

Strategies To Implement If You Suspect Drug Use

Though some hysteria is understandable, try and compose yourself and take some time before approaching your child about your issues. Be honest and tell them that you are scared and hurt for them because you love them. Though you may also be angry and irritated, these emotions are just side effects of your fears and love.

Experimentation does not automatically mean that your child is entrenched in drugs and that they are inevitably going to spiral deeper into more and more drugs. In fact, many children who experiment with drugs do not go on to develop addictions or dependencies. This is a moment for you to engage in open discussion and encouragement to help build their confidence and decision making skills.

What not to do:

When you suspect or find out that your children are involved in drugs it will be an extremely emotional moment. Without taking the time to calm down and think, it is all too easy to do and say things that will negatively impact your ability to speak openly and effectively to your child about your concerns. Here are some of the things that you should avoid in the heat of the moment.

- Lose your temper
- Confront them in a hysterical manner
- Threaten or make ultimatums
- Get violent/abusive (verbal or physical)
- Jump straight to punishment or the laying down of rules
- Ask why. This sounds like a question looking for blame
- Asking “why, how, when, what” doesn’t just look for blame but sounds like interrogation. You don’t want your child to feel like you are attacking them.
- Use ridicule or sarcasm. This will most likely result in resentment
- Try to make them feel guilty
- Make it about yourself, other family members or external people
- Diagnose your child. That is, tell them that their problem is...or you’re doing this because...it’s just another way for your children to feel misunderstood

You broke their trust:

As a parent, there are some things that you may do that your children will perceive as invading their privacy, breaking their trust and attacking them. This could include reading their diary, searching their bag or bedroom for drugs. Your children will be angry and will lash out at you and the best thing for you to do is to explain to them that you were worried and hurt and that there was behavior and signs that led you to make the choices that you made. If these types of controversial moves can be avoided by you it is best. Realistically though, these are the sort of measures parents feel the need to resort to. If this occurs, you need to be ready to explain yourself.

Help them to avoid drugs:

Even after having open, honest discussions with your children, sending them out to fend for themselves and leaving the ball in their court can still be a horrifying thought. There are some things you can do without suffocating or pushing your children way. Here is a very good example.

Bail them out:

Let your children know that if they are at a party or place where drugs are present and they are uncomfortable with the situation, they can call you or another adult to collect them without fear of repercussions.

- They could pretend they received a missed call from you and make you aware of the situation by just asking “why now?” Then you can give them an excuse to tell other people at the party.
- They could just call you privately away from other people then give an excuse for leaving, if they need to tell anyone at all.

Ask for help outside the family:

Discussion and communication can be extremely difficult and despite your best efforts, having the open relationship you would like with your child may prove too much. There are groups and services available to help people with children or anyone else who may have a problem with drugs. You have nothing to lose by giving them a call and making enquiries or having a talk.

<http://www.cedia.net.au/parenting>