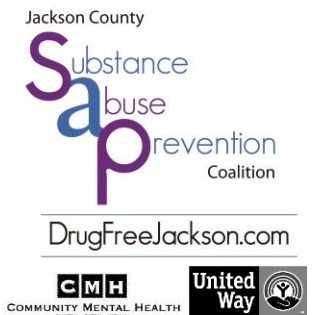


PRESS RELEASE

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PARENTS - TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (March 12, 2015) – March is Parenting Awareness Month in Michigan. Talking to your kids about drugs and alcohol can be a hard subject to approach, but if parents don't talk to them they will find other avenues to get information. Provide your kids with a strong foundation and make sure they are well informed about the facts of substance use. It doesn't have to be a difficult conversation. Listed below are some useful ways to talk with and educate your kids about drugs and alcohol.

- 1.) **Use and find blocks of time** such as after dinner, before school, while driving, or other times when you have their attention to discuss how harmful drugs are.
- 2.) **Take advantage of the everyday “teachable moments.”** Daily events where you can point out things that you want them know about.
- 3.) **Point out alcohol, tobacco, and drug-related situations** happening in your community.
- 4.) **Use News or Social Media highlights** as conversation starters. Media is filled with stories that detail the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse.
- 5.) **Watch TV programs with your kids.** Use this opportunity to discuss their thoughts of the program. Do advertisements make drug use acceptable and routine? Do they show its downside? How did the program make your child feel about drugs? Notice the Anti-Drug advertising.
- 6.) **When watching or hearing about outside events,** ask your child open-ended questions such as; What are your thoughts and how did it make you feel? This helps take some pressure off of them and provides an opportunity to share your own values and ideas.
- 7.) **Share stories of people in recovery and about those lost to substances.** Ask your kids how they feel or what their thoughts are about the stories.
- 8.) **View the partnership for Drug-Free Kid's Drug Guide** to learn about the current trending drugs. Ask your kids, what they heard about these types of drugs? Do they know anyone that uses them? Has he/she been offered to use drugs, smoke, or drink? If so, how did they handle it?

Remember: Being an active listener when talking to your children at any age will be a great benefit to both you and them. Active listening requires the parent to stop talking and just listen to your child. Get a real sense of their feelings and where they are coming from on these very difficult topics. Summarize what you heard and share your thoughts in a non-threatening way. They will be more open without being ridiculed.

For more information about:

- Talking to your kids, please visit www.drugfree.org or visit www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting, a great site for the series on “Talking to your kids about Drugs and Alcohol”.
- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Ravenn Moore at (517) 796-5133 or via email at rmoore@uwjackson.org
- **Additional information, your agencies contact information**

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