

Strong Family Relationships Can Prevent Alcohol and Drug Use Among Teens

Teens in the United States face many pressures to use alcohol and drugs. Parents who talk openly with their children and play an active role in their children's lives can play an important role in helping their children to make good choices and avoid using alcohol or drugs. This sheet includes several tips for parents about how to develop a positive relationship with their children to prevent alcohol and drug use.

1. Get information about drugs and alcohol so that you can talk to your kids about these issues. Alcohol and drugs are harmful for children. They are harmful to their health, their development, their education, and they are illegal.
2. Have a close relationship with your child and be involved in their life so that your child will know that you care about them. If you have a close relationship, they will also trust you and listen to you when you talk to them about how to make good decisions.
 - a. There are many ways to build a close relationship with your child. For example, talk to your child everyday by asking, "Tell me about your day. What did you do? How was school today? Are there any problems that you need help with?"
 - b. Check on how they are doing in school. Communicate with their teachers. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Look at their grades every semester. Make sure they do their homework every day.
 - c. Know what activities your child is involved in and ask about how they are going.
 - d. Ask your child what are their goals are so that you can support and encourage them to reach their goals.
 - e. Get to know your child's friends. Invite their friends to your house so you can meet them.
 - f. Build positive relationships in your family by spending time together and doing fun things together.
3. Open communication with your child is important. If you have open communication, they will feel more comfortable talking to you when they face challenges and you will be able to support them better.
 - a. Even though you may not be familiar with or understand what your child is experiencing, you can still listen to them, talk to them about challenges they are facing, and support them.
 - b. Instead of yelling at your child when they make a mistake, talk to them about why you are worried about them.
 - c. Never give up on your children.
4. Set clear rules and expectations for your children.
 - a. Always know where your child is when they go out. Set a curfew for when they have to be home.
5. Teach your child how to make good decisions and stay away from drugs and alcohol.

- a. Talk with your child about how to say no if someone offers them drugs or alcohol.
 - b. Make a plan for what they can do if they are in a situation where people are using drugs and alcohol.
6. Be a strong leader for your family and set a good example for your children by not drinking and not allowing alcohol in your home.
7. Provide a healthy environment for your family. If you live in a neighborhood that is unsafe for your children, consider moving to a safer area.
8. You are not alone. Many parents may be facing similar challenges to you. You can talk to your community leaders, friends, doctors, or teachers to get help.

Sources: National Institute on Drug Abuse; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.