

## Risk and Protective Factors

It is important to know the risk factors when we talk about adolescent substance use. While risk factors vary from individual to individual. They are based on biological, psychological, genetic and community characteristics that are associated with a higher likelihood of substance use disorder. Here are a few:

- Family history of substance use
- Mental health issues
- Lack of family involvement
- Early use of alcohol or other drugs
- Peer pressure

It is important to point out that just because a risk factor is present, it does not mean that a problem will occur. This is where parents become the most important protective factor for their teens. Protective factors are characteristics that are associated with reducing risk factors. When parents talk early and often about alcohol and other drugs, they can protect their teens from many of the risk factors. Continue to keep the lines of communication open with your teens, particularly if you have a family history of substance use, it is important for them to know this risk factor. Should you need any support or conversation starters please reach out to Candi Davenport MS LADC at [cdavenport@relatemn.org](mailto:cdavenport@relatemn.org).