

# EVERY CONVERSATION MATTERS

## Talking to your teen about drugs and alcohol



Talking about drugs and alcohol with your child can be hard, but it's one of the most important things you can do to keep them safe and healthy. Making conversations about substance use a normal part of family life is one practical and effective step you can take towards protecting your child and their future. To get the conversation started, we've provided a few scenarios and approaches below.

### **You're watching a movie with your teen that portrays drug use**

- 1 Find out what your teen knows about drugs, then share your stance on substance use. Start the conversation with open-ended questions like, "Do you think this movie makes drug use look acceptable?" or "Do you know of any kids in your school that use drugs?"

### **Your son or daughter is starting high school**

- 2 Remind your teen that they don't have to give in to peer pressure to drink or use drugs to fit in. You can say, "Many high schoolers don't use substances which makes it ok for you to choose not to drink or use drugs either."

### **Your teen is going to a party with friends**

- 3 Sit down with your teen to discuss the party. Communicate clear and specific rules for attending. Ask questions such as, "Where is the party located?" and "Will a parent or adult be present?"

### **Your child's friend is caught with marijuana**

- 4 Communicate the risks and consequences of using marijuana. Don't be afraid to ask your teen if they knew their friend was using marijuana and if they have tried it too. It's important to remain calm and be supportive.

### **A close family member seeks treatment for alcohol addiction**

- 5 Have a heart-to-heart with your teen about alcohol abuse. Share the facts about addiction and how it's a disease. Encourage your teen to ask questions and be ready to answer them truthfully.