

How to Talk to Your Kids about ANYTHING through L.O.V.E. (especially drugs and alcohol)

Substance use by teens and young people has immediate risks, which can easily cause long-term problems. Better communication will help you help your kid. To keep conversations ongoing and current with your kids regarding substance use or anything you deem of value, use LOVE skills.

L.O.V.E. Your Kids

- ♥ **LISTEN; then. . .** Repeat your child's words without inflection or judgment
Focus on something positive in your child's words or deeds
Identify the key points discussed and transition to another topic or action needed
Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered "yes," "no," or in just a few words
- ♥ **OFFER.** Use the "information sandwich"
Share your idea or recommendation
Check back for understanding and agreement
Ask permission to share an idea or recommendation
- ♥ **VALIDATE.** Let your kid know that his/her feelings are real and matter to you
- ♥ **EMPATHIZE.** Let your kid know you think his/her challenges or problems are difficult and real
Understand your child's risk of developing a SUD to prevent or respond to use early

The A, B, C, & D of Developing Substance Use Disorder

- A: Age of First Use.** The earlier substance use starts the more likely it is that a substance use problem will develop. The less and later a teen uses (or does not use at all), the better off he/she will be.
- B: Big Life Changes.** Changing schools, relationships, situations, and home life can cause stress that can lead to teen substance use.
- C: Co-occurring Mental Health Issues.** Existing mental health issues can cause a teen or young adult to self-medicate, which can lead to a substance use problem.
- D: DNA (Genetics).** Family history can increase the risk of developing a substance use problem. Let your teen know about challenges you or your family may have faced.

For Additional Help, Support, and Resources

Drug Free Workplace PA: <https://www.drugfreeworkplacepa.org>

Drug Enforcement Agency 360 Strategy: <https://www.dea.gov/prevention/360-strategy/360-strategy.shtml>

Partnership for Drug Free Kids: <https://www.drugfree.org>

The Center for Motivation & Change: <https://motivationandchange.com/>