How To Talk to your teen about weed

Tips on Engaging Your Teenager In A Smart Dialogue About Marijuana

Made possible through funding from Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Alcohol and Drug Programs
If you're a good parent, see the changes that are happening in your kids.

Every child should have a caring adult in their lives. **KEITH EMERSON**

The most important educational vehicle in all life is a parent figure. **JOE MANCHIN**

The best inheritance a parent can give his children is a few minutes of his time each day. **ORLANDO ALOYSIUS BATTISTA**

If you're the parent, be a parent. **EMINEM**

'I'm your parent and I'm greater than you' doesn't work. What I establish with my children is a partnership. **BILL COSBY**

Being a parent is knowing how to love. Sometimes love is discipline, sometimes it's humor, sometimes it's listening. **JADA PINKETT SMITH**

When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen. **MELISSA ETHERIDGE**

The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

**PETER DRUCKER**
OVERVIEW

The following educational booklet is designed to help parents begin difficult dialogues with their teenagers. Additionally, it is designed to help parents begin dialogues with other parents. Our goal in creating this booklet is to elevate the ability to commence a dialogue from the fear of not knowing how to conduct such a dialogue. Too often, we fear that we don’t have the skills or permission to spark and lead challenging conversations. As parents, it’s our responsibility to ignite these dialogues, and to do so proactively. While this booklet is designed to specifically facilitate a dialogue about marijuana, the basic principles outlined here are built on the desire to be intentional, proactive and genuinely engaged in our discourse with members of our family and community. Lastly, this booklet is designed to inspire you to speak up. To give you the confidence to begin these dialogues today. To voice your heart before it’s too late. To initiate the dialogue not only on behalf of your child, but on behalf of every teenager in our community.
SECTION 1 of 2
Talking To Your Teen About Marijuana
THE KEY TO BEGINNING A DIFFICULT DIALOGUE WITH YOUR TEEN

THE CHALLENGE:

- How do you begin the admittedly awkward and difficult conversation with your son or daughter about marijuana, or any drug or alcohol related issue for that matter?
- Possibly, you recall your parents trying to have such a conversation with you. Or, perhaps in TV and movies, you’ve seen parents fumble through this dialogue in a failed attempt to connect with their teen.

THE SECRET

- It actually doesn’t need to be an awkward conversation, if you approach it the right way.

Yes, you can.

Can I Still Talk To My Teen About Weed If I Smoked Weed When I Was A Kid?
KNOW WHERE YOU’RE STARTING FROM

Every parent is different and every relationship provides a different context in which this dialogue will take place.

Ultimately, however, parental guidance is most effective when it isn’t entirely top-down, controlling and punitive.

Do you already have open dialogues with your teenager?

Have you and your teen established a respectful rapport in which you talk to one other?

Does your teenager feel comfortable coming to you to talk about issues he/she is facing?

Dictate The Terms Of The Dialogue Before Her Peers Define Them For Her.
Define the objective, tone and purpose of this dialogue. To warn? To scold? To educate? To invite your son or daughter to feel comfortable talking to you about issues that he or she may prefer to keep from you? To continue and deepen an already open and free-flowing channel of communication?

Articulate your desire for this to be a safe, open and honest conversation. (self esteem, body image, family issues, school issues, etc.) in the future.

Think of this conversation as more than a “stand-alone” dialogue, but as the pathway to more open communication about this issue, and other issues.

Behind This **Tough Gaze** Is A Teen Who Wants To **Talk.**
AS IT PERTAINS TO MARIJUANA

- Know the facts. Understand that marijuana negatively affects the still-developing teenage brain.
- IQ Scores have been shown to plummet when marijuana use begins in the teenage years – this has a lifelong effect.
- Potency: Has increased fourfold since the marijuana of the 1980s.
- 1 in 4 Ventura County teens (high school juniors) has smoked marijuana in the past month.
- Pop culture is exploding with endorsements of marijuana (music, movies, etc.) that may make your teen and his/her peers idolize it even more than in the past.
- Decide whether or not you feel comfortable (or hypocritical) telling your son or daughter about your own past or current marijuana use – but know that the “pot” of yesteryear was very different, much less potent, and much less harmful; likewise, some adults in Ventura County who currently use medical marijuana (although laden with potential consequences, including DWI, etc.), are likely at lower-risk than teens due to the profoundly negative influence of marijuana on the young teenage brain.

To Guide Your Teen Get Wise On Weed.

1 in 4 Ventura County High School Juniors Has Smoked Weed In The Past Month.
ONE IN SIX teenagers who begin smoking marijuana may become addicted.

Today’s weed is approximately four times more potent than the weed of the 1980s & 1990s.

80s/90s

Today

ONE IN FOUR high school juniors in Ventura County has smoked weed in the last month.

It’s true. People who begin smoking weed heavily in their teens may lose up to eight IQ points versus their peers.

-8 IQ points

PARENTS: If you got the facts down, would you still let your kid get high?
SECTION 2 of 2
TALKING TO PARENTS OF YOUR TEEN’S FRIENDS ABOUT MARIJUANA
THE KEY TO BEGINNING A DIFFICULT DIALOGUE WITH OTHER PARENTS

THE CHALLENGE:

- How do you begin a conversation with other parents when marijuana has entered or may be on the verge of entering your teenagers’ lives? What’s the appropriate way to begin a dialogue with the parents of some kid you don’t know? Or is it a dialogue you seek to proactively address with a long-time friend’s parents? What’s the objective of beginning such a dialogue? Did an incident occur that needs to be addressed or resolved? Or is it simply a new friend or acquaintance with whom your son/daughter is increasingly spending time? Are you curious to see if this parent shares your values and/or will provide a safe environment for your teen? Or, is there an issue that affects both of your teens that you believe needs to be examined and discussed?

Was It Awkward To Strike Up A Convo With Another Mom About Our Kids Smoking Weed? Not As Awkward As My Daughter Losing Eight IQ Points Because We Didn’t Have The Convo.
TIPS ON ENGAGING THE PARENTS OF YOUR TEEN’S FRIENDS

THE REALITY

- Life doesn’t teach us how to begin these dialogues – we’re used to simply trying to “be pleasant” as we race from work, to the grocery store, to soccer practice, to parent teacher conferences, to all of the things that consume us within any given day. There just simply isn’t enough time to think about these dialogues, and often we retreat into “niceties,” nodding hello, commenting on the weather, and quite simply, trying to find a way to stay within our own little bubbles. But if we don’t speak up, who will? Be intentional. Schedule a time to talk in person. Invite the other parent to coffee. Or invite to take them to lunch.

Is Today The Day You Will Step Off The Sidelines?

1 IN 4 VENTURA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS IS SMOKING WEED. AND ALL YOU’RE GONNA BRING TO SOCCER PRACTICE IS SMALL TALK AND SNACKS?
ROADMAP TO ENGAGING THE PARENTS OF YOUR TEEN’S FRIENDS

Introduce yourself! If you don’t know the other parent, find a friendly way to say hello. If you already know the parent, introduce the fact that you’re interested in connecting to talk about an issue related to your kids.

Create a plan for how the two of you want to work together in the best interests of your children. If an incident has already arisen, clarify your desire not to scold, but to “right the ship” moving forward.

State your objective. Articulate the impetus for the dialogue and state your intended goal of what the conversation will achieve.

Share relevant facts and info. As it pertains to marijuana, Ventura County Behavioral Health has articulated a number of documents to help parents understand the basic facts.

Clarify that you’re entering the conversation with the intention to achieve a desired outcome – and that you aim to work together openly and honestly in an attempt to achieve that outcome.

Work together. Give the other parent an opportunity to talk and state their objective and their belief in the importance or non-importance of the issue you’re about to talk about.

Outline clear next steps. Talk about how you will keep communication channels open and how you can work together to uphold the health and self-esteem of your kids. Exchange contact info. Plan a next date to reconnect. Getting involved is great, but staying involved can change your child’s future.

Truthful Talks Transform Teen Trajectories.

How High?

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MADE POSSIBLE BY

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CONTACT US FOR SUPPORT
✉ HOWHIGH@VENTURA.ORG
📞 (805) 662-1860

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARIJUANA AND THE TEENAGE BRAIN?
VISIT US ON THE WEB AT

HOWHIGHVENTURACOUNTY.ORG

DESIGN BY:
JAMS