



Who Can Help My Teen?

Kids — especially teenagers — often think of their parents as "overbearing" or "nagging." If your child hears the same information you're trying to give him from someone of authority, he may be more inclined to listen.

Counselor

Many kids who use drugs have other problems in their lives. Some are stressed about school. Some feel very alone or have been deeply affected by family issues, such as divorce. And more than half of adolescent drug abusers also suffer from a (usually undiagnosed) psychological disorder, like depression or bi-polar disorder. A school counselor, drug counselor, or therapist can help your child pinpoint and discuss the underlying issues behind his/her drug or alcohol use.

Sports Coach

Your kid's coach is much more than just someone who runs practices and calls plays. He/she is the person who will be first to notice changes in your child's athletic abilities, appearance, motivation, and behavior if your kid continues using drugs. You can enlist a coach's help in monitoring your child, or you can ask the coach to speak to your child about how his drug use negatively affects his body, his performance, and his team as a whole.

Member of the Clergy

Because many drug users rely on clergy for assistance during recovery, many clergy members are now being professionally trained to help those battling addiction. If your family has been at the same place of worship for a long time, your child may feel comfortable opening up about his problems to someone he knows very well and who he is sure won't judge him.

Caring Adult

Many adolescent substance abusers say they drank or used drugs during hard times because they had no one else to go to. Your child may be in serious need of someone to talk to in order to alleviate her stress in a healthier way. A teacher, family friend, aunt or uncle, or other adult that your teen trusts may be able to lend the listening ear and shoulder to cry on that your child is seeking.

Pediatrician /Family Doctor

Ask your child's doctor to give him a talk about alcohol and drugs and their lasting effects on the body (be sure to mention this when you schedule the appointment so the doctor is prepared.). Remember: for confidentiality reasons, a doctor can't tell you what your child disclosed, but he/she can persuade your kid to quit using casually or to get help if the problem is more serious.

Treatment Center

If your child's alcohol and/or drug use has started causing serious and recurring problems, it's time to start looking into intensive treatment programs. Both in- and outpatient programs provide the stability, education, discipline, and counseling adolescents need to get better. Locate a treatment facility near you [using the treatment finder on this page].

Getting Help for You and Your Spouse/Partner

In order to help your child tackle her drug problem, you (and your partner) must be healthy and in a clear state of mind. However, many parents lose the ability to think and act rationally when they have a child in danger. Some parents become so obsessed with their child and her problem that they neglect the other important aspects of their own lives: their jobs, physical health, and other kids. It is therefore as vital that you seek help for your own emotional well-being as it is for your drug-using child.

- Support Groups such as Al-Anon
- Therapist
- Treatment Centers offer support to families