

Good and Not-So-Good

People usually use alcohol or other drugs because they help them in some way. But sometimes the result is more than what we wanted or expected. This can be good, but it can also be not so good. Some of the good and not-so-good things happen immediately (or in the short term) while others may not happen for quite awhile (long term).

Think about your current substance use and fill in the chart with some of the things you get—or might get in the future—from using alcohol or other drugs (e.g., a short-term good thing might be “a high feeling,” a long-term not-so-good thing might be “spend a lot of money that could be used on buying on a car”).

	Good things ... 😊	Not-so-good things ... ☹️
Short term		
Long term		

Ask the young person to fill in the chart and give it back to you. Use their answers to start a conversation.

Or simply ask them questions about their perceptions of their substance use. Start with some positive questions:

- What are some of the good things about using...?
- What do you like about using...?
- How has using helped you?
- What would you miss if you couldn't use...?

Then switch to some questions about the not-so-good side of their substance use:

- Can you tell me about the down side?
- What are some things you are not so happy about?
- What are the things you wouldn't miss?
- How much/often do you worry about it?

Next, move on to explore past experiences:

- When did you start ...?
- How did you get to where you are now?

Finally, shift your attention to possible plans and goals:

- How would you like things to be?
- If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?