



Improve the Connection with Your Teen

- Be honest and dependable
- **Enjoy time together**
- Network with other parents – describe what you're experiencing
 - Discuss what works and what doesn't
- **Be absolutely clear that you don't want your child using substances**
 - Discuss results and dangers of abuse
 - Leave no room for interpretation
- Don't make up what you don't know – find answers together
- If they ask if you used drugs, repeat that you don't want them to do so
- Be a better listener!
 - Paraphrase what you teen just said
 - Check for understanding
 - Ask for input about family decisions



Avoid Cutting Off Discussion

If your teen makes statements that challenge or shock you...

- Turn them into a discussion
- Ask teen why they think people use substances or do any of the behaviors you are discussing and might be shocking you
- Ask them to consider whether the effect is worth the risk or ask about outcomes of their perspectives
- Be clear about the risks and any other aspects of your point of view on any given issue, without blame, shame, or judgment

Listen first, speak second

- Pay complete attention (with eye contact) when teen is talking to you
- Ask open-ended questions that require more than 'yes' or 'no' response
- Wait for responses, don't put words in teen's mouth

Reserve judgment

