**6 Things Parents Need to Know About Teenagers and Drugs**

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Every teenager goes through a critical period in their teens when they discover drugs. Some ignore the temptation, some try drugs and move on, and some get hooked to the extent of ruining their lives. You cannot predict how your child will turn out, so the safest option is to manage the risk from the start.

The first step is understanding why your child may try drugs. Here are some of the most common factors.

**Curiosity**

Teens are notoriously curious, especially of illicit and taboo activities. The idea of being naughty or stories of drug use that suggest the effects are exciting and fun can tempt even the most sensible child to “give it a try to see what it’s like”.

**Peer Pressure**

Teenagers are very much about group mentality. Anyone not doing what their peers are doing can be viewed as weak or naive and face rejection from popular circles. To prove their bravery or gain acceptance, teenagers may try drugs.

**Media Influence**

The media depicts a lot of drug use as “cool”, from TV shows to magazines. It’s even more prevalent on the Internet, where content is rarely censored. Teenagers look up to these characters in the media as role models and may take drugs to be like them.

**Boredom**

Teenage minds are constantly active and frequently looking for new thrills. The possibility of choosing activities such as taking drugs or watching pornography is always high and is exacerbated by periods when they are out of school for an extended period.

**Performance Improvement**

Competitiveness in class or on the playing field may lead teenagers to search for something to give them an edge over their peers. The belief that drugs can improve mind or body performance can easily deceive teenagers into taking drugs for an easy advantage.

**Helping Your Child with a Drug Problem**

If you think your child might be on drugs, do not panic. Take a bold but gentle approach to investigate and, if necessary, help them recover. Here are some methods you can use to help your teen without pushing them away:

Create a friendly atmosphere so your child feels comfortable opening up. Do not lecture them. Encourage them to speak more as you listen, to understand the real problem that is pushing them to drug use.

Get involved in planning your child’s free time. Do not impose, but try to appear as if you are offering advice from experience for summer camps, exercise routines and the best places to volunteer.

If the drug problem has reached serious levels, contact a professional rehabilitation center for treatment. Your child will mingle with other teenagers with the same problem and realize that they are not alone.

Provide helpful material, such as books and videos about other teenagers who have gone through and overcome the same problem. This is a great morale booster on the road to recovery.

Make an effort to know your child’s friends beyond the surface. Understand their background, interests and activities — and their problems, too! The better you know them, the easier it will be to spot those who are likely to lead your child down the wrong path.

Understanding your teenage child is an integral part of bringing them up well. If you realize they are involved in drug use, do not blame them. Blame will only push them further away. Try to find out what made them start taking drugs and show gentle, loving support and understanding. Be there for them and help them beat their habit.