



A Dangerous Progression

Becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol is not something that happens overnight. There is typically a progression of milestones that occur between the ages of 12 through 21. Research has shown that the younger someone begins their substance use, the greater their chances will be of becoming dependent later in life.¹ Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana, continue to be the most widely used substances by adolescents.² Teens will typically begin their use with cigarettes, alcohol and then progress toward marijuana.³

The good news is that the overwhelming majority of people do not become addicted. In 2015, 92% of the US population were not substance dependent. There is that 8% of people that will become addicted, however.⁴

two. People will often say that marijuana is not a gateway drug. The reality is that it isn't for a lot of adolescents. It does seem that it is a gateway drug for that smaller percentage that develop a drug use disorder, however. Also, let's not forget about alcohol. Approximately 5,000 people under the age of 21 die from alcohol related deaths each year. This is six times the amount of deaths caused by all other drugs combined.⁵

It is vital that youth and parents alike get properly educated. This is a conversation that needs to be had in an age appropriate fashion, at multiple milestones throughout a young person's development. Don't be afraid to broach this subject with your child. If you do not educate them properly about this topic, they will most likely learn about it from their friends, or from what they see online.

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Ongoing use of substances through adolescence can lead to addiction.⁵ This is especially true with prescription drugs. Youth will often begin taking opioid pain killers. Due to the high cost and difficulties with accessibility associated with prescription drugs, some people will progress to using heroin as it is cheaper.⁶ The current opioid epidemic that is taking place across the country has shown that no one is immune from developing an addiction to prescription pain killers and/or heroin.

According to a 2014 National Survey, 92% of heroin addicts reported beginning their use with marijuana.⁷ While this does not mean that marijuana inevitably leads to heroin addiction, it does suggest a strong correlation between the

If you have a child that is struggling with a substance use problem, visit this link for support:

drugfree.org/landing-page/get-help-support

Heroin use is part of a larger substance abuse problem.

Nearly all people who used heroin also used at least 1 other drug.

Most used at least
3 other drugs.

Heroin is a highly addictive opioid drug with a high risk of overdose and death for users.

People who are addicted to...



...more likely to be addicted to heroin.

SOURCE: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2011-2013.

Preventing Drug Use: How to Talk With Your Teen

Honest and open **communication** is one of the best ways to **improve relationships** and **resolve conflicts**.

Below is a basic framework, for how to **engage your teen** in an **open discussion** about the **topic of substance abuse**. This model can be applied to other **negative behaviors** as well.



Understand your influence as a Parent...Remember, you are the parent. Although they frequently don't act like it, youth sub-consciously desire parental authority and structure in their lives.

Be Empathetic....Visualize being in your child's shoes prior to meeting with them. This will help you gain insight into the best way to approach them.

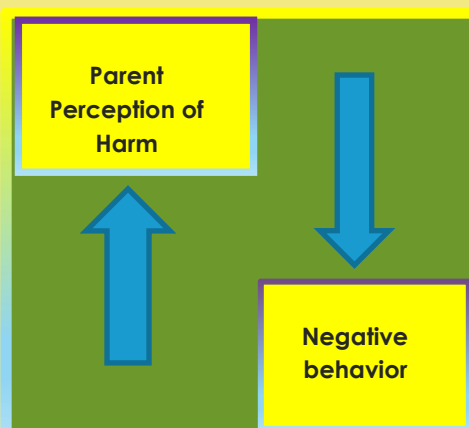
Choose a Good Time and Place...Mentally prepare your child by letting them know you have to talk about something serious with them and then work together to identify the best time and place for the meeting.

Start the conversation...Let your child know what they are doing right up front and that you are proud of them for the good decisions they have already been making.

Active Listening--Use 'I' Statements...As the conversation unfolds, stay focused and be sure to use 'I' statements. Also, don't personalize if your child starts to become defiant or disrespectful. Modeling calmness will help to keep the conversation on track.

Set Clear Rules...Conclude the conversation by summarizing what was discussed. Then clearly set the boundaries you feel need to be put in place, based on the issue at hand.

Maintain your boundary...'Sticking to your guns' is imperative after this process. If you do not hold your child accountable to the rules that were established, you will continue to have trouble with them.



Visit this website for more advice on how to effectively talk to your teen about this important issue. www.drugfree.org

Did you know.....

...the **more harmful** you perceive a **behavior** to be, **the less likely** it will be that your child will engage in it. **Send a clear message** that you **expect your child to be drug free**.



Community involvement is the foundation of **Drug-Free Coalitions** (DFCs). Without community buy-in, little to no progress can be made. It is for this reason that DFCs are required to have a representative from all twelve primary sectors of the community.

See below for a listing of these sectors.



Our Community Partners

- City of Bristol
- Bristol Police Department
- Bristol Youth Services
- Bristol Public Schools
- Bristol Boys and Girls Club
- Bridge Community Church
- Main Street Foundation
- St. Andrews Lutheran Church.
- Thomaston Savings Bank
- United Way of Central CT
- Wheeler Clinic

Whether you're an enthusiastic high school student, a concerned parent, or a local **businessman** dedicated to the **Bristol community**, your participation on the **coalition** can **make a significant difference in our work.**



If you are interested in getting involved with the coalition please feel free to contact us at (860) 314-4690 or Email: jessemancinone@bristolct.gov
Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @Best4bristol

References

- 1 https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Website_TEDS_SRI42_Ageatnrl_07-10-14/TEDS-SRI42-Ageatnrl-2014.pdf
- 2 <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/frequently-asked-questions/what-drugs-are-most-frequently-used-by-adolescents>
- 3 <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/introduction>
- 4 <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FRR1-2015/NSDUH-FRR1-2015-NSDUH-FRR1-2015.pdf>
- 5 <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>
- 6 <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/heroin/how-heroin-linked-to-prescription-drug-abuse>
- 7 <https://leamaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/27Sep2017-opioids-one-pager.pdf>
- 8 <https://www.samhsa.gov/2k16/2k16-annual-report>
- 9 <http://www.performwell.org/index.php/identity-outcomes/10-indicators/152-parental-attitudes-toward-substance-abuse>