

Talking to your Teen About Substance Use

Adolescence is a tricky time. Teenagers are beginning to establish their identities and this often means testing the limits of parental controls. When it comes to drugs and alcohol, pushing the boundaries can lead to dangerous territory. Setting clear rules about substance use gives teens the structure they need to stay safe. Research shows that kids who have clear rules and expectations are less likely to get into serious trouble or run to extremes and are more likely to make safer choices. Here are some tips for talking to your teen about substance use.

Plan to have the talk: Springing a conversation about drugs/alcohol on your teenager can make him/her feel ambushed and defensive. Give your child a heads up beforehand and be clear about what the conversation will entail, so everyone can be on the same page. Not talking about it can cause your teen to rely on his/her peers to get information that is often inaccurate.

Spell out the rules: Discuss your rules and the specific consequences of breaking them. Avoiding ambiguity lets your teenager know where you stand, And for kids who feel pressured to do something they aren't comfortable with, it can make it easier for them if they know they can use their parents as an excuse for saying no.

Explain your reasons: Be very clear about your reasons for prohibiting substance use. Teenagers are often ordered to do things without being given a clear reason why and by explaining yourself you're inviting them to have a more open, adult conversation. The potential consequences of drinking and using drugs are real. Any kind of experimentation is illegal when you're a teenager, and it's dangerous.

These are just a few tips you can use to have a conversation about substance use. Parents are the biggest influence in a teen's life. Even though teens may test limits as they are eager for more independence, they still want and need you involved. Let them know you're open and available to talk/listen to them about substance use so they will be equipped to make an educated decision.

On-Demand Webinars for Parents

The week of January 25-29, LCPS partnered with INOVA for an Act on Addiction Summit leading up to its annual Mental Health and Wellness Conference. Professionals from across academic and clinical settings shared their expertise on understanding substance use, reducing mental health stigma, building resiliency, addressing behavior challenges and supporting students from a trauma-informed lens, among others. Sessions and translations can soon be viewed on-demand on the Parent Resource Services page: <https://www.lcps.org/parentresourceservices> under the heading *2021 Mental Health and Wellness Conference*.

How to Contact Your SAS



Fiona Brown, LPC

If you have questions or need support

regarding substance use, contact your school's SAS, Fiona Brown, at Fiona.Brown@lcps.org.

Additional information and resources can be found on our page: <https://www.lcps.org/>

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Information and Resources

Increase your knowledge

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/223622> - Parent/Student SUD information

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/201540> - Alcohol Information

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/184676> - Drug Information

<https://www.lcps.org/Page/201538> - Tobacco and E-Cig Information

<https://easyread.drugabuse.gov/> - Easy-to-read drug facts

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/comorbidity/covid-19-resources> - COVID-19 & Substance Use

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X20303992>—Stanford study on vaping increasing COVID-19 risk

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/covid-19-risk-linked-to-vaping-but-addicted-kids-find-it-hard-to-stop>

Support for you as a loved one

<https://healthtools.aarp.org/pill-identifier>—Resource for identifying unknown pills/capsules

<https://www.familiesagainstnarcotics.org/> - Resource for families

<https://drugfree.org/article/online-support-community-for-parents-caregivers/> - Online Support Community for parents/caregivers

<https://www.alanondistrict10.org/> - Support for family members of someone struggling with addiction—Zoom meetings

<https://www.alanondistrict10.org/zoom-meetings>—Support for children of parents struggling with addiction—Zoom meetings

Find a treatment provider

<https://findtreatment.gov/> - SAMHSA treatment locator

1-800-662-HELP (4357) TTY: 1-800-487-4889

www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline - SAMSHA National Helpline

<https://www.smartrecovery.org/smart-recovery-toolbox/smart-recovery-online/> - Online Recovery Community: Self-Management and Recovery Training

<https://recoverydharma.org/> - Recovery community based on Buddhist Principles, virtual meetings available

https://na.org/?ID=virtual_meetings—Virtual Narcotics Anonymous meetings

<https://nvintergroup.org/> - Virtual Alcoholics Anonymous meetings

Upcoming Webinar-style Events:

Parent Presentations:

**Unified Mental Health Team Parent Coffee—
Rock Ridge HS, Thurs. Feb 11 @ 8:30am**

Student Presentations:

Sterling MS, 8th grade Feb 18 & 19

Harmony MS, 8th grade Feb 23-26

**Freedom High School, 10th grade Feb 9 & 10,
16 & 17**