10 strategies to prevent youth substance use

Did you know that most parents say they are having conversations with their teens about substance use and expectations, when in reality, the majority of youth do not feel as though their parents are talking? The messages parents give are often too quick, awkward or they turn into lectures. It can be difficult to know what to say to your teen. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has come up with 10 strategies that we are going to discuss to help parents out.

1. Be honest and direct. Sit down and have a direct, open and honest conversation with them. Talk about peer pressure, addiction and temptation. You may want to share with them something from your past, other times parents feel hypocritical. Remember that you do not want your child to make the same mistakes you may have, so being honest with them is not hypocritical.

2. Give them praise. Celebrate them when they do the right thing, accomplish goals, overcome obstacles, etc. A little positive reinforcement can go a long way. You can become their inner voice that they will lean on when they find themselves in a tough situation.

3. Make sure they know and understand the legal consequences of drug use. It is not about scaring them, it is about being real. Being in possession of substances or in the wrong place can have tough legal consequences as well as ones that impact financial aid, college acceptance, jobs and more. Use the real world as examples such as a news story, a community issue, etc.

4. Make sure they know the life-long consequences of addiction. Being addicted can ruin a promising young life. It is important that parents even discuss tobacco and nicotine, as these impact life also and their use often leads to use of other substances. Keep it real.

5. Volunteer at a treatment center or homeless shelter. Seeing addiction first hand can be powerful and life-changing for a teen. These places give opportunities to talk to people that are living these lives.

6. Do your homework. Before talking to your teen, learn the basics so you feel prepared and ready. Check out the latest research to learn what is going on in your teens world. Reach out to professionals for information, tips, etc. Our prevention educators have lots of resources designed for parents to become more comfortable and prepared for these conversations.

7. Make one-on-one time. Make it a priority to spend time with your teen where nothing else is the focus, just them. During this quality time, your teen is more likely to open up and talk to you about what is going on in their world. You can use this opportunity to understand them better and creates a stronger bond.

8. Keep your cool. Rolled eyes, heavy sighs, temporary deafness—you may experience all of these when trying to talk with your teen about drug use. Keep calm and know that your words really are getting through. Try a different approach the next time you bring up the topic.

9. Connect with other parents. More than likely other parents are having the same concerns. Get together and talk about concerns, share ideas, be sounding boards for each other.

10. Give them the facts. Use straight facts so that you are setting them on the right path. If you are not sure, find out, it is ok as a parent to not know something so be honest.

For more on this visit www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com. If you need help or would like resources please contact us and we would be glad to send you more information.
Resource link

In response to the ever changing world around us, we have compiled links and resources to help families and educators address new and changing needs. We want to be sure that students, parents and teachers have plenty of information to help them out when it comes to social skills, substance abuse, conversation starters, mental health and more. Included here you will find links to age appropriate stories, activities, articles and more that can be helpful tools for you.

In our elementary section we have included a great collection of social skills story books that children can watch and keep up on important topics. Some areas include mindfulness, resiliency, asking for help, handling emotions and more.

In our middle and high school section, there are opportunities for reflection, discussion and activities that are paired with each Storyteller video when they access the Natural Highs information.

The parent section is full of information to help parents with common struggles from dealing with adolescent emotions to having conversations about tough topics. There are resources being added, so be sure to bookmark the following link:
https://www.catholiccharitiessteuben.org/services/substance-free-living/prevention-services/steuben-council-on-addictions/student-resources/

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience: School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades. Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities. Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.

Steuben County Underage Party & Drug Information Tip Line

Anyone with information relating to underage drinking such as parties, underage sales, etc. or information relating to illegal drugs, such as sales, dealers, or other suspicious activities are encouraged to use the tip line.

The tip line will be monitored seven days a week, 24 hours a day, all calls are kept anonymous.

Do your part to help make our communities safe for everyone!

1-844-378-4847
Use of high potency marijuana increases risk of anxiety disorders

(Alexandria, Va) - Today’s highly potent marijuana dramatically increases the risk of mental health issues according to a new study published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry. The study, conducted with 1,087 twenty-four-year olds who reported recent marijuana use, found that users of high potency marijuana were four times more likely to abuse the substance and twice as likely to develop anxiety disorders.

“Studies such as this continue to prove what we have been saying for some time: today’s pot is light years away from the weed of Woodstock,” said Dr. Kevin Sabet, president of Smart Approaches to Marijuana and a former senior drug policy advisor to the Obama Administration. “As we have routinely pointed out, the science behind today’s pot is sorely lacking. As it catches up, we are certain to see more studies such as this.”

In addition to increases in anxiety, the study also found that users of high potency marijuana were more likely to use the drug once a week, twice as likely to have used other substances in the past year, and more than three times as likely to be tobacco users.

Marijuana commonly used in the 60’s, 70’s, and even 90’s barely registered above 4% THC content. Today, following the commercialization of the drug, average THC content has exploded some 500%. Average marijuana “buds” can feature up to 30% THC while marijuana concentrates can contain upwards of 99% THC.

As the science struggles to catch up with the rising potency of today’s marijuana, we are only seeing the first signs that marijuana use has become much more harmful to the human brain. Last year, a groundbreaking study confirmed a link between the use of high potency marijuana and greater rates of psychosis at the population level. Daily users of high potency pot were more than 4x more likely to develop psychosis.

“When it comes to tobacco, we didn’t see truly drastic harms until big corporations saw the potential for massive revenues and started altering tobacco to make it more addictive,” continued Dr. Sabet. “We are beginning to see the same take place with marijuana. A massive industry, ironically featuring billions in investment from Big Tobacco, is working to expand marijuana commercialization while...