

PARENTS' GUIDE TO DRUG ABUSE TALKS



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The image shows a group of diverse young adults in a classroom setting, all giving thumbs up. The background is a bright, modern classroom with large windows. The text and logos are overlaid on the image.

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Foreword

As a parent, you want the best for your kids. That is the reason why when drugs are involved, you should be very careful in discussing everything about drugs, especially the risks associated with them.

No parent, family or child is immune to the effects of a drug. Several kids may end up in trouble even if they are the best and have made efforts to avoid drugs. In fact, even some who were provided with proper guidance from their parents end up abusing drugs for various reasons.

There are also particular groups of kids that may be more likely to use drugs compared to others. Kids who have friends who use drugs tend to try drugs too. So, it is important to know your kid's friends and parents as well.

Always be involved with your kids' lives. If the school of your child is running an anti-drug program, you should get involved. This will give you some knowledge, which you can use when talking to your children about the risks of drugs.

Parents are role models for children to the point that they greatly influence their child's behavior and other aspects of their lives. Find some time to talk to your children about drugs. In this book, you will learn the different ways you can explain everything about drugs and be connected with your children's lives.

Parents' Guide to Drug Abuse Talks

Chapter 1

Drug Basics

Synopsis

Drugs are chemicals, which can change the way bodies work. If you have ever been sick and took medicine, you already have an idea about the different types of drugs. Medicine is a drug that doctors provide to those who are sick. But, did you know that even medicines can be dangerous if they are not taken carefully. There are some kinds of drugs that are dangerous all the time. These are not given by physicians or doctors. Cigarettes and alcohol are included in these kinds of drugs. Even if people can purchase these legally at stores, they can be dangerous. Illegal drugs are harmful and these may include marijuana, LSD, heroin, ecstasy, and cocaine.

Different Kinds of Drugs

You have probably heard that drugs can be bad for you. But, why are they bad? And what does that mean? Below are the different kinds of drugs you should be aware as well as their effects and impacts to your life:

Medicine – The Legal Drugs

If you are sick and you take medicine to feel better, you already know about this kind of drugs. Medicines are considered to be legal drugs. Doctors can prescribe these medications and stores may also sell them and individuals are allowed to purchase them. However, it is not safe or legal for people to abuse medications or buy them illegally.

Alcohol and Cigarettes

Alcohol and cigarettes are other kinds of legal drugs. In most countries, people who are 18 years old and above can purchase cigarettes and those who are 21 years old and above can purchase alcohol. However, excessive drinking and smoking aren't healthy for adults and are prohibited to kids.

Illegal Drugs

When individuals talk about drug problems, they typically mean abusing illegal or legal drugs including ecstasy, cocaine, marijuana, crystal meth, heroin, and LSD. Generally, marijuana is a illegal. However, due to its health benefits, some states let doctors recommend it to adults for particular illnesses.

Illegal Drugs: Why Are They Dangerous?

Illegal drugs are not good for anyone. They are bad for teens and kids whose bodies are still growing. Illegal drugs can damage one's heart, brain, and other organs. For instance, cocaine can cause heart attacks even for a teen or a kid.

While using such drugs, individuals are also less able to perform well in school, sports, and several activities. It is frequently harder to think clearly and create wise decisions. People may do dangerous or dumb things, which could hurt themselves or others while using drugs.

Why Do Some People Use Illegal Drugs?

Sometimes, teens and kids try using drugs to fit in a group of peers. There are cases that they are bored or curious. Someone may also use illegal drugs for several other reasons, but in most cases, they take drugs to escape from reality. Drugs might make someone feel better and forget about their problems temporarily. However, this escape lasts only until the drugs wear off.

Drugs do not solve problems. Using drugs could cause other problems aside from the problems you have. Somebody who is using drugs might become addicted to them. This means that the body of the person may become so accustomed to having this drug that he or she can't do well without it.

Once you are addicted to a certain drug, it is tough to stop taking it. Stopping may cause withdrawal symptoms including sweating, tremors, and vomiting. Such sick feelings may continue until the body of the person adjusts to being free from the drug again.

How Would You Know If Someone Is Using Drugs?

If someone is using drugs you will notice changes in how that person acts or looks. Below are some of the signs, but it is also essential to remember that depression or another issue could cause such changes. People who use drugs might:

- ✓ Lose interest in going to school
- ✓ Hang out with kids who are also using drugs
- ✓ Become negative, worried, cranky or moody all the time
- ✓ Want to be alone all the time
- ✓ Can't concentrate
- ✓ Sleep all the time, especially during class
- ✓ Always get in fights
- ✓ Gain or lose weight
- ✓ Have a runny nose all the time
- ✓ Cough a lot
- ✓ Have puffy or red eyes

What You Can Do to Help?

If you think your kid is using drugs, the best thing you can do is have a talk about drugs. Drug talks are essential, especially if your kid is curious about drugs and wants to know if they are really risky or not.

When having a drug talk, you should understand drugs and why they are dangerous. Being familiar with some terms like the following can be helpful:

- **Addiction** – Someone is experiencing addiction if she or he becomes dependent on a drug all the time.
- **Depressant** – Depressants are drugs that slow a person down. Physicians prescribe depressants as a drug which helps people be less anxious, angry or tense. Depressants can also relax muscles and make someone feel less stressed out or sleepy. Several individuals can also use such drugs in an illegal manner to slow themselves down as well as help bring on sleep, especially after using different types of stimulants.
- **Stimulant** – Stimulants speed up the brain and body. Some of these are cocaine and methamphetamines. These are the opposite of depressants. Typically, stimulants can make someone feel energized and high. When effects of stimulants wear off, a person will feel sick or tired.
- **Narcotic** – Narcotics dull the senses of the body and relieve pain. These may cause someone to fall into a stupor, sleep, slip into coma, or have convulsions. Particular narcotics like codeine are legal if

provided by doctors for treating pain. Heroin is an illegal narcotic with much of the same characteristics but both can be addictive.

- **Hallucinogen** – A hallucinogen is a drug like LSD, which changes the mood of the person and makes her or him hear or see things that are not really there or think of some strange things.
- **High** – This is the feeling which drug users like to acquire when taking drugs. Some get spacey some very happy or may even believe they have special powers like the ability to see the future or fly.
- **Inhalant** – Like gasoline or glue, once sniffed could provide users an immediate rush. Inhalants generate a quick feeling of getting drunk, which can be followed by staggering, confusion, sleepiness, and dizziness.

Chapter 2

Pick the Right Time and Have the Right Attitude

Synopsis

Talking about drugs is a sensitive topic. That is the reason why you should pick the right time and have the right attitude when discussing it. But, when is the right time and how to know if you have the right attitude to discuss drugs?

Knowing the Right Time and Having the Right Attitude

Since talking about drugs is not the same as talking about activities at school, you should always know the right time and have the right attitude for you to successfully discuss this topic. There are several tips to know the right time and have the right attitude. Some of those are provided below:

- **Know Your Kid's Schedule**

Knowing your children's schedule is important if you want to pick the right time and have the right attitude. If your kids are busy with their school activities, don't interrupt them. The reason behind it is that they might not concentrate on what you are saying. If possible, know your kid's free time or you try informing them in advance that you want to talk about something important so they can allot time for you.

- **Bond with Your Children First**

Bonding with your children first can let you mold their mind and can allow you to pick the right time easily. Plus, you can quickly equip the right attitude as you are having fun. When discussing drugs, don't use a shocking introduction. Try to take it slowly but in a serious manner.

- **Make Sure to Discuss Drugs During Your Free Time**

Your free time is always the right time for you to discuss drugs with your child. Just make sure to focus on the discussion and turn off your devices so that if anyone calls you, you will not get distracted. However, even if it is your free time, make sure that it's the free time of your children too. By doing this, you and your children can focus and take the topic seriously.

- **Take Away Everything That May Disturb Your Discussion with Your Children**

Taking away everything that may disturb your discussion with your children will let them focus on what you say. If your kids are watching TV or playing games with their game consoles, you can tell them to turn it off first so you may have their full attention..

Considering the mentioned tips above will not just help you to achieve success, but also you can guarantee that your kids understood everything you discussed. So, always pick the right time and have the right attitude.

Chapter 3

Be Creative in Explaining The Risks

Synopsis

Some surveys show that there are kids who are not comfortable talking to their parents about what they feel and what they are going through. There are also those who aren't comfortable talking about how to stay free from drugs as well as excessive use of alcohol.

Tips for Talking about Drugs with Your Kids in a Creative Manner

- ***Give Information Appropriate for Their Age***

Simple details repeated on important information will get the message across regarding the dangers of alcohol and drugs. For instance, if your kid is eating fruits, you can talk with them regarding how fruits are good and healthy for their body.

When it comes to drugs, you may have to ask your child if they even know what they are. Tell them that they are addictive and can harm their bodies severely. If they ask some questions, don't hesitate to answer them.

The older your kids get, the more information they would seek. Make sure that you are updated with the drug names and how they could affect one's body so that you could give the right details. If you don't know all the answers it would be smart to do some research.

- ***Indicate Your Family Values***

Your children should know how you feel about using drugs and consuming alcohol. For instance, you could say that in your family, you don't agree with taking any kind of drug unless your doctor says so. Several individuals have made mistakes while using numerous drugs and some have even died.

- ***Tell Them about Your Beliefs***

Show your children that you always practice what you preach. Avoid drinking alcohol excessively if you want your kids to be responsible drinkers. If you are taking tons of vitamins, try doing it discreetly.

- ***Talk about Peer Pressure***

Your kids need to know how to determine good friends from bad ones. Good friends are always there to care and listen to them. People trying to pressure them into drinking, smoking or using drugs are not good friends. Encourage your children to engage in different healthy activities like sports to be fit, feel good, and be energetic.

There are other ways you can explain the risks of drugs. Depending on what you believe in, you can explain that sometimes adults enjoy a glass of alcohol. Tell them that when alcohol is consumed too often it becomes dangerous to their health.

You should pick the right time to talk about drugs to your kids. Children are exposed to various things like alcohol and drugs on a daily basis. Start encouraging them to take care of themselves as well as take pride in their healthy bodies.

If you don't know everything about drugs, don't panic, just conduct some research. There are lots of resources available out there. However, make sure that they are accurate and will help you guide your children. If you don't know where to get started, asking help from experts can offer you a big hand.

Chapter 4

Explain the Advantages of Being Drug and Alcohol Free

Synopsis

For many individuals, getting off drugs and alcohol isn't the hardest part of getting rid of addiction. Living drug and alcohol free is the most challenging part. There are tons of reasons for this. One of these is some feel pain when fleeing. This pain can be the cause of abandonment, child abuse, being a gay or lesbian or loss of a loved one. There are not easy problems, but this can much harder if combined with the problem of recovering from drugs and alcohol.

You must explain to your child that no matter how tempted they may be to use a drug, the advantages of not using will always outweigh the disadvantages of using a drug.

The Perks of Living a Drug-Free Life

Living a drug-free life can provide more freedom compared to the artificial feeling of freedom you can get from being high. Drug users may try escaping through addiction. Addiction doesn't provide a solution or healing powers and it surely will not provide the same benefits as a drug free life. Some examples of the advantages of a drug free life may include:

Family

One of the most essential aspects in living a drug-free life is the family aspect. Drug addiction or abuse can tear families apart. Drug use may cause mood swings, violence, cheating, financial troubles, or lying. There are few families that remain standing during drug addictions. As well, strong family ties will greatly reduce the chance of your child abusing drugs.

Stress Management

Even if people feel that drugs take away stress, addiction and abuse do exactly the opposite. Once someone has become dependent upon a drug, just the thought of not being able to use again can be stressful. Between trying to seek more drugs, hiding drug use from your loved ones and parents, financial stress can be overbearing. No matter where you live, being drug-free will be less stressful.

Career

Living a drug-free life will let you excel and do good in school. Some drug users find it hard to concentrate or care about their daily responsibilities. Drug users harm not only themselves but those around them as well.

Mental Stability

Tons of drugs can cause mental health problems and these may often lead to addiction in drugs. Once this starts, it will require professional help and hard work to stop. Living a drug-free life will provide you with a great amount of mental stability.

Wellbeing

Your overall wellbeing is at stake once you abuse any drug. This may include your friendships, values and priorities, physical health, or family. Living a drug-free life can benefit you in each aspect of your life.

There are other benefits you can acquire from being drug-free. If you don't want to ruin your life and every aspect of your life, then don't hesitate to get rid of drug your drug use. There are other things that you can do with your life. You don't need drugs to get rid of your issues or personal problems. Drugs are not solutions. These will just give you a relief for the meantime, but in the long run, they will start to ruin your life.

Life without Alcohol

For some, not consuming alcohol can be a difficult task. Though alcohol isn't really prohibited for people who are 21 years and above, it is always wise to drink in small amounts as addiction to alcohol can be dangerous and might ruin everything you have accomplished.

Not drinking alcohol will offer you a healthy body and a cheerful mind. Getting rid of this habit will assist you in maintaining a positive outlook, making useful decisions, and living a better life. Your work will improve. Your relationships and mind-set will improve including those with your

own family. Overall, not drinking alcohol will benefit you in various ways. Below are some of them:

Healthier Liver

One of the numerous functions of one's liver is to filter the body, it is also the major organ that alcohol affects. The majority of the alcohol that you consume is absorbed and metabolized into the body through liver. This body organ can only process a half ounce of alcohol each hour. If you have consumed more, the liver can't process this and complications can arise in your vital systems. Moreover, if this goes unchecked for a period of time, your liver can be damaged permanently. You will also suffer from other liver disorders that are caused by alcohol.

Getting rid of alcohol can offer you a healthier liver, which is a vital organ. Without a liver you cannot survive!

Sharper Brain

Brain cells can be affected by alcohol use. Using too much alcohol can result in lesions on one's brain. This can also damage their cognitive functions as well as their memory. Those who are addicted to alcohol can sometimes lose their ability to form long-term memory. Alcohol's inhibition-lowering effect has been linked to increased domestic violence, child abuse, and teenage pregnancies.

Sound Heart

Drinking in excess can damage the heart as well as other vital organs. In fact, drinking can even lead to heart attacks or death.

Improved Sex Life

Prolonged alcohol abuse may cause hormonal imbalance in the body. This could result in an estrogen's hypersecretion that can lead to impotence of men and sexual dysfunction. Not consuming alcohol can provide people with stable hormone levels.

Lesser Risk of Cancer

Hormonal imbalances that cause impotence in men may lead to breast cancer in women. Alcohol has also been linked with different illnesses of the pancreas like pancreatic cancer.

Safer Pregnancies

The placental barrier between the mother and her baby is permeable to alcohol. If alcohol is consumed by the pregnant woman, the fetus can be invariably affected. This can lead to miscarriage, severe congenital disorders or stillbirth in the baby. Putting down alcohol can put you at a lesser risk when you are pregnant.

Avoid Obesity

Alcohol may contain more sugar than fruits, yet no nutrients. This can lead to an unhealthy weight gain. Obesity increases the chances of having more serious problems like heart problems, diabetes, depression, and many others.

Better Sleep

Even though alcohol is a depressant and cause drowsiness, this disturbs sleep patterns particularly in your sleep's second half. So while you may

think that drinking to go to sleep is helping, it is actually making the problem worse

Improved Social Life

Alcohol addiction can also cause social and psychological problems. As mentioned earlier, alcohol can cause a hormonal imbalance in one's body, which can cause frequent insomnia, depression, dementia, and so on. Even though alcoholic beverages are also part of numerous cultures, alcohol's abusive overuse is often condemned through societal norms, which can lead to alcoholics becoming outcasts. If you do not consume alcohol, you will be able to get rid of the mental or psychological problems that are hindering you from living an more improved social life.

Being drug and alcohol free is a hard thing to do, but there is nothing you should worry about. As long as you talk with your children and take the time to explain addiction well your children should live happy drug-free lives.

Chapter 5

Make Sure You Are A Good Role Model

Synopsis

There is no such thing as being a perfect parent. Parents have the hardest jobs in the world. It's a special joy to raise kids, but it can be demanding, exhausting, and challenging. Plus, there is no days off. Each parent has bad days and good days. Yet, each day, you serve as a role model for your children.

Being a Good Role Model

You have to take note that your child learns from what you say and what you do. Your child also thinks the same way you do as well as copies your expressions. Before your kids go to school they have already learned a great deal of behaviors from you.

Is It Something You Should Worry about?

If you show restraint in terms of alcohol, gambling, and drugs, then there is a huge possibility that your kids will follow your example. If you're considerate to others and you control your temper, your child will likely copy your behavior.

Are Other People Role Models for Your Child?

Friends, uncles, aunts or grandparents that spend time with your kids are role models. A coach, teacher or neighbor may also be a role model. The more positive examples your child has the better.

Having an adult who cares can make a huge difference. Even when there is conflict or life is tough, if an individual supports and cares for a child, it can make a huge difference. If there's someone to stand by your kid no matter what, your kids will be able to get over the tough times.

Anyone may be a role model, yet the main caregivers or parents have the most influence on the child. Even if your child is now a teen and does not seem interested in you, she or he is watching you as the role model.

How Can You be a Good Role Model?

Consider how your behavior affects your children. It is not likely that you are always be cheerful and calm. Well, no one is. Children need to see parents express real feeling in a healthy manner. If your kid has witnessed you dealing with your anger appropriately, she or he will learn this from you. If he or she watches you celebrating special occasions without using alcohol, your kid will learn the same. If you are facing a hard time and you are trying to escape it with drugs, gambling, and alcohol, your kid will remember it. Therefore, as your kid grows up, she or he will learn by your example. Your kid will also follow your example when coping with lifes challenges.

What if You Make Mistakes That You Don't Want Your Kid to Copy?

If there are problems in your family, your child will be affected. In most cases, children believe that they are the cause of the problem or they did something wrong.

You can assist your children by talking with them. Even young kids can understand your sincere apology. It is possible to be honest with your kid. You can say sorry and explain mistakes and explain that you are doing your best to change. You should also tell your child that you love her or him and that the problems are not their fault.

How Can You Teach Your Child about Some Positive Role Models?

Talking to your child about the things that can happen to you when you are her or his age will help them to avoid drugs greatly. Tell your children about someone who made a huge difference in your life and tell them the reasons why it helped.

Understanding that different individuals behave in various ways will help your child. Your kid should start thinking about who would make a positive role model.

No one said that it is easy to be a role model. But, it is not impossible, do it for your kid!

Chapter 6

The Dangers in Not Having a Drug Talk

Synopsis

Some parents are too confident about their children's behaviors. They think that their children are wise and knowledgeable enough when it comes to drugs. But, did you know that even if your kid is the best in class, there's a possibility that he or she could abuse or become addicted to drugs? Well, it happens, especially when parents don't have a discussion about drugs with their kids. If you are a parent, you should have a serious discussion concerning drug use and the dangers that come with it. A few examples of the dangers follow below.

The Consequences of Not Having a Drug Talk

A talk about drugs is said to be one of the best ways for you, as a parent, to educate and guide your children away from drugs. Even if you have a busy schedule, don't take drugs for granted as you might end up facing a complicated situation that you might regret for the rest of your life. Though your schedule is hectic, you will always have your spare time. Instead of doing other activities at home, why not sit and talk to your children about their daily activities and let them know about the risks of taking drugs?

There are several dangers in not having a drug talk. One of them is that your kids might seek for answers with their friends who are already using drugs. In this scenario, your kids could also end up using drugs, which might ruin their future or worst – their lives. Since they don't have any clue about drugs and some of their friends said that they should try it once to know the effects, they might abuse the drug and get addicted to the substance.

Most children are curious about almost everything, even drugs. More often than not, there are instances that kids try using drugs to test if they are really bad and if they really can ruin their lives. If they don't see anything negative about drugs, they continue use until they end up abusing these drugs which will be dangerous in the long run.

There are other dangers of not having a drug talk. If you want your kids to stay on the right path, do not waste your time and immediately start talking with them about drugs because nothing is more important than your child's safety!