

Talking to Your Daughter: The Anti-Drug

Your role as a parent in influencing your daughter has never been more important. By being involved in your daughter's life - and educating her about the dangers of drugs and alcohol - you give her the tools necessary to grow up confident in herself and her abilities.

A recent survey on drug abuse found that 16% of girls ages 12-17 use drugs - the same rate as boys. In addition, girls often experience a decline in self-esteem during their early teenage years. This decline in self-esteem may make some teen girls even more prone to peer pressure and subsequent drug abuse.

As for the consequences for girls, drug abuse leads to an increased risk of sexual assault, unwanted pregnancies, and domestic violence.

As a parent, you can make a difference!

Below are ten helpful tips to get you started:

1. Listen to your daughter. Focus on what is really important – what she thinks, believes, feels, dreams and does. You have a profound influence on how she views herself.
2. Begin and sustain an ongoing dialogue about alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Make it clear that in your family, it is not acceptable to use drugs – ever.
3. Establish a "together time" – a regular weekly routine for doing something special with your child.
4. Tell her that you love her for who she is. Explain to her that there are many beautiful, healthy body types. Urge her to love herself just the way she is. Dieting may increase the risk of eating disorders and other health problems, such as drug abuse.
5. Help her to be physically active. Studies show that a young person involved in sports is 40 percent less likely to get involved with drugs than an uninvolved peer.
6. Get involved in your daughter's school and after school activities. Volunteer, coach, direct a play or teach a class.
7. Set a curfew – and enforce it strictly. But be ready to negotiate on special occasions.
8. Make it easy to leave a party where drugs are being used. Discuss in advance how you will come to pick up your daughter if she feels uncomfortable.
9. Take your daughter to work with you. Participate in every April's official Take Our Daughters to Work Day and make sure your business participates.
10. Talk to other parents. When you share your commitment to make the world respect and nurture our daughters, you'll be amazed at how many other parents agree.

This article is brought to you by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.

Resources For Parents

Dads & Daughters: www.dadsanddaughters.org/

Girl Power! 4 Adults: www.health.org/gpower/AdultsWhoCare2

Boys and Girls Clubs: www.boysandgirlsclubs.org/

Resources For Girls

Freevibe: www.freevibe.com

Girl Scouts: www.girlscouts.org/

BeautyQ's Serious Stuff: www.beautyq.com/adserious_subabuse.html