

## **PARENT EDUCATION DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION**

Drug and alcohol experimentation is a significant part of the adolescent sub-culture. 90% to 95% of teens will have experimented with substances before graduating from high school. 90% of teens begin experimentation with pot or alcohol. The younger the age of first experimentation, the higher the risk of serious addiction developing. As parents, we want to help our teen delay the age of first experimentation. Informed, caring parents who are willing to supervise their children and take a firm stand can stop early adolescent experimentation with drugs and alcohol.

### ***EARLY INTERVENTION IS CRUCIAL!***

#### **SIGNS OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR....**

- Dramatic personality change in your teen: hostility and fighting, secretiveness about friends, irritability, mood swings, withdrawal from family.
- Poor school performance, absenteeism.
- Change in eating and sleeping patterns: munchies (pot), sudden weight loss (speed).
- Change in peer group.
- Increase in late night phone calls.
- Valuables and liquor missing from the home
- Police problems: shoplifting, driving under the influence, possession, car wrecks.
- Teen defends drug use as okay.
- Drug paraphernalia found in teen's room.
- Drug symptoms: red eyes (pot), glassy eyes (coke), listless and tired (pot, barbiturates), hyperactive, sleepless (speed, coke).

#### **PREVENTION: WHAT PARENTS CAN DO....**

- Educate yourself about drugs.
- Talk to your child about drugs. Be *very clear* about "no use" so that when the issue comes up with peers, your child will have no doubts. Role play peer pressure situations with your teen.
- Supervise your teen. Take an active interest in his life and friends.
- Network with other parents. Know them and talk to them.
- Do not allow unsupervised parties. Check to see that adults are present.
- Set clear limits and curfews.
- Structure family time together. Turn off the T.V, and talk to your teen and listen to your teen.
- Model responsible behavior yourself, especially with alcohol.
- Get help at the first sign of trouble. Call a counselor who specializes in adolescent issues, your school, or local counseling center.

**REMEMBER - EARLY INTERVENTION IS CRUCIAL!**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Yes, Your Teen is Crazy*; Michael Bradley, EdD. Very wise on adolescent development and parent-teen communication.

*Get Out of my Life, but First Would you Take Me and Cheryl to the Mall?*

Anthony Wolf, PhD. Funny and wise on parent-teen communication.

*Choices and 'Consequences, What to Do When Your Teen Uses Drugs or Alcohol*; Dick Schaefer. Although written for parents of teens who are already engaged in serious substance abuse, this book is extremely helpful to parents of all teens.

*Surviving Your Adolescent*; Tomas Phelan, PhD. Very good on contracting with your teen.

*Parenting Teenagers by STEP*; Dinkmeyer and McKay *Journey of the Adopted Self*; Betty Lifton

*How to Talk so Kids Will Listen & Listen so Kids Will Talk*; Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish. Good tips on parent-child communication.

*Reviving Ophelia*; Mary Pipher, PhD. How to parent girls.

*Surviving an Eating Disorder, Strategies for Family and Friends*; Siegal, Brisner, Weinshel

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**PARENT EDUCATION  
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL  
CONTRACTING WITH YOUR TEEN**

Contracting is a way parents can deal directly with their teens around issues of drug and alcohol experimentation. Parents control the details and amenities of family life. This gives them leverage to make structured agreements with their child. In order to contract effectively without the help of a counselor, you need to have fairly good communication with your teen. Contracting at this level is only appropriate for teens who are experimenting or misusing drugs or alcohol.

**LEVEL I: "NO USE" CONTRACT** (appropriate for teens who are *experimenting* with drugs or alcohol):

Set rules with your teen:

- \*No drug/alcohol use.
- \*No illegal action related to alcohol or drug use.

Set consequences ahead of time for breaking the rules:

- \*Consequences should be in accordance with the law and school rules.
- \*Add your own consequences. Build in choices.

**LEVEL II: SIMPLE CONTRACT:** (appropriate for teens who are *misusing* drugs or alcohol, ie - regular use on weekends, increase in problems.)

I agree to the following:

- \*No drug or alcohol use.
- \*No verbal abuse or physical violence.
- \*Attending counseling or drug information groups.

Privileges:

- \*Use of the phone.
- \*Curfew will be \_\_\_\_\_ on weekends, \_\_\_\_\_ weekdays.

Consequences:

If *any* of the above rules are broken, then the following will happen:

- \*Evaluation by a CD counselor (outpatient or in-patient).
- \*Put on a stricter contract (Turf Contract).

*Please note: An adolescent who cannot keep a Level II contract needs professional assessment and help. Do not try to deal with the problem alone.*

## REMEMBER

“Your teen’s ability to abide by your agreements will tell you what level of usage he or she is at.”

“The teen’s responsibility is to *show you he isn’t dependent* on drugs or alcohol. The parent’s responsibility is to *set limits*.”

From: Choices & Consequences--What to Do When a Teen Uses Alcohol Drugs, by Dick Schaeffer.

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