Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
Get informed, stay smart, stay safe

Factsheet

Talking to a young person about alcohol and other drugs (Simplified English)



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year:

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Cannabis, Drugs (General), Emerging Drugs (“Legal Highs”), "Ice" (Methamphetamine), MDMA/Ecstasy, Tobacco

Tags: Simplified English, effective communication

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

Talking to a young person about alcohol and other drugs

As a parent you can affect your child’s choice to use or not to use alcohol and other drugs. It is important to talk to your child as they get older and face new experiences and challenges.

Here are some tips to help support your child and encourage them to talk to you:

- Even if your child does not see any drug use at home, they can see it on social media, through friends or other sources. Prepare them before they are exposed Give them information so they can make good choices about how to stay safe.
- Get information about different drugs, their effects, and risks. Think clearly about what it is you want to say. Think how you will answer any questions they ask, for example, questions about your own drug use.
- Be open, and do not lecture your child. Listen to their thoughts, and make it clear they can talk to you if they have any questions.
- Clearly state your rules about alcohol and other drug use, and explain why your rules are important. For example, you can say you are worried about drug use because it affects teenage brain development and can lead to dangerous situations. Make sure that other parents who may supervise your child (for example, at a birthday party) also know your rules.
- Correct any untrue facts about alcohol and other drugs. For example, one of the most widely held beliefs is that it is normal to use alcohol and drugs, but most young people have never tried an illegal drug and do not use alcohol. Encourage your child to find out more for themselves by exploring our drug factsheets.
- It is fine to ask directly about alcohol or other drug use; but don’t guess that they are using drugs.
- Prepare yourself for a negative reaction. This does not mean the talk wasn't helpful– it may take some time for your child to understand what you have said. Stay calm and understanding. Don’t let it turn into an argument.
- Let them know you care and remind them of their good qualities. Young people are more likely to listen and take your advice if they feel loved and respected.

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