

## WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR TEEN

- Maintain routine and structure at home
- Notice and act on behavioural changes of concern
- Do what you can to help them enjoy school
- Encourage involvement in sports and hobbies
- Know where your teenager is
- Take an interest in their friends and activities
- Spend time with them and be available to talk about anything
- Look after yourself and stay connected with other parents

## USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES

- National Drugs Helpline 1800 459459
- HSE Drug Service 091 561299
- Parentline 1890 927277
- WRDATF 091 480044
- [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)
- [www.alcoholireland.ie](http://www.alcoholireland.ie)
- [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
- [www.supportme.ie](http://www.supportme.ie)

### Did You Know?

A criminal record can affect your future career prospects, hobbies, interests and travel. Encourage your teen to make wise choices.

# Teen Talk

## A Parent's guide to discussing substance use with your teenager



**Practical information and tips on how to address the topic of drugs and alcohol with your teenager**

As teens get older they are more likely to experiment and take risks. Therefore, it is essential to start having conversations with your teen to help prepare them for making good decisions.



**REMEMBER:** You are the most important resource, and a powerful role model, for your teenager. Be conscious of your drinking habits, attitude toward drugs, and the storage of alcohol and medication in your home.

# HOW TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION

## PLAN

- Prepare well: Know your boundaries and expectations around drugs and alcohol
- Have your facts right: do some research if needed
- Find a good time and include your partner where possible
- Remove communications barriers like phones, computers and games

## TALK

- Be conscious of your approach: be sensitive, respectful and open to discussion
- Let your teen know you are setting boundaries because you care and want the best for them
- Work together to set boundaries, rules and consequences
- Keep the conversation positive, upbeat and clear
- Don't forget to listen: your teen's point of view and feelings are important
- Take advantage of prompts and teachable moments. These can happen at any time, driving the car, when eating dinner, a news item on TV etc.
- Remember, you were a teenager too. Be supportive and show empathy

## FOLLOW UP

- Talk regularly and talk often, many conversations are better than a long boring lecture and the content will change as your teen develops
- Ensure they can come back to you with questions and for advice
- Don't be afraid to enforce the boundaries you have set