

Talking about substance use – tips and resources that can help¹.

Parents often wonder about the best way to protect their children when it comes to issues like alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and other drugs. Here are some tips and resources you might find helpful as you help your child(ren) navigate life successfully, including avoiding harm from alcohol and other drugs.

Stay connected – 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 confidence and 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

HEALTHY FAMILIES BC

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/substance-use/parenting-and-substance-use>

This site 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.

KELTY MENTAL HEALTH

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/substance-use-and-youth>

Includes helpful tips for understanding the topic, talking with youth, signs and symptoms of misuse and links to other helpful resources including [Substance Use: Talking Alcohol, Vaping & Other Drugs with Your Kids podcast](#)

CANNABIS USE AND YOUTH: A PARENT’S GUIDE

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/cannabis-use-and-youth-a-parents-guide>

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.

¹ Updated May 2023. This document has been adapted from [Parenting: The Drugs Question](#) produced by the Canadian Institute on Substance Use Research. Additional resources have been added based on consultation with other credible sources.

TALKING POT WITH YOUTH

<https://www.ccsa.ca/talking-pot-youth-cannabis-communication-guide-youth-allies>

This is a resource for parents produced with input from youth. It is a comprehensive guide that can help one better understand youth's perspective and provides answers to frequently asked questions about cannabis to support your conversation with a youth.

FAMILYSMART™ “IN THE KNOW” WEBINAR SERIES

<https://familysmart.ca/videos/>

There are numerous recorded sessions that might be helpful.

FOUNDRY

<https://foundrybc.ca/>

Offers young people ages 12-24 (and their parents/caregivers) health and wellness resources, services and supports – online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC

GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORTS

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>

Important resources for information, support and treatment services for substance use and mental health concerns.

QUIT NOW BC

<https://www.quitnow.ca/>

A go-to place for those looking to quit smoking or vaping.

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT VAPING

<https://tinyurl.com/y2llzn6m>

A tip sheet for parents from Health Canada.

VAPING HEALTH EDUCATION TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS

<https://bclung.ca/how-we-can-help/vaping/vaping-prevention-toolkit>

“TALKING TO YOUTH” A resource to assist in communication about drug use and related concerns.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose/talking-to-youth>

TALKING WITH YOUTH ABOUT OVERDOSE

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose/talking-to-youth>

Shares information, tips and related resources and videos specific to talking about overdose.

DISCOVERY YOUTH & FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES, ISLAND HEALTH

<https://tinyurl.com/yco99zvg>

If your teen develops a problematic relationship with substance use, you and your family may benefit from a consultation with a substance use counselling professional. Referrals are accepted from families, youth themselves, or any allied service and health care professional. Discovery offers counselling services for youth, families, and parents. Services are free and available to anyone in the community directly or indirectly negatively impacted by substance use.

SUBSTANCE USE AND YOUTH: A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND THEIR CARING COMMUNITIES

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/substance-use-and-young-people>

This guide offers supports to help parents, families, and adult members of a young person's community talk with young people about alcohol and other drugs as they navigate individual life circumstances.