



June Newsletter

Changing Lives, One Day, One Goal,
One Person at a Time



Tips for Talking to Teens About Drugs & Alcohol

1. Make your values and rules clear.

Parents sometimes use phrases like "be smart" or "make good decisions," though these terms may have very different meanings to different people. For example, a parent who says, "Be smart!" may think he is asking his child not to drink, while the child may interpret the instructions as, "Don't drink enough to black out." So, be specific. If you mean, "You can go out with your friends as long as you can assure me you will not use marijuana," then say it that way.

2. Ask and listen, but resist the urge to lecture.

As adults, we very much want to impart as much wisdom as we can to help young people avoid the same mistakes that we made. But, it is probably more useful to draw out their innate curiosity and encourage them to seek answers on their own. Consider beginning by asking a question like, "What do you know about marijuana?" Teens who feel like their point of view is valued may be more willing to engage in a conversation. In response to what your child says, use nonjudgmental reflective statements to make sure they feel listened to, then follow up with a question. For example: "So you've heard that marijuana is pretty safe because it is natural. Do you think that is correct?" You don't need to agree with everything your teen says; you just need to make it clear you are listening.

3. If your child has already used substances, try to explore the reasons.

Teens may use substances to help manage anxiety, relieve stress, or connect socially with peers. Being curious about those reasons can help them feel less judged. It may also give you a window into your teen's underlying struggles, help develop insight into their behavior, and point to problems that may need professional support. On the other hand, these conversations may be challenging for a parent to have with a child, and some young people have limited understanding as to why they use substances. For adolescents who are using substances regularly, we recommend an assessment by a professional who can support them in behavior change.

4. Know when and how to intervene.

Engaging with adolescents on the topic of substance use can be a delicate dance. We want to encourage openness and honesty, and we also want them to get clear messages that help to keep them safe. Teens who use substances recurrently and/or who have had a problem associated with substance use may be on a trajectory for developing a substance use disorder. It is a good idea for them to have a professional assessment.

5. Be mindful of any family history of substance use disorders.

Much of the underlying vulnerability to developing substance use disorders is passed down genetically. Exposure to substance use in the home is also a major risk factor. Both may affect children with a first- or second-degree relative (a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle) with a substance use disorder. While we know from studies that the genetic heritability of addiction is strong, it is also complex, passed on through a series of genes and generally not limited to a single substance. Honest conversations about unhealthy substance use, addiction, and the family risk of substance use disorders can help provide teens a good, solid reason for making the smart decision not to start using in the first place.

Member Spotlight

After receiving her Associates degree in Liberal Arts from Delta College in 2011, Bri'Ana Dunn enlisted into the United States Army where she served from 2011 to 2018. After being honorably discharged, she moved back to Michigan to continue her education. She is currently a graduating Senior at Saginaw Valley State University, majoring in Public Administration and minoring in Emergency Management. With already 8+ years of experience in the field, Bri'Ana enjoys working in public administration because it requires strong leadership skills, and it is tied to public programs and services which makes a big impact on the lives of people in her community. Volunteering at WOC has given her the opportunity to retreat from everyday life, appreciate what she has and form lifelong, healthy relationships. She also believes her work with WOC has helped boost her mental/physical health and wellbeing. One of her favorite inspirational quotes that she loves to share with others is "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." by James Keller.



Bri'Ana J. Dunn
WOC Volunteer Since 2023



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Family & Friends: An Addiction Support Group

Is your loved one leading a destructive life?
That doesn't mean your life has to be destroyed as well.

Stronger Together is here to help you cope.
Join us at WOC for an addiction support group for family and friends of people struggling with addiction.

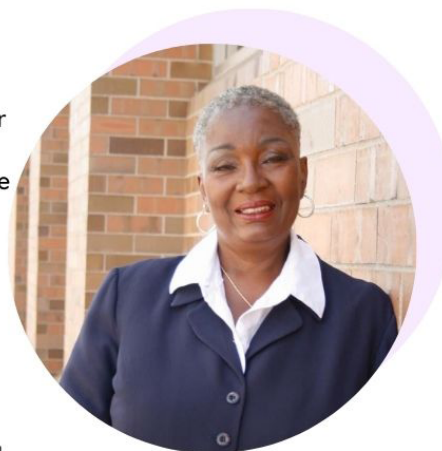
1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. 6:30 - 8 PM
1000 Tuscola St Saginaw, MI 48607

President's Corner

There are no specific signs or behaviors that can tell you a young person is using drugs. Uncharacteristic behavior such as mood swings, a drop in school performance, different friends, or a change in appearance may indicate other issues that are not drug related. There is no guarantee that your child will never use alcohol or other drugs, but there are ways to reduce the possibility they will experience harms from their use.

It may help to:

- Lead by example and display appropriate behavior yourself.
- Establish rules and agreements about what is acceptable behavior regarding alcohol and drugs.
- Develop a close and trusting relationship with your child at an early age, and support and encourage positive behavior.
- Encourage a healthy approach to life including good foods and exercise.
- Allow your child to practice responsibility and develop good decision-making skills from an early age.
- Have open and honest discussions about the risks associated with drug use.



Evelyn McGovern
Cofounder/President

Juneteenth
celebrate freedom

HAPPY
Pride
MONTH