



**BRING  
IT UP...**

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU TALK  
TO YOUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA**

**TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONVERSATION:** →

It's important to understand that expressing curiosity does not always result in experimentation. It's natural for youth to feel curious and have questions about marijuana use. If you don't talk to them, someone will.

"When I was a kid..." doesn't really work when talking with youth about marijuana today. It's a whole new drug because THC, the part of the drug that gets you high, has gone from 1% - 5% in the 1960s - 1990s and up to 30% in plant form and 98% in vape form today.

Believe it or not, studies show that parents and adults in the community are one of the most powerful influences in a teen's life. More than friends. More than TV. More than celebrities.

- Here are some ideas for ways to get teens talking:
- Create a topic jar.
  - Ask open-ended questions.
  - Talk about topics they like.
  - Schedule some one on one time.
  - Listen more than you speak.
  - Remember, listening does not equal agreeing.
  - Be patient & allow for silence.
  - Put yourself in their shoes.
  - Don't try to fix them.

### What Teens Are Saying:

"If you ask me about my life, don't start lecturing me or getting all angry the second you hear something you don't like. Listen and respect what I'm saying—and maybe I'll respect what you're saying a little more too."

"Be positive. I don't want to hear about how I could ruin my life. I want to hear about how great my life is now and how I can keep it that way."

"Ok, so you want me not to drink or do drugs. How about helping me figure out how to avoid it without feeling stupid or losing my friends?"

"Listen to me regularly—not just when you have something you want to talk about."

"Don't make a big deal out of having a 'talk.' Just bring it up in the car or something."

"How about asking me what I know about alcohol and drugs and what I think about it? You might be surprised."

**PARENT UP**



# BRING IT UP...

# WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOUTH ABOUT MARIJUANA

## YOUTH:

"I know, I know. We've already talked about this."

## YOUTH:

"Marijuana is a plant. It's natural. How harmful could it be?"

## YOUTH:

"Would you rather I drink alcohol? Weed is so much safer."

## YOUTH:

"I'm only doing it once in a while on weekends, so it's not a big deal."

## YOUTH:

"But it's legal in some states; why would they make something legal that could hurt me?"

## ADULT:

"My concern is that things are changing quickly and there is a lot of new information out there. I've learned some new things and I care about you so much. That's why it's important that we talk about it. Would that be okay?"

## ADULT:

"Not all plants are necessarily healthy or good for you — think about cocaine or heroin or even poison ivy — they are all plants."

"I would much rather you find healthy ways to cope with difficult feelings than turn to drugs. Can we brainstorm activities and alternatives?"

## ADULT:

"What is going on in your life that makes you feel like you want to do either?"

"Honestly, I don't want you to be doing anything that can harm you — whether that's smoking pot, cigarettes, drinking or behaving recklessly. I'm interested in knowing why you think weed is safer than alcohol."

## ADULT:

"What would make it feel like a big deal to you?"

"I'm happy to hear that this is not something you do on a regular basis. The fact is, using any drug can be harmful at your age because your brain is still developing."

"What are some things that keep you from using?"

## ADULT:

"Well, alcohol is legal, but causes damage, car accidents and other behavior that leads to jail time. Alcohol can also cause major health problems, including liver problems and addictions. Cigarettes are also legal, even though they are highly addictive and proven to cause birth defects and cancer. Just because something is legal and regulated doesn't make it safe."