

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR KID ABOUT ANYTHING (including alcohol and other drugs)

Substance use by teens and young people have immediate risks and can cause long-term problems. Better communication can help you help your kid.

To keep conversations going with your kids – about substance use (or anything else) use LOVE skills

- **LISTEN**
 - *Open-Ended Questions:* Ask questions that can't be answered "yes" or "no" or with just a few words
 - *Affirm:* Find something good in your child's words or deeds
 - *Reflect:* Repeat your child's words without inflection
 - *Summarize:* Identify the key points you and your child have discussed and transition to another topic, or an action that will be taken
- **OFFER:** Use the "information sandwich":
 - Ask permission to share an idea or recommendation
 - Share your idea or recommendation
 - Check back for understanding and agreement
- **VALIDATE:** Let your kid know you know that their feelings are real
- **EMPATHIZE:** Let your kid know you think their challenges or problems are hard Understanding your child's risk of developing a substance use problem can help you prevent or respond to early use.

- **A -- AGE OF FIRST USE:** The earlier substance use starts the more likely it is that a substance use problem will develop. The less and later a teen uses (or not at all), the better off they will be.

- **B -- BIG LIFE CHANGES:** Changing schools, relationships and situations and home can cause stress that can lead to teen substance use.

- **C -- CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:** Existing mental health issues can cause a teen or young adult to self-medicate, which can lead to a substance use problem.

- **D -- DNA (GENETICS):** Family history can increase the risk of developing a substance use problem. Let your teen know about challenges you or your family may have faced.

For additional information, visit: www.drugfree.org

For help and support, call the Partnership Helpline at: 855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373) or visit www.drugfree.org/helpline