



### What is the hardest part about being a parent?

*Knowing that...When they are offered alcohol, I probably won't be there. [It's hard] thinking if I did enough [for] when that day comes. The goal is that they won't be so startled that they'll have a plan. Practice is good.*

*Chandra is a real Cambridge parent who has joined our campaign.*

*She has two children who are 10 and 13*

### Just Start Talking

#### Have ongoing conversations.

Difficult topics (like alcohol and drugs) require ongoing conversations. Talking with your teen about drugs and alcohol requires parents to create a space where your child does the talking.

It's important to ask questions and show your teen that you're listening and you hear what they're saying.

#### Practice non- judgment and support

Start conversations by telling your child that you love him/her, and ask what he/she thinks about the topic if alcohol.

Use openers to start the conversation like news or events at school. Let them know that you won't get angry if they are honest and willing to learn.

Avoid jumping to conclusions and try to understand how your teen makes decisions. Ask them to walk you through a tough decision they have made or may make in the future.

### What to Say

#### Be clear

Tell your child that you do not want them to use alcohol or drugs. Discuss the risks of drug and alcohol use.

#### Admit to your mistakes.

Be honest and say, "This is about you and making sure that you are safe, regardless of the mistakes I may have made."

#### Discuss boundaries:

Ask your teen what they think good boundaries and rules are, and come to an agreement together. Some good discussion topics might be:

- ✓ Curfews
- ✓ Privacy and Mutual Respect
- ✓ Follow-through and Consequence

#### Show Support:

Show that you understand how difficult these situations are. Verbally recognize their maturity for being able to discuss these difficult subjects

### Alcohol Use: Expectations & Consequence

Take some time with your teen to discuss the rules, expectations, and consequences for alcohol use in your home.

Use the space below to write down three rules, and the consequences if those rules are broken. Sign the agreement together, and post it in a high traffic area in your home.

Rule 1:

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Consequence if broken:

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Rule 2:

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Consequence if broken:

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Rule 3:

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Consequence if broken:

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Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teen Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Limit Access

Check if alcohol and other prescription drugs are accessible at home. Monitor them, lock them up, or throw them out.

Talk to your relatives and peers about not supplying alcohol to anyone under 21.

Will there be parental supervision at parties? Find out, and make sure no alcohol will be available.

## Show Love & Build Confidence

Acknowledge good behavior, and make it specific.

When discussing a negative behavior, address the misbehavior, not your child. Remember, it's the behavior you're upset with, not your child.

Validate feelings and opinions. Repeating what your child says is a great way to show you're listening

## Demonstrate Positive Decision-Making

Involve your teen in the decision making process. Explain each step involved, and identify your feelings about the issue.

Support your teen by talking through their decision-making process.

## Create a 'safe word'

Designate a "safe word" or phrase your teen can use that let's you know they need your help in getting out of an uncomfortable situation.

## Practice

Walk through how to handle tough situations when he or she might be asked to use alcohol or drugs. Work together to come up with ideas about how to respond.

Watch a TV show with your teen. Use a topic that arises as a conversation starter.

*Did you hear about that story on the news? What do you think?*

*I've been wondering, what do your friends think about drugs and alcohol?*

*I found a bottle in your bag. I love you, and I want to talk about how it got there?*



**PARENT**  
**LIKE YOU MEAN IT.**