



## Parenting: The Drugs Question

it's all about relationships  
not facts, stats and scare tactics

Parenting is a lot like being on a road trip. It can be fun to experience new places with your growing child, but it can also be challenging. Parents often wonder about the best way to protect their children when it comes to issues like alcohol and other drugs. Here are ten important tips parents can use to help their children (and others) navigate life successfully, including avoiding harm from alcohol and other drugs.

- ✓ **Stay connected** – more than anything, your child needs you! Young people who know they're loved have a stronger sense of self-worth.
- ✓ **Have fun**, and focus on building a positive relationship.
- ✓ **Show your child you believe in them** by supporting their interests and encouraging them to pursue their passions.
- ✓ **Help your child solve their own issues** – it helps build their resilience.
- ✓ **Resist the urge to know everything** – they're growing up and need some 'space' to find their own meaning of things.
- ✓ **Share clear, consistent expectations** – the more you discuss these openly with your child, the more likely they will understand your intentions, and the more likely they will adopt them.
- ✓ **Recognize that we all make mistakes**, and use them as opportunities to learn together.
- ✓ **Expect to be challenged** – be respectful and prepared to negotiate but clearly communicate your position and your own values.
- ✓ **Be available** – by encouraging open and regular communication, you're showing your child their thoughts and concerns matter.
- ✓ **Be a positive role model** – part of being a parent is modelling healthy behaviours and attitudes.

### Helpful Resources

#### ALCOHOL SENSE

[www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/alcohol-sense](http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/alcohol-sense)

This resource, part of Healthy Families BC, provides parents and adult influencers with tips, tools and videos for starting conversations that will help guide kids towards healthy decisions when it comes to alcohol.

#### PARENTS (NCPIC)

[ncpic.org.au/parents/](http://ncpic.org.au/parents/)

This resource, developed by the Australian government, is similar to the previous resource but focuses on cannabis.

#### CANNABIS USE AND YOUTH: A PARENT'S GUIDE

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca/sites/default/files/cannabis-use-and-youth-a-parents-guide.pdf](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/sites/default/files/cannabis-use-and-youth-a-parents-guide.pdf)

This guide provides an honest and thoughtful discussion on cannabis so parents can make better decisions about cannabis use—or non-use—in the context of your family and be better equipped to have productive conversations with their children.

**THE FORCE SOCIETY "IN THE KNOW" WEBINAR SERIES**

*www.forcestheory.com/in-the-know*

There are numerous sessions that might be helpful including "Paying Attention: Relationship or Behaviour? – Talking to youth about substance use."

**THE ART OF MOTIVATION**

*www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/publications/helping-schools/aom/index.php*

This resource was designed to help school professionals and other adults engage in meaningful conversations with young people about their alcohol or other drug use. It applies the principles of motivational interviewing to support positive behaviour change.

**HERE TO HELP**

*www.heretohelp.bc.ca*

Resources to help people live well and prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems developed by the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information (a group of BC-based mental health and addictions non-profit agencies funded by the Provincial Health Services Authority).

**ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE**

*211 within Regional Districts of Squamish-Lillooet, the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver; 1-800-663-1441 elsewhere in BC*

Worried about drug and alcohol use? Whether it's for yourself or someone you care about, you can call this service for information, options and support. They can refer you to a full range of counselling and treatment services across BC. Services are confidential, multilingual, free, and available 24/7.

**HELPING SCHOOLS**

*(www.helpingschools.ca)*

Resources designed to help educators and other adults in the school community stimulate students to think differently about drugs and to explore the meaning of drugs in human experience. The Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research is happy to provide consultation and support to schools, districts, and parent organizations. Contact [cisurvan@uvic.ca](mailto:cisurvan@uvic.ca) for more information.