

YOU are your teen's biggest role model



As pop culture has become a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week, online and offline phenomenon, young people often look to their favorite music artists, athletes, and/or actors to be the dominant role models in their lives. But celebrities and public figures have been increasingly caught making bad choices and engaging in risky behaviors, and that is far from being a good example. Drinking and using drugs such as marijuana is dangerous and can lead to addiction, criminal activity, loss of school scholarships, and mental health disorders like depression.

Take this time to talk to your teen about the dangers of drug use and set clear rules about consequences. Always remember that you are the single most important influence when it comes to drugs. So this message needs to start with you.

Learn more about connecting with ["Teens Today."](#)

Be open and honest

It can be difficult talking to your teen about your past, especially if it involves drug use, and other risky behaviors. But these experiences—drawing on real-life examples of friends who had trouble as a result of drug use, couldn't get a scholarship, or caused a car crash while high—will hit close to home for your teen. Use this opportunity to talk to your kids about making smart choices. Be sure to emphasize that this discussion is about their future, and not about your past. Even if you made mistakes in the past, be clear that you do not want your children to repeat them.

Not sure how to be the best role model for your teen? Follow these simple steps;

1. Take interest in things they enjoy.

Find out their favorite hobbies and spend an afternoon together doing what they love most.

2. Set rules and be the example.

Let your teen know that drug use is unacceptable and help them to make good choices for their future. Let them know that you, too, will practice making good choices.

3. Keep the lines of communication open.

Casually ask how things are going at school and in their social life to ensure an open, ongoing dialogue at home.

4. Talk about smart decision-making.

Use a casual conversation to talk about good decisions and bad decisions, as well as consequences of both.

More tips on how to [be a good role model.](#)

Be a Good Role Model

Be a role model of the person you want your kid to be. What stronger anti-drug message is there?

Keep these tips in mind:

- 1 Be a living, day-to-day example of your value system. Show the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness you want your child to have.
- 2 Know that there is no such thing as "do as I say, not as I do" when it comes to drugs. If you take drugs, you can't expect your child to take your advice. Seek professional help if necessary.
- 3 Examine your own behavior. If you abuse drugs or alcohol, your kids are going to pick up on it. Or if you laugh at a drunk or stoned person in a movie, you may be sending the wrong message to your child. Be the person you want your kid to be. What stronger anti-drug message is there?