

Parent Study Hall

Topic: Protective Factors

TODAY'S LESSON: PARENTS— YOU DO MATTER.

The issue of preventing teens from abusing drugs and alcohol can feel very overwhelming. However, parents are the most influential force in the lives of young people. There are definite steps that can be taken by parents and caregivers to decrease the likelihood of teen drug and alcohol abuse. One positive step is to strengthen the protective factors in the lives of teens.

What are Protective Factors?

Protective factors are conditions that help strengthen healthy decision making for teens and counter the risk factors that contribute to drug abuse. There are three basic categories of protective factors: individual characteristics, bonding and healthy beliefs and clear standards.

Get Your Teen Involved in the Community

Parents can control the positive bonding experience with teenagers. Bonding can make up for many disadvantages and counteract the presence of risk factors. When evaluating or trying to improve bonds with a teen there are three things to consider: opportunities, skills and recognition.

- 1. Opportunities:** Create opportunities for youth to contribute to the family and community. Find volunteer activities that correspond with a teens interest. This will increase the teens responsibility level and help them to feel that they play a significant role in their family and community.
- 2. Skills:** As teens become involved make sure that they have the skills necessary to succeed. If you are not familiar with the skills that are required for the activity, find someone to act as a mentor to prevent any feelings of failure or frustration among your teen.
- 3. Recognition:** Make sure to recognize teen efforts. Let them know that you are proud of them and that you value their contribution. This will not only build self esteem, but will also strengthen the bond between you and the teen and facilitate real conversations which are very important in preventing substance abuse.

Create a Roadmap for Behavior

1. Make it a point to set clear standards and expectations of teenagers.
2. Establish specific consequences for bad decision making.
3. Be consistent. With consistent support and consequences for undesirable behavior, young people are more likely to follow the standards that have been set.

COMMON RISK FACTORS

- Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms and crime.
- Extreme economic deprivation
- Family history of problem behavior
- Academic failure
- Friends who engage in problem behavior.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Teens with strong family ties are less likely to try alcohol, marijuana and tobacco.**
- **Teens with strong family ties are five times less likely to have friends who use drugs.**

Help is Available: Online Resources

- www.drugfree.org
- www.timetotalk.org
- www.theantidrug.org
- <http://pact360.org>

Need more information? Contact:
Bluegrass Prevention Center
859-225-3296