

“What could happen?”

Talking about consequences

Alcohol and drug use can cause serious harm, especially to a developing brain. While gambling is not a substance, it also can have devastating health effects, such as insomnia, high blood pressure, stress related conditions, depression, suicide, and addiction.

You can help youth make healthy life decisions. Here's how.

Parenting Rules to Live By

When caring adults monitor, supervise and set boundaries, youth are at a lowered risk for using alcohol, drugs or gambling. Make it clear that you do not want the youth drinking alcohol, using drugs, or gambling, and that you trust that they won't. Set firm, but responsible rules such as a curfew, expecting to be notified when plans change. Knowing where the youth is at all times is important.

Be Calm & Solution-Focused

It is easy to react out of fear, frustration, and anger, but you can do harm this way. Keep the communication lines open. Every so often, discuss your rules and expectations. Acknowledge peer pressure and take it to the next step by doing some problem-solving with your child. For example, “What are you going to do if you are out with your friends and someone offers you alcohol and/or other drugs?”

Communicating Consequences

Tell youth (more than once) the legal and health consequences of gambling, alcohol, and drug use, and be clear about what you will do if the rules are broken. Be specific about the consequences and how their decisions can impact the family or relationships as a whole; especially the impact on any younger children who often look to them as to how to act.

Correct the Myths

Explain that underage drinking, drug use, and gambling is not a rite of passage and is not an excusable experience. Tell them that studies have shown that alcohol and drugs damage their developing brain. Let them know that most youth don't use alcohol, drugs, or gamble.

Show respect and listen. All kids (teens too) need to feel loved.
Youth will know that they are precious and safe, even when you establish limits.