



MIDDLE SCHOOL

CROSSWAY STUDENT MINISTRY

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

CONVERSATION GUIDE

It's the conversation no parent wants to have, but we have to have it at some point—either before or after. Sure, the schools talk about it a lot. And there are occasional ads about it on TV and social media, but at some point, our kids need to hear their parents talk about drugs and alcohol. Maybe you're reluctant because of some of your past decisions. But don't let that stop you. A lot of times—in many areas—we parent based on the lessons we learned from our bad decisions, even more so than the good ones we made. Or maybe it all feels very foreign to you. It's never been an issue in your life. Addiction is too much a part of today's culture not to have a conversation about it—both to inform your kids about the dangers and to set clear expectations and boundaries.

WHAT TO SAY

STARTING THE CONVERSATION...

Set the tone of the conversation by being loving and supportive. Avoid lecturing and allow your kid to weigh in on their thoughts as much as possible. Ask or say things like:

- Why do you think people try drugs of any type? Why do you think people get addicted to something?
- Why do you think there are laws against underage drinking?
- If someone offered you drugs or alcohol and you didn't want it, what would you say?
- If you are ever in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, call me and I will come get you, no questions asked.
- This isn't a trap. I promise. You're not in trouble. I'm just wanting to get to know your world. Have you ever done drugs? If yes, how did it make you feel? If yes, why did you want to do it?
- Have you ever had alcohol before? If yes, how did it make you feel? If yes, why did you want to do it?
- Let's talk about our expectations for you regarding drugs and alcohol.
- Thank you for talking with me. It's too important not to talk about it.

- Let's talk about our expectations for you regarding drugs and alcohol.
- I love you too much and care too much about your future to allow you to experiment with drugs or alcohol.
- Thank you for talking with me. It's too important not to talk about it.

SUGGESTED EXPECTATIONS...

Be very clear with communicating the following expectations to your child:

- Never ride in a car with someone who has drugs on them.
- Never ride in a car with someone who has been drinking or doing drugs.
- There will be NO drugs in the house.
- You will not spend time with friends who use drugs or alcohol.
- Consuming of drugs is not acceptable.
- Consuming of alcohol is not acceptable.
- Consequences: loss of privileges. mandated therapy, etc.

IF YOUR CHILD IS ALREADY USING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL...

If you find out or your teen tells you they are doing drugs or using alcohol, stay calm. You don't want your teen to shut down. Your primary goal is to get to the root of the problem and help them find a solution.

- This doesn't change how I feel about you.
- I love you and accept you no matter what, but using drugs/alcohol is not ok.
- What made you choose to start drinking or doing drugs?
- Do you think there are any underlying issues that you're trying to deal with?
- Drugs/alcohol may feel good temporarily, but they won't solve any problems.
- Is there something at home that bothers you?
- How can our family help you?
- Do your friends know you're doing this?
- Can you be honest with me about how long you've been using?
- Realistically, we will need to talk about how you can earn back trust.
- Though it may feel like an intrusion, it will be important to know that you may be drug tested randomly. (You can purchase test kits at your local pharmacy.)
- Who else can we talk to about this? (Small group leader, mentor, coach)
- Let's talk about seeing a therapist or drug counselor.
- We need to set some boundaries together to help you make good decisions. Here's what that will look like for you. (Determine what that will be regarding cell phones, driving, friends, etc.)

For more information and other great parent resources, visit crosswaycc.org/family and ParentCue.org

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