







How to Talk to Your Kids about ANYTHING through L.O.V.E. (especially drugs and alcohol)

Substance use by teens and young people has immediate risks, which can easily cause long-term problems. Better communication will help you help your kid. To keep conversations ongoing and current with your kids regarding substance use or anything you deem of value, use L.O.V.E. skills.

L.O.V.E. Your Kids

-  **LISTEN.** **Then...** Repeat your child's words without inflection or judgment. Focus on something positive in your child's words or deeds. Identify the key points discussed and transition to another topic or action needed. Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered "yes," "no," or in just a few words.
-  **OFFER.** Use the "information sandwich"
 - ◆ Offer Information. Share your idea or recommendation.
 - ◆ Check for understanding and agreement of presented information.
 - ◆ Ask permission to reiterate idea; ask before offering more information.
-  **VALIDATE.** Let your kid know that his/her feelings are real and matter to you.
-  **EMPATHIZE.** Let your kid know you think his/her challenges or problems are difficult and real. Understand your child's risk of developing a SUD to prevent or respond to use early.

The A, B, C, & D of Developing Substance Use Disorder

- A: Age of First Use.** The earlier substance use starts the more likely it is that a substance use problem will develop. The later a teen uses (or does not use at all), the better off he/she will be.
- B: Big Life Changes.** Changing schools, relationships, situations, and home life 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 Help, Support, and Resources

Drug Free Workplace PA: www.dfwpa.org

Drug Enforcement Agency 360 Strategy: www.dea.gov/360-strategy

Partnership for Drug Free Kids: www.drugfree.org

The Center for Motivation & Change: www.motivationandchange.com