

# NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE



Parents play a critical role in their teen's decision-making processes and healthy passage through adolescence. Our resources can help.

One of the greatest fears in raising an adolescent is that they might become involved in problematic substance use. When parents and caregivers have the appropriate knowledge and skills, they can greatly reduce the chances of this fear becoming a reality.

## Educate Yourself First

Parents are the most effective resources in preventing and reducing teen substance use.

**True**   **False**

Parents who intervene early with their child's alcohol or other drug use can help significantly reduce the likelihood that they will become addicted or suffer long-term negative consequences.

**True**   **False**

Substance use is a rite of passage among teenagers.

**True**   **False**

Many teens report they want their parents to talk to them about substance use.

**True**   **False**

Teens consistently identify "disappointing their parents" as a major deterrent of substance use.

**True**   **False**

Answers: 1-True; 2-True; 3-False; 4-True; 5-True

If you think your child or another member of your family needs help now, we can provide guidance and support. Call Caron's Education Department at 800-678-2332 ext 6117.

## Then Get Started...The Earlier, the Better

These strategies are good ways to get started:

- Start talking with your child about alcohol or other drugs early.
- Continue the conversations throughout their childhood and into their teen years.
- Establish "no use" expectations for your child.
- Teach your child how to say no.
- Know your child's friends. Don't be afraid to ask other parents about their expectations for their children related to alcohol and other drug use.
- Monitor, supervise, and set boundaries. Enforce consequences when your child breaks the rules.

## Talk with Your Child

These questions can help you get the discussion going:

- What is one of your best character traits?
- What is one area you think you can improve in?
- What types of situations do you find stressful? What are some things that help you relax?
- What are your favorite things to do during your down time?
- Tell me about one of your proudest moments - how did you feel?
- How do you feel when you hear about other teens abusing substances?
- How would you react if other teens tried to pressure you and your friends to try alcohol or other drugs?
- What are three things you want to accomplish before you graduate from high school?
- Do you feel any differently about friends who drink alcohol or use drugs?
- Who is someone you look up to? What is it about that person that makes you want to be like them?
- What are some reasons people might abuse alcohol or other drugs?

## Look for Possible Signs of Substance Abuse

### Physical changes:

- Conspicuously high periods of energy coupled with very low energy
- Changes in appetite, weight, or grooming
- Changes in speech patterns like slurring, slowing, rapid, or pressured speech
- Dilated or constricted pupils or consistently red eyes
- Heightened sensitivity to physical stimuli: smells, sounds, sights, touch
- Smells of alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana

### Behavioral changes:

- Decreased involvement or talkativeness
- Secretiveness and lying
- An abrupt change in friends
- Apathetic

- More irritable
- Defensive about substance use
- Loss of motivation, particularly for activities they used to enjoy
- Change in sleeping patterns
- Use of nicotine products such as tobacco and vaping devices

### Productivity changes:

- Tardy or absent from school
- Not completing homework
- Refusing to do any work

## Steps to Take When Intervention Is Necessary

Getting help is the first step. Involve a professional who is trained to help screen for problematic substance use. You may want to consider the assistance of:

- Your family physician
- A school counselor or a student assistance professional
- A professional counseling practice offering substance use disorder assessments

A professional trained in substance use disorders will use a number of assessment tools and ask a series of questions designed to identify problematic substance use and risky behaviors, mental health issues, and other areas of concern in an individual's life. Through these assessments, the professional will be able to determine the extent of a person's drug use, the level of potential abuse, and makes a referral to a treatment program is necessary.

Treatment for substance use disorders may include a variety of behavioral approaches. The type of counseling or treatment, the length, and the setting will depend on the individual, their level of misuse, and the family.

