

talk about it



Conversation Goals

To maintain open lines of communication at a time when acceptance by friends and peers is becoming important, and to strengthen your child's healthy coping strategies. Other goals include: explaining the difference between prescription and over-the-counter drugs, why some medicines are misused, and how drugs change the way you act, think, and feel. Now is the time to warn of the special dangers around prescription painkillers, and to express your disapproval of any drug and alcohol use, while setting and reinforcing consequences.

Conversation Starters



- Middle school can be difficult, and you may be offered drugs and alcohol. Even though we've already talked about why those things are unhealthy, I want you to know that you can always talk to me if you have any questions or if you're ever made to feel uncomfortable.
- Tell me about your friends and their families. What are they like?
- Have you heard of people misusing medicine? Why do they misuse it? What happened to them?
- How would you handle it if your friends wanted you to experiment with alcohol or drugs?
- In that [movie/show] we watched, what consequences did the person who used drugs/drank experience because of their decision? If you were that person's friend, what advice would you give them?

Talking Tips

- 1 Make your questions open-ended (e.g., What did you think of that movie? What do you usually do with your friends when you hang out?). These types of questions can help spark conversations, and can help you better engage with your teen.
- 2 Listen to what your teens are saying with an open mind.
- 3 Talk with your teen, not at them.
- 4 Collaboratively develop expectations and consistently reinforce them. It's important to communicate the consequences if he/she were to break one of your rules, and it's also important that these consequences are realistic.
- 5 Talk with them about the direct connection between opioids and heroin.
- 6 Encourage teens to take healthy risks (e.g., meeting new people, joining a new club).
- 7 Develop a "code word/phrase" for your child to use if they find themselves in an uncomfortable situation.