



Substance Abuse Prevention Parent Script

This script was created by Raising Resilience guest speaker: Aubrey Lough, SUDP, LMFT of Creating Growth Counseling

Parent: "Hey, kiddo. I want to talk with you again about underage drinking and using drugs. Would it be OK to do that now?"

Teen: "Oh my God, mom! We have already talked about this a million times. I know, I know!"

Parent: "We can never talk about it too much. I care so much about you, and it is important that we understand each other. You probably know some things that I don't about this stuff, and I'd love to hear your take on it. So, what is it that you know about drinking and using?"

Teen: "There is a ton of information out there. I don't even know where to begin. I guess, from reading and what I've seen I know it can make anxiety a lot worse and that can affect relationships and make things really hard at school. I also know it can put kids in dangerous situations. I know different drugs have different effects on sleeping and eating but I don't totally understand all of it."

Parent: "That's all true and you know, I don't totally know how eating and sleeping is affected, either. Let's do some research together on that later and see what we can find out."

Teen: "Sure."

Parent: "You know one of the reasons I wanted to talk with you is because it was just homecoming, and I didn't make the time to connect with you beforehand. I'm sorry about that. I imagine there was some drinking and pot use, at least, at homecoming. How do you feel about that?"

Teen: "I didn't really see anything last night, but I've seen at school that people who use get really paranoid and freak out over little things and they become big things. They have to leave class or go to the office, or they just stop coming to class sometimes."

Parent: "What are some of the reasons you see that people drink and use?"

Teen: "I guess the social factor and people find it fun to do with friends. It's available and other people are doing it. It's different and changes things up. I think people get bored. Well, I guess to relax or just to change the way they're feeling. And to celebrate stuff. I mean, when you got the promotion at work you cracked open the bottle of champagne. It's just what people do."

Parent: "You're right that a lot of times drinking is the main way our society shows celebration. Do you remember what else we did when I got the promotion?"

Teen: "We all went out to eat and dad got you flowers."

Parent: “Exactly, so there are other ways to celebrate. And I’m sure we can brainstorm more. It is important that you know that there are alternatives to alcohol and drug use to achieve all the things that you said were the reasons people drink and use. It is also important to me that you do those alternatives instead of drinking and using. So, for changing how you feel, what are things that work for you to do that?”

Teen: “I guess the biggest thing for me is getting exercise. Even if I don’t want to when I start, it always makes me feel better.”

Parent: “I totally get that. It’s the same for me. If you ever want to go to the gym or go for a bike ride or walk together, I’m there! You know the thing that is different about teens drinking and using versus adults is because of the consequence you talked about. Specifically, that it is illegal and can have very direct impact on things like having a driver’s license now and in the future. Have you seen anything like that happen?”

Teen: “Oh yeah, I heard some kids were drinking and using drugs and decided to go somewhere and everyone piled in the car. That’s so dangerous. I know kids have lost their license and some have been really hurt. I also know some can’t play sports because of the school’s and coach’s rules.”

Parent: “It can also really hurt your self-respect and put you in situations that are overwhelming and unsafe. And it robs you of the opportunity to learn other coping skills, like working out. And that sets you up for limited options in the future. That’s why I expect you not to drink or smoke cigarettes or pot until you are of legal age and not to use other drugs. What is your primary reason not to drink or use right now?”

Teen: “I mean mostly that it would disappoint you, but also how it could affect my relationships and mental health.”

Parent: “I’m glad to hear that you have some big why not’s... And while I would be disappointed, I also expect you to be honest with me and talk with me about if you do drink or use. There will be consequences like having to earn back your phone, but the consequences will be much greater if I find out from someone other than you. It is something that we can tackle together, and I am always on your support team.”

Teen: “I get it. Thanks, mom.”

Parent: “You know what you said about school made me realize that’s something else we didn’t identify in reasons to use, because I know sometimes teens use drugs because they think it will help them do better in school. At the substance use panel I went to, one of the panelists shared how when she was a freshman, the valedictorian of the senior class offered her cocaine, saying it was the only way to get to the top of the class at BHS. I know there may be a lot of pressure to perform, but I want to assure you that your best is always enough and if you are struggling with school or the pressure, you can come to me, and we’ll find resources for you. The instant gratification or productivity associated with stimulant use isn’t sustainable. And it is again an example of robbing you of opportunities to develop effective long-term habits like time-management skills.”

Teen: “I definitely feel the pressure sometimes, but I know the quick fix doesn’t really help. Even when I have too much caffeine to stay up and study, I end up not feeling well the next day and I think usually do worse on the test then.”

Parent: “Exactly, that’s a perfect example. Is there anything else you want to share with me right now?”

Teen: “No, this was good.”

Parent: “It was! Thanks for talking with me. I really appreciate it. And I want to find those answers with you about how exactly drinking and using affect sleep and eating, and maybe brain development, too. So, let’s do that later tonight.”