

Opening the Conversation:

ESTABLISHING TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING

Parents should start by building a foundation of trust and understanding; this is essential for open communication. Parents are encouraged to create a safe and non-judgmental space where youth feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns about alcohol and substance use. By actively listening and validating their experiences, parents can establish a strong trust and lay the groundwork for open dialogue.

INITIATING THE CONVERSATION

Initiating the conversation about AUD/SUD may feel daunting, but it's an crucial step in promoting awareness and prevention. Parents are encouraged to approach the topic with empathy, sensitivity, and honesty, using age-appropriate language and examples to facilitate understanding. By framing the conversation as an education and supportive exchange, parents can encourage youth to share their perspectives and ask questions without fear of judgment.

PROMOTING HEALTHY DECISION-MAKING

Promoting healthy decision-making is important for empowering youth to make informed choices about alcohol and substance use. Parents are encouraged to provide accurate and up-to-date information about the risks of AUD/SUD, while also highlighting the benefits of prioritizing their health and well-being. By engaging in open discussions about values, boundaries, and peer pressure, parents can help youth develop resilience and confidence in their ability to resist harmful influences.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Leading by example is one of the more powerful ways parents can influence their youth's attitudes and behaviors. Parents are encouraged to model healthy habits and behaviors, such as responsible drinking, seeking support when needed, and practicing self-care. By demonstrating empathy, resilience, and integrity, parents can inspire their youth to make positive choices and navigate challenges with confidence.

CHECKING IN AND STAYING CONNECTED

Checking in regularly and staying connected with youth is essential for maintaining open communication and addressing any concerns or challenges. Parents are encouraged to create opportunities for ongoing dialogue, such as family meetings, one-on-one conversations, and shared activities. By actively listening, validating feelings, and offering support without judgment, parents can strengthen their relationship with their children and reinforce their commitment to their well-being.

RESOURCES:

Reimuller, A., Shadur, J., & Hussong, A. M. (2011, March). Parental social support as a moderator of self-medication in adolescents. *Addictive behaviors*.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3023817/>