

Centerstone Addresses Teen Vaping Crisis Through Release Of New Educational Comic Book

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ALTON - Centerstone, a national leader in behavioral health and addiction services, has announced the release of its eighth comic book, *Spark Demystified*. The Spark comics are a series of comic books geared toward children and teens with each issue addressing common topics in an approachable yet factual way. The latest issue tackles teen vaping, while past issues have tackled other age-appropriate topics such as bullying, depression, online safety, relationships, drugs, and underage drinking.

Spark Demystified, the latest issue from Centerstone's comic book series, covers teen vaping and how the use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for kids and teens, and can lead to

substance use disorders. The comic also addresses peer pressure, which is cited as the one of the most common reasons why middle and high school student try vaping or e-cigarettes.

“I know things,” Spark the superhero says in the latest issue. “Vaping can be really, really addicting. It’s filled with Nicotine,” she adds.

Described as a “crisis” by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Denver Health and other major healthcare organizations, data shows that teen vaping is at an all-time high. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2022, approximately one of every 30 middle school students (3.3%) and one of every seven high school students (14.1%) reported using e-cigarettes in the last 30 days. The CDC says that vaping and e-cigarettes has been the most commonly used form of tobacco among youth populations since 2014.

“*Spark Demystified* is a testament to the creativity of our team,” says Centerstone Regional CEO Ben Middleton. “Children and teens don’t always react well to lectures or PowerPoint slides. The Spark comic book series was our solution to garner their interest while still providing important information and conversation starters,” he added.

The Spark comics are used by Centerstone staff in multiple states across the country to augment prevention programming offered in dozens of middle schools, high schools, and community-based settings. To develop the latest issue, Centerstone partnered with writer Allison Chaney Whitmore in Los Angeles, as well as pencil and ink artist Carola Borelli, colorist Agnese Pozza, and letterer Roberto Megna, all of whom are based in Italy.

The entire Spark comic book series can be viewed online at no-cost at [Centerstone.org/comics](https://centerstone.org/comics). Individuals and groups serving children and teens can request free printed copies of the comic book, while supplies last, by reaching out to Centerstone at communications@centerstone.org.

For more information about Centerstone’s services or to make an appointment, visit [Centerstone.org](https://centerstone.org) or call 877-HOPE123.

About Centerstone

[Centerstone](https://centerstone.org) is a nonprofit health system providing mental health and substance use disorder treatments. Services are available nationally through the operation of outpatient clinics, residential programs, the use of telehealth and an inpatient hospital. Centerstone also features specialized programs for the military community, therapeutic foster care, children’s services and employee assistance programs. Centerstone’s Research Institute

provides guidance through research and technology, leveraging the best practices for use in all our communities. Centerstone's Foundation secures philanthropic resources to support the work and mission of delivering care that changes people's lives.