

Substance Misuse Prevention - Tips for Home

Steps Every Parent can take:

- Lock up medications in your home and properly dispose of unused/expired medications. 24/7 drop boxes are located at police stations in Auburn, Bedford, Goffstown, Hooksett and Manchester.
- Model healthy behavior. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. “What a crazy day, I need a glass of wine” Model positive coping mechanisms such as exercise, don’t use alcohol or drugs to cope. Replace with: “What a crazy day, I need to do some yoga, take a bath, talk to a friend...” ★
- Set clear boundaries and maintain consistent consequences (Youth with harsh rules or no rules are most likely to experiment with drugs or alcohol).★
- Talk about your values – even when it feels like they are not listening, most teens report the reason for not drinking is parental disapproval. ★
- If you are worried about your child reach out sooner rather than later – research shows that early intervention makes a big difference. Addiction is a progressive disease, so get help early.

Our kids are so young; do we really need to start now?

- Youth who begin using alcohol before the age of 15 are five times as likely to develop alcohol dependence later in life as those who begin use after age 21.
- Children who drink early/drink at home, drink the most. (CDC, ARDI 2009)
- Adolescence is an AT RISK period for addiction. A. Thomas McLellan of the Treatment Research Institute reports that 94% of all addictions initiate between the ages of 12 and 25.
- There are biological reasons for this. The human brain is not fully developed until the age of 25 and it is judgement that develops last. That’s the part of the brain that says “This is a bad idea” – which becomes further impaired by substance use. Times of transitions are also especially risky.
- Even at a very young age there are some indicators of potential issues down the road, these risk factors can help to identify young people who may need additional supports. Early interventions can make a big difference. Some of these indicators include early aggression, poor academics, social problems and lack of parental supervision.
- No one factor determines a person’s risk for alcohol or drug dependence, but if you know that addiction has impacted someone biologically related to you, then you know there is an increased risk in your family for addiction. About 50% of risk is genetic.

More Tips for Parents:

Research indicates that adolescents do best when they maintain strong connections to their families. Yet how do parents stay connected with teens who are often moody and sometimes defiant?

- Be available to your child or teen to talk, especially at times they are most likely to talk to you like at dinner time, in the car, or before bed.
- If your child asks to talk to you, stop what you are doing and listen to them. They may only share a part of what they are concerned about to test you, so take time to listen and encourage them to share more may help them open up.
- Let your child know that it’s ok to disagree, or talk about things that you disagree with; focus on your child’s feelings rather than your own.
- Children and teens are aware of concerns in the family so rather than shielding them from problems, provide them with age appropriate information. This actually helps in reducing anxiety and worry.



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Behavioral health is essential. **Prevention works.** Treatment is effective. **People recover.**

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What can I do to make difficult conversations easier?

- Talk about all sorts of topics, don't wait for something difficult to come up before you openly communicate. Use media and news to casually bring up tough topics.
- Be clear, direct and honest. Give them the facts and use the listed resources to do some research on how much is developmentally appropriate to share based on your child's age.
- Be an active listener
- Be open minded and non-judgmental
- Be curious, don't assume. Try to understand your child's point of view and be genuinely interested in what they have to say. "Tell me more." "That's interesting, how did that make you feel?"
- Stay calm and remember that every difficult situation or awkward conversation is not a crisis
- Don't be afraid to have a sense of humor
- Forget needing to know the right words or having all the answers "I am not sure about that but we can figure it out together."
- Don't be afraid to be embarrassed, it's normal
- Don't worry about not being cool or being out of touch
- Share your values
- Acknowledge feelings

Additional Resources:

The information on this handout was adapted from the following websites and you can learn more by visiting any of these trusted sites.

Drugfree.org ★ The blue stars above mark some of the parent tips offered through the Partnership for a Drug Free NH	www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm
Kidshealth.org	Drugabuse.gov
Drugfree.org	Checkthestatsnh.org

In your local community there are lots of people who want to help. Consider talking with your local school staff including guidance counselors, student assistance professionals, school resource officers, health teachers and school nurses. Your local police department also has many resources to help guide community members.

Regional and state resources are listed on the Makin' It Happen website www.makinithappen.org and a regional **resource guide** specifically for Substance Use Disorder can be found at www.communitycompassgmr.org. This guide lists all of our regional providers of Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery. It also includes a guide about insurance created by New Futures.



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