

St. Paul Prevention Ministry

10 Part Series: "Why do kids use drugs?"

Part 1: The ABC's of "Why do kids use drugs"?

Most available information and from local group of youths, identified the following reasons:

Acceptance - belong to a specific group	Feel good, fun
Appearance – example: thin	Feel grown up
Boredom	Need to be accepted
Curiosity	Peer pressure
Defiance	Relax
Depression	Show their independence
Environment – easy to get, culture, role model	Status – example - being "cool"
Escapism, forget their troubles, stressed	Tragedy, ease the pain
Experiment, take risks, have fun	

Part 2: "Why do kids use drugs" – What Research Shows

Research shows that family, community, and social norm related to drug and/or alcohol use play a crucial role in teen's decision not to use drugs or alcohol. There are factors that increase (Risk Factors) or reduce (Protective Factors) the risk of drug use amongst youth.

Part 3: "Why do kids use drugs" – Protective Factors

These are factors that reduce the risk of alcohol and/or drug use

1. Family factors

- strong bonds
- clear rules of conduct within the family
- parental involvement in child's life
- parent's positive evaluation of peers

2. Community factors

- peers have conventional values
- successful school performance
- strong bonds with positive institution – eg school, religious organisation, etc.
- child's agreement with the social norm that drug use **is not** acceptable.

3. Child's self esteem

**The more protective factors, the greater the chance for the youth to remain drug-free.*

Source: NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse) – "Developing Successful Drug Abuse Prevention Programs" March 2000.

Part 4: "Why do kids use drugs" – The Risk Factors

These are factors that increase the risk of alcohol and/or drug use:

1. Family factors

- lack of strong parent-child attachment in a nurturing environment
- parents who abuse drugs or suffer from mental illness
- poor parental monitoring
- ineffective parenting

2. Community factors

- inappropriate classroom behaviour or failing school performance
- poor social skills
- affiliation with deviant peers
- perception that drug use is acceptable within peer, school, or community environment

Source: NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse – “Developing Successful Drug Abuse Prevention Programs” March 2000.

Part 5: “Why do kids use drugs” – Some Tid Bits On Parenting

‘Research shows that:

- in recent “national report card”, teens gave parents a “C-“ in preventing youth from drug use
- teens with “hands-off “ parents are 4x in greater risk of using alcohol and drugs, and smoking than “hands-on” parents
- dads are less likely than moms to talk about drugs to their kids’

Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University

Part 6: “Why do kids use drugs” – Some Tips To Show You Care

1. Reinforce your love. Say “I love you” more often.
2. Be careful not to criticise.
3. Remember that children often reflect what they have, and have not learned.
4. Teach the principles of “why” and not just the “what” to do or not to do.
5. Listen to them, **a lot**. Avoid interrupting. Give them your individual attention

Source: Partnership for a Drug-free America. Metlife Foundation

Part 7: “Why do kids use drugs” – On Communication I

10-ways parents/guardians can help their children decrease the Risk Factors:

1. **Attitude** – let your children know you trust them and that they can trust you in return
 2. **Honesty** – they will know when you are not being honest with them
 3. **Respect** - their feelings, ideas, opinions, and their privacy
 4. **Love**-continuously show your love for them
 5. **Ask “why”** and allow them to vent their feelings
 6. **Humour** - use your sense of joyfulness or sense of humour
 7. **Be fair** – talk things over
 8. **Unconditional statements** – **avoid** using words like “never” or “impossible”
 9. **Know your limitations** – you can’t fix everything
 10. **Listen-!!!**
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Part 8: “Why do kids use drugs” – On Communication II: Listening

Need to:

1. pay attention to what they are saying and the feelings behind it
 2. take time
 3. avoid interruption
 4. encourage them to express their feelings
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Part 9: “Why do kids use drugs”- On Communication III

Some Helpful Hints:

1. Consider the **time and place**. It is best to talk to young individuals away from others.
 2. **Rehearse** what you want to say. Practice helps maintain control.
 3. **Anticipate** their response and know how you will respond.
 4. **Leave the door open**. Allows the youth to know you are willing to talk some other time.
 5. **“Teachable moments”**
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Part 10: “Why do kids use drugs”- On Communication IV

The LAST MESSAGE:

MAKE YOUR POSITION CLEAR when it comes to the use of substances like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, as well as gambling and other habit forming activities.

DON'T ASSUME that your children know where you stand.
