

CONVERSTATION STARTERS

You can be the difference.

Talk Today, Tomorrow and Always – Don't Ever Stop Talking.

Sitting down to talk about alcohol, drugs, and gambling can be scary. Try using everyday opportunities to talk, such as in the car, during a meal, or while watching TV together. Having lots of little talks takes the pressure off one lengthy discussion.



Use real world examples that kids understand. Celebrities, sport figures and musicians are often in the news for their substance use.

“Hey I heard about... What do you think about that?”



Make it personal. If there is a history of addiction, or gambling problem in your family, tell them about it.

“I worry because you have a higher risk for developing a drug, alcohol, or gambling problem.”



Show them that most teens are not drinking, using drugs, nor gambling.

In their eyes, everyone is doing it no matter what an adult says.

“Even though it may seem like all your friends are drinking or using drugs, you don't have to follow what they are doing.”

“Even though it might seem like most teens are drinking or using drugs, the fact is, it's not the majority.”



Be real and give them the facts.

“Did you know that every day, 29 people in the U.S. die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver?”

“About 10-14% of youths are at risk of developing a gambling addiction, which means that they already show signs of losing control over their gambling behavior.”



Empower your child, ask them what they think and what they think you should know.

“What is the biggest issue you're facing? Let's talk about ways you may want to handle it.”



Stay strong. Your kids may give one word answers, may be defensive, or may be angry. When needed, take a break and talk later. But don't stop the conversation.

“Did my question upset you? Why? Help me understand what you are feeling.”



Be aware of and sensitive to their life transitions, such as starting middle school or high school, a break-up, the loss of a friend, or graduation.

“This is a different time for you – are you scared, curious or concerned? I went through all this, too. Let me tell you how it affected me.”