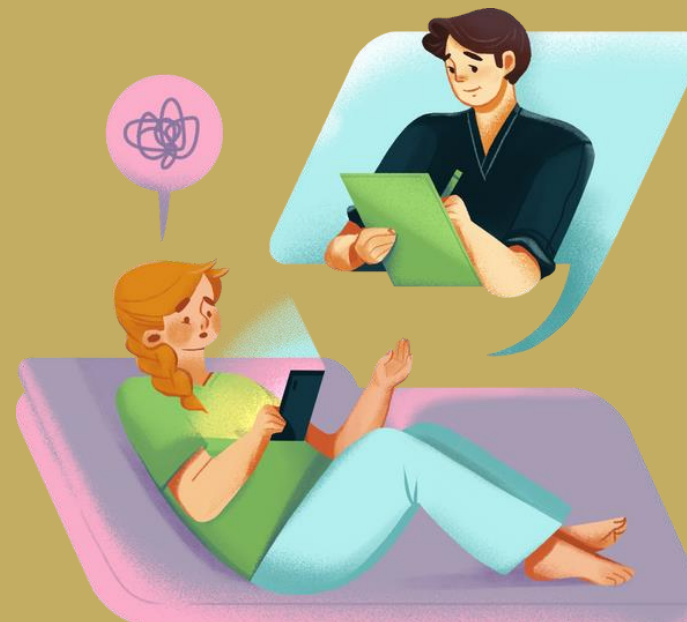
This can be the first concern many students feel. It is the job of the counselor to remain impartial, professional and non-judgemental. Furthermore, to hear and understand where the student is coming from and their definition of progress or change.

02. “You’re going to tell me to quit.

It is not the job of the counselor to determine what the outcome will be. The student shares their goals and the counselor will discuss and explore steps toward that goal with the student.

Relapse, or engaging in substance use when a person is trying to abstain, is a part of the change process that counselors study in their clinical practice. Relapse is one step in the learning process of finding what helps a person reach their substance use goals.

03. “What if I relapse?”



04. “You’re going to tell my parents or my coach.”

No counselor can share your substance use habits outside of the confidential office. It is only when a student is in imminent harm to themselves, or someone else. All discussion of substance use is protected by legal confidentiality.

05. “You’re going to always ask me about it.”

Substance can be a part of the counseling process, but only if the student feels comfortable or that it is relevant to their life. It is not the role of a counselor to only ask or focus on one topic with any student; they must follow where the student leads.

Benefits of Substance Use Counseling

01. “This is a private place I can just express how I’m feeling without judgement.”

This is a core tenant of therapy, to provide a safe and private space for anyone to express how they’re feeling and what they’re thinking; which often can relieve stress, pressure or tension just by saying things out loud. Judgement should never be a part of the therapy process.

02. “I like that my therapist can just listen.”

Although it may sound simple, listening is a skill. Being able to be present with someone who’s sole purpose is to stick with your experience and understanding of a situation can feel validating, and calming.

No student needs to be in crisis, or working through a huge problem, to explore their life in therapy; and to receive support or guidance.

03. “Part of taking care of yourself is going to the gym, therapy is that same process.”



04. “I can set a goal and track my progress.”

Having a plan in therapy can be a great way of focusing toward progress. Having a therapist that is with you each step, checking in and evaluating progress with you, can lead to the change students are hoping to see in their lives.

05. “Counseling allows me to be kinder to myself”.

Having an outside perspective, and one more removed from a student’s life can often result in a less critical perspective, and one that is a bit more balanced when it comes to reflecting on how a student feels about themselves.

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~Questions~

