

Alcohol, Drugs and Sexual Assault



There are no shortage of news stories on the local and national level about teens victimizing others and being the victims of sexual assault due to underage drinking and substance abuse. No matter where you fall on the issues, one thing is for certain, we all want to see our children succeed in life and achieve their goals. Maintaining self-control amidst the pressure to use mind and behavior altering substances are crucial conversations for parents to have with their children.

Here are 5 things to think about when it comes to alcohol, drugs, sexual assault and your child...

1) Be educated!

You're not in this alone; there are many resources to help you talk to your children before they make risky, life-changing choices.

- www.teenesteem.org/educational-videos
- www.drugfree.org
- www.ncapda.org

2) Start talking to your child early about alcohol, drugs and respecting themselves and others

- The average age a girl has her first drink is 13 and for a boy it's age 11 (NIH)
- 47% of high school students have had sexual intercourse (CDC)
- 1 in 5 women has been sexually assaulted while in college (Justice Department)
- 35% of high school seniors reported they'd smoked weed at least once in the past year (NIH)
- Frequent binge drinkers (nearly 1 million high school students nationwide) are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including drug use, sex with multiple partners as well as earn Ds and Fs (NIH)

3) Get comfortable talking to your child about making good decisions

Use recent media events like the Stanford Brock Turner trial or New Hampshire prep school assault case to spark the conversation. Use open-ended questions to engage your child in a thoughtful discussion.

- What decisions could have been made differently to change what happened that night?
- How do you think this will affect his life? How about her life? How about their families' lives?
- How does knowing about these events affect your life?

4) Accept that it's not like when you were growing up

- Do a search on YouTube for "**Senior Trip 2016**" plus the name of a few local high schools
- A number of very dangerous, new synthetic drugs, drugs laced with other drugs, opiate painkillers and other substances have emerged recently as increasingly popular among partygoers

5) Remember if you see or hear something, say something

*What's worse than your child being angry at you is **any** child losing their innocence or their life due to their poor choices, or the poor choices of those around them.*