

**STAYING
CONNECTED:**
*Preventing
Substance
Misuse*



Public Health Nurse

We All Have a Role to Play!



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Outline

- What Works?
- Understanding Adolescence
- Effective Prevention Strategies



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What works!

- Positive relationships with caring adults (family or not)
- Parental monitoring
- Supervised activities
- Positive peer relationships
- Sense of belonging
- Problem-solving skills



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Understand Adolescence

Time of major changes:

- Puberty
- More intense emotions
- Developing more mature reasoning & thinking
- Expanding peer groups
- Dating & sexual feelings
- Coping with multiple changes/stress
- Becoming more independent



Understand Adolescence

- Brain still developing and maturing until about age 30
- More susceptible to risk-taking
- At greater risk from harmful effects of alcohol & other drugs



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Prevention Strategies

1. Be a Positive Role Model
2. Communicate Openly & Effectively
3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations
4. Be in the Know
5. Be Engaged



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1. Be a Positive Role Model

Most 10-18 yr. olds said parents were their leading influence in decisions about alcohol & other drugs

“Be the kind of adult you want your kids to become”



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1. Be a Positive Role Model

Really think about what you do and say

“What a day! I need a drink”



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2. Communicate Openly & Effectively

- Regular conversations allow sharing of interests and concerns
- General communication associated with delayed alcohol & other drug use
- Also lowers other risk taking behaviours



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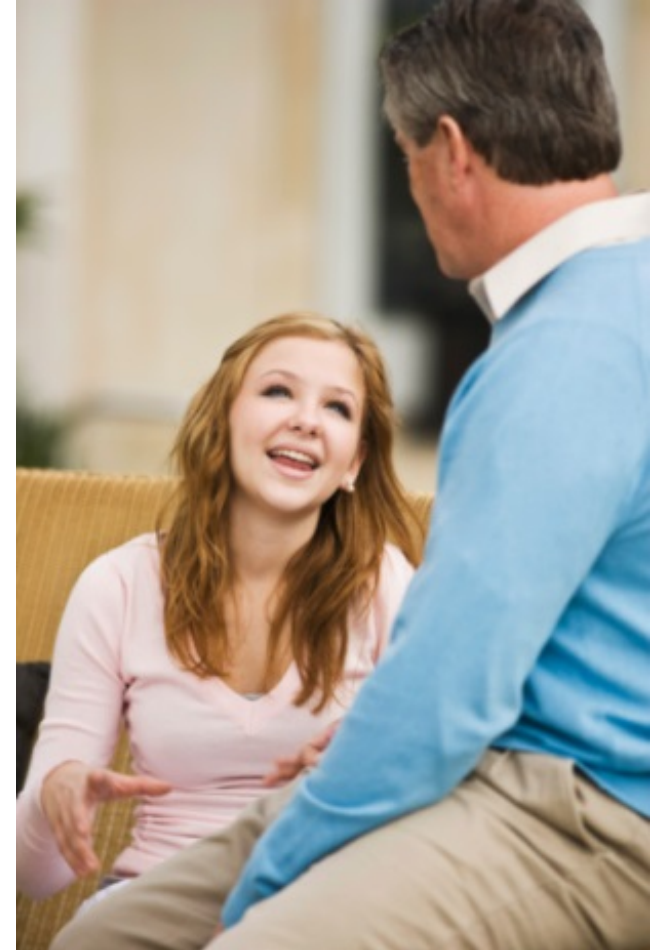
2. Communicate Openly & Effectively

- Make a connection before giving instructions
- When apart talk about when you will reconnect
- Invite one on one time
- Be a safe sounding board
 - Be understanding even if don't agree
 - Take emotion or reaction out of the conversation



2. Communicate Openly & Effectively

- **Timing is everything**
 - Talk when relaxed/not busy
 - Look for cues they want to talk
- **Be curious:**
 - Ask what they think
 - If they want advice
 - About their interests and passions



3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations

Creates an environment where boundaries are respected

Youth who are aware that their parents would be upset with them if they drank or did other drugs, are less likely to do so



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3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations

- Involve them in making decisions
- Encourage independence
- Set realistic limits
- Be clear about your “non-negotiables”



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3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations

- Expectations should be:
 - Based on age
 - Seriousness of the situation
 - Personality
 - Clear, simple and specific



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3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations

- Praise when they do well and problem solve on their own
- Be consistent and follow through
- Revisit expectations
- Negotiate changes regularly



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3. Set Clear & Realistic Expectations

Remember mistakes happen and our best learning comes from our mistakes



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4. Be in the Know

- Monitoring your teen's activities means knowing who they are with, what they are doing, and where they are.

If youth are going to use alcohol & other drugs, they tend to do it when adults are not around



4. Be in the Know

- Get to know your teen's friends and parents
- Be aware of:
 - What's happening in your child's world (e.g., friends, school, sports, community)
 - Current and local events (e.g., fentanyl)
 - Drugs that may be easily accessible (alcohol, tobacco, prescription and other drugs)
 - Facts & myths related to alcohol & other drugs- Scare tactics don't work!



4. Be in the Know

- Help to plan ahead and agree on a safety plan
 - Coach them in problem solving skills. Practice at home, at school and in the community
 - Practice role playing situations
 - Pose “what if” questions and consider different choices. A just say “no” approach doesn’t work



“What if...”

- Does a parent or trusted adult know where you are?
- Do you have emergency numbers saved in your phone? Is your phone charged? Is there cell service?
- Do you know the address of where you are?
- How will you respond if put in an uncomfortable position?



“What if...”

- How will you get home safely? What is your plan A & plan B (e.g., contact with parent or trusted adult, cash for a taxi)?



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“What if...”

- What would you do if a situation got out of hand?
- Will you be embarrassed tomorrow by what you do today



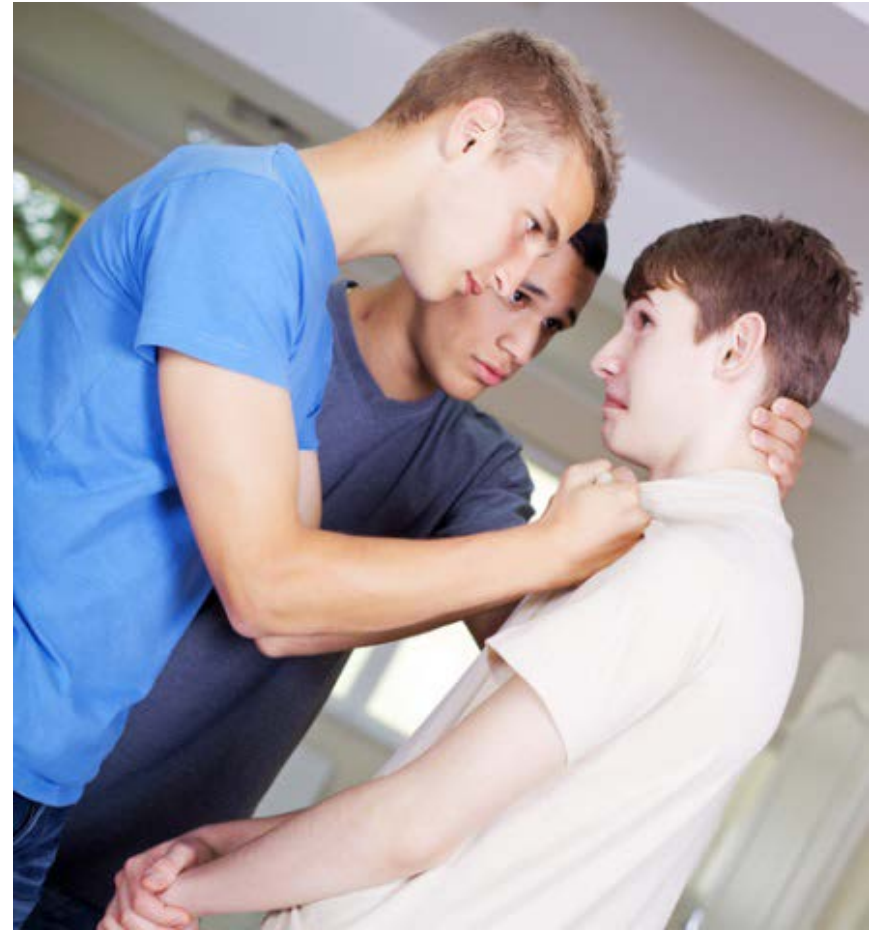
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“What if...”

- How will you deal with potentially violent situations (e.g., walk away, pace yourself so you don't lose control)?



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“What if...”

- Do you know the signs and symptoms of an overdose or alcohol poisoning?
- How do you look after a friend that is drunk and/or high?
- What do you do when something goes wrong (call 911, recovery position, CPR, naloxone)?

Don't be afraid to call 911!



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5. Be Engaged

- A supportive parent–teen relationship, characterized by closeness and caring, can help delay when youth first try alcohol and other drugs and lowers their chances of developing a habit later in life



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5. Be Engaged

- Help them to find their “spark” in life
- Be involved in their day-to-day life, keep conversations flowing
- Praise them and remind them you love them on a regular basis
- Show you care
- Help build your teen’s confidence!



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Youth who face each day with confidence and a positive attitude are more likely to make healthy choices!



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Questions?



Thank you for your time and attention!



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Health Unit Contact Information

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