

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: How to Keep Your Teen SAFE This Summer: 8 Ways Parents Can Prevent Substance Use

Researchers at The Partnership to End Addiction maintain while summer is fun and exciting, changes in routine can also bring stress, boredom, loneliness, or pressure from friends. These challenges can increase the risk of experimenting with alcohol, drugs, nicotine, or other substances. Parents can make a big difference by staying connected, setting clear expectations, and having regular conversations, to help your teen make healthy choices all summer long.

1. Make a List of Activities They Can Do Without Asking First

It can be frustrating for teens when they can't reach a parent to ask permission to go somewhere. It can also be hard for parents who are busy at work to communicate with their teens in real time.

Talk with your teen about activities they can do without asking each time. For example, they may be able to go to a trusted friend's house, the pool, or a local park.

Set clear rules. You can ask them to leave a note or send a text that includes Where they are going; Who they are with; What they are doing; When they expect to be home

This helps your teen gain independence responsibly while helping you stay informed.

2. Know What's in Your Home

Many teens get access to alcohol, medications, nicotine products, or cannabis products from their own homes or from friends' homes.

Take time to: Keep track of alcohol in your home; Store prescription medications in a secure place; Lock up medications that could be misused; Safely dispose of expired or unused medications; Keep vaping devices, nicotine pouches, cannabis products, and edibles out of reach.

These steps can help reduce temptation and make it harder for teens and their friends to access substances.

3. Talk With Your Teen Every Day

Texting is helpful, but talking is even better. A phone call, FaceTime, or face-to-face conversation can tell you much more than a text message. You can hear changes in your teen's voice and mood that may signal stress, sadness, or trouble. Regular check-ins also remind teens that someone cares about them and is paying attention. Try asking questions such as: "What was the best part of your day?"; "Anything stressful happen today?"; "What are your plans for tomorrow?"

Small conversations build trust over time.

4. Know Who Your Teen Is Spending Time With

Friend groups often change during the summer. Some friends may go away to camp or jobs, causing new friendships to form.

Get to know: Who your teen is spending time with; Where they are hanging out; When possible, the parents or caregivers of their friends.

Connecting with other parents can help everyone stay informed and support safe choices.

5. Help Your Teen Make a Summer Plan

Too much unstructured time can lead to boredom, and boredom can sometimes lead to risky decisions. Work with your teen to create a loose plan for the summer. Encourage activities such as: A summer job; Sports or fitness activities; Volunteering; Camps or classes; Creative hobbies; Time with trusted friends and family

Your teen doesn't need every minute scheduled, but having goals and activities can help them stay engaged and connected.

6. Talk About Social Media and Group Chats

Many summer plans start online. Teens may see posts, messages, or videos that make substance use look normal, fun, or harmless. Ask your teen: What apps they use most often; How they decide what is safe online; Whether they have seen posts about drinking, vaping, or drug use

Help them think critically about what they see online and remind them that social media often shows only part of the story.

7. Pay Attention When Something Doesn't Seem Right

If a story doesn't make sense, trust your instincts and ask questions. For example, if your teen says, "It's not mine. I'm holding it for a friend," you don't have to jump to conclusions, but don't ignore the situation, either. Stay calm and gather more information.

Remember that unusual behavior doesn't always mean substance use. It could also mean your teen is dealing with stress, anxiety, friendship problems, or something else.

What's most important is that you stay curious, listen carefully, and keep the conversation open.

8. Don't Forget About Mental Health

Summer brings changes in routine, social pressures, family stress, loneliness, and worries about the future, which can affect a teen's mental health.

Check in regularly about how your teen is *feeling*, not just what they are *doing*.

Ask questions like: "How have you been feeling lately?"; "What's been on your mind?"; "Is there anything you're worried about?"

When teens feel supported and understood, they are more likely to come to their parents when they need help.

Building trust rather than suspicion is recommended. Some parents worry that setting rules or asking questions sends the message that they don't trust their teen. In reality, clear expectations and regular communication help build trust. When parents stay involved and reduce opportunities for risky behavior, teens are more likely to make safe choices.

Partnership to End Addiction is a national nonprofit uniquely positioned to reach, engage and help families impacted by addiction. With decades of experience in research, direct service, communications, and partnership-building, they provide families with personalized support and resources while mobilizing policymakers, researchers, and health care professionals to better address addiction systemically on a national scale. For more information, please visit <https://drugfree.org>.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention awareness campaigns entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," to educate and update the community regarding alcohol, prescription and illicit drug use and its consequences in youth and adults. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more at www.safeglencove.org.