



TALKING TO TEENS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE



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- Supporting a teen who might be struggling with substance use can be tough, but the way you approach the conversation makes all the difference. This guide will help you communicate with care, patience, and understanding.

Why Teens Experiment with Substances



Teens may try substances for lots of reasons—stress, peer pressure, or just curiosity. Keeping this in mind can help you approach the topic with empathy instead of judgment.

Tips for Better Communication

Use “I” Statements

Focus on how you feel rather than accusing. For example, “I feel worried when I see you upset,” rather than “You’re making bad choices.”

Really Listen

Give them your full attention. Make eye contact, show that you’re listening, and don’t interrupt.

Stay Positive

Avoid blame or criticism. Keep the conversation supportive to help them feel safe opening up.

Do's and Don'ts for Talking to Your Teen



Do:

- ✓ Be patient. These conversations take time.
- ✓ Acknowledge small wins. Progress is progress.
- ✓ Let them know you're there, no matter what.

Don't:

- ✗ Threaten or make ultimatums.
- ✗ Focus only on what they're doing wrong.
- ✗ Criticize or judge.

After the Conversation



Give your teen some space to think things over. Let them know you're ready to talk again whenever they are. You can also offer to explore support options together.

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