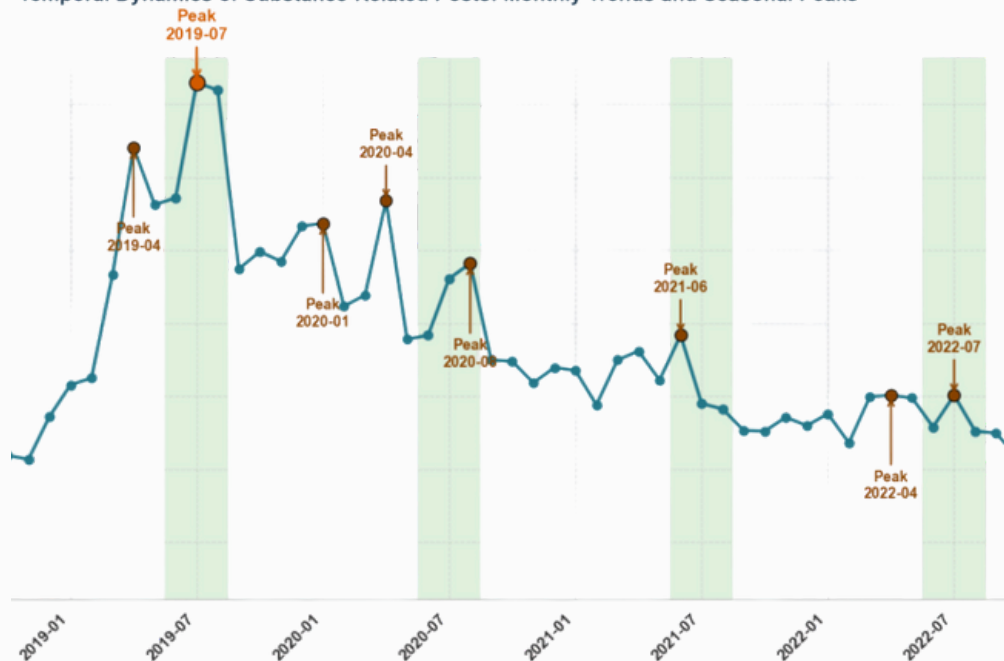


Predicting Substance Use Conversations

Using predictive modeling, the study showed that peer and family influences, guilt, and disgust were key predictors of substance-use posts. In contrast, joy and school-related content were linked to non-substance-use discussions. The model performed well in identifying substance-use content, underscoring the strong connections between emotions, social contexts, and behavior.

Temporal Dynamics of Substance-Related Posts: Monthly Trends and Seasonal Peaks



Monthly trends in the percentage of substance-use related posts from 2018 to 2022.

Implications for Prevention

This research highlights that adolescent substance use is not just experimentation—it is deeply tied to emotions and social pressures.

Key takeaways for prevention efforts include:

- Engaging peers positively: Peer norms are powerful; programs that build healthy peer networks can reduce risky behavior.
- Supporting emotional health: Addressing guilt, sadness, and fear through coping skills and mental health support is critical.
- Involving families and schools: Strengthening family bonds and supportive school policies can serve as buffers against risky behavior.
- Timing interventions strategically: Substance-use discussions peak during school breaks and holidays, suggesting opportunities for targeted outreach.

By understanding teens' emotional experiences and social influences, community coalitions like The Charles Town Initiative can design interventions that truly resonate with youth, providing timely support and fostering healthier choices.

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