

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Talk Today, Tomorrow and Always – Don't Ever Stop Talking.

Sitting down for the "big talk" about alcohol can be intimidating for both you and your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk, such as in the car, during dinner, or while watching TV together. Having lots of little talks takes the pressure off in trying to get all of the information out in one lengthy discussion, and your child will be less likely to tune you out.



Use real world examples that your kids would know about. Celebrities, sport figures and musicians are too often in the news for their substance use.

"Hey I heard about... What do you think about that?"



Be honest. If there is a history of alcoholism or drug abuse in your family, tell them about it. If you can, tell them all the details about who is struggling and how it impacts everyone in the family. If it is you, tell your kids your experience and treat it as you would any other disease.

"I worry because we aren't like everyone else, and you have a higher risk for developing a drug or alcohol problem."



Be real and let them know just how dangerous it really is.

"Did you know it only takes [this much] alcohol before you are too impaired to drive?"



Empower your child, ask them what they think and what they think you should know.

"What do you think is the biggest issue facing teens today? How do you face it?"



Know what you are talking about!

"I read that x in 10 kids your age are drinking. I know it might not be you, but it's probably happening with your friends and with people you know. Do you want to talk about it?"



Stay strong. Your kids may answer with a yes or no, may be defensive or angry. Don't stop the conversation. Take a breath and start again.

"Did my question upset you? Why, help me understand what you are feeling?"



Be aware of and sensitive to their transitions, such as starting middle school or high school, a break-up, the loss of a friend, or graduation.

"This is different time for you – are you scared, curious or concerned? I went through all this too. Let me tell you how it affected me"