NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Help for Parents

Unfortunately, no matter what you do to help your kids grow up alcohol and drug-free and avoid getting into trouble with alcohol or drugs, one day you may find that your son or daughter is in trouble.

Maybe you found alcohol or drugs in the car, in their bedroom or some evidence of drugs in their clothes when you are doing laundry. Maybe you got a phone call from another parent, from school or even from one of their friends. Maybe you haven't found anything but you have seen the changes – What To Look For - Signs and Symptoms. Or, maybe you overheard a conversation, saw an e-mail or text message.

No matter what the reason- **if you are concerned, don't ignore it! NOW is the time to take action!**

Get Help – Get Support – You Don't Need to Handle This on Your Own: As a parent, your ability to be helpful depends on how much you understand about alcohol (Learn About Alcohol) and drugs (Learn About Drugs), as well as how you have been affected by your child's alcohol and drug use.

In fact, **the most important thing you can do** to help your son or daughter is to commit to getting help and support for yourself! A family that is working together to find help will do better than one who points at the child and says – "they are the problem – they need help – not us - fix her."

You Are Not Alone and There is Support! To better understand how you have been affected, and find out if you need some help, answer these questions:

- Alcohol: Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking?
- Drugs: Do You Need Nar-Anon?

In addition, there are a range of community resources that can be helpful Find an Affiliate, but make sure that you find someone who has been specifically trained and is successfully experienced with alcohol and drug problems and young people.

Make a Commitment to Change: Feeling overwhelmed, confused, angry, scared and guilty are all perfectly normal. At the same time, it is a natural instinct to want to jump in and "fix it" **right now**. Although some situations may require immediate, urgent steps, it is important to understand that change can take a long time and involves hard work on the part of everyone in the family.

Don't Deny The Problem and Don't Make Excuses:

Most parents see "experimenting" with alcohol and drugs as risky but often see it as "just part of growing up." And some of the parents NCADD talks to say things like: "it's just marijuana," "at least it's only alcohol, and not drugs," or "it's just a phase--all kids go through it." Based on the science of what we have learned about alcohol and drug use by kids under age 21, especially about alcohol and marijuana, that's just not the reality. Making excuses for their alcohol and drug use including when they miss class or a family function or covering up for them actually "enables" your child to continue to drink and use drugs.

FACT: Alcohol and drug "experimentation" by teens is risky and can lead to serious trouble, including alcoholism and drug dependence.

Advice From Parents - For Other Parents:

After decades of working with parents of young people in trouble with alcohol and drugs, NCADD and our Affiliates have learned a great deal from parents……here are some examples of advice from parents for other parents:

- ***"I wish I would have called sooner."***
- ***"We should have called after his first arrest."***
- ***"Because of our family history with alcoholism and addiction, I should have known what to do."***

- ***"We let it go for too long, just hoping it would go away or get better."***

When Do You Take Action? Sooner Rather Than Later.

For additional information, Learn About Alcohol, Learn About Drugs or Get Help may be helpful.