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September 22, 2025
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Season 5 of Awkward Conversation Launches on You Tube Wednesday, September 24

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, in partnership with the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, will release Season 5 of the video podcast *Awkward Conversations* on September 24, 2025.

The unscripted Season 5 of *Awkward Conversations* is once again hosted by Jodie Sweetin (*Full House*, *Fuller House*) and will feature twenty-one weekly video podcasts on the [Elks Drug Awareness Prevention YouTube channel](#) through March 26, 2026.

Watch the [trailer](#) for Awkward Conversations, Season 5

Each week Jodie is joined by Amy McCarthy, Director of Clinical Social Work, Adolescent Substance Use and Addiction Program at Boston Children's Hospital. Together they will speak with celebrity parents such as **Dr. Mayim Bialik** and **Alec Mapa**, as well as role models like **Spencer Paysinger** (former NFL linebacker and producer *All-American*). They will also sit down with experts including **Dr. Christopher Willard** (author of *Raising Resilience* and *Growing Up Mindful*) and **Dr. Nora Volkow** (Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse). Their discussions delve into complex issues and provide thoughtful answers to the questions parents care about most.

Season 5 covers a wide array of subjects designed to help parents empower their kids to stay safe, drug-free, and make informed decisions, including:

- **Sept 24: Parenting in the Digital Age** – Spotting online red flags and mentoring digital choices.
- **Oct 1: The Science of Addiction** – How addiction changes the brain and why prevention matters.
- **Oct 8: Sleep, Nutrition & Mental Health** – How daily habits shape resilience and lower risk.
- **Oct 15: Social Media** – Balancing harmful trends with positive influence.
- **Oct 22: Teen Leaders in a Substance-Free Movement** – How youth are shifting culture and leading peers.
- **Oct 29: Vaping, Marijuana & Youth Perception** – Why “legal” doesn’t mean safe.
- **Nov 5: New Drivers** – The risks of driving, peers, and substance use.

- **Nov 12: Mindful Parenting** – Raising calmer, more resilient kids through mindfulness.
- **Nov 19: Cross-Culture** – Why culturally aware prevention approaches matter.
- **Nov 26: OFF (Thanksgiving Week)**
- **Dec 3: Marching Toward Resilience** – Lessons from military families.
- **Dec 10: Body Image** – How body confidence links to prevention.
- **Dec 17: Athletics and Prevention** – Sports and teamwork as protective factors.
- **Dec 24: OFF (Christmas Week)**
- **Dec 31: OFF (New Year’s Week)**
- **Jan 7: Resilience & Coping** – Everyday coping strategies that build resilience.
- **Jan 14: Parenting Neurodivergent Kids** – Custom strategies for ADHD, autism, and more.
- **Jan 21: Resilience & Mindset** – How optimism builds protective strength.
- **Jan 28: First Signs, First Steps** – Acting early with compassion when warning signs appear.
- **Feb 4: Prevention Through Creative Arts** – How art and music help kids thrive substance-free.
- **Feb 11: Parenting in Times of Stress** – Supporting kids during crises and community trauma.
- **Feb 18: Substance Use in LGBTQ+ Youth Communities** – Fostering open communication and prevention strategies to promote positive mental health and acceptance among youth.
- **Feb 25: Parenting Through Financial Stress** – Building resilience despite economic challenges.
- **Mar 4: One Pill Can Kill** – A deep dive into the fentanyl crisis.

New to this season are **short, animated explainer videos** for kids ages 6–9, each paired with a **Parent Guide**, which offer prompts and takeaways to help families continue the conversation. These new resources make *Awkward Conversations* accessible for every age group and expand its role as a family prevention tool.

“DEA is proud to continue our partnership with the Elks’ Drug Awareness Prevention team to shine a spotlight on critical issues affecting the mental wellness of our youth, including the dangers of synthetic drugs and the influence of social media,” said DEA Community Outreach & Prevention Support Chief Sean Fearn. “A key part of DEA’s prevention strategy is to equip parents with the tools and resources they need to help their children lead drug-free lives, and these podcasts are an important step in achieving that goal.”

“This season’s addition of explainer videos and parent guides reflects exactly what the Elks stand for — always finding new ways to give parents and caregivers practical tools to have meaningful conversations with their kids,” said Bill Bryan, National Director of the Elks DAP. “Our mission has always been to support families with resources that meet them where they are, and we’re proud to continue that tradition in partnership with the DEA.”

“As a mom to two young teen daughters, I am well aware of the many awkward conversations we need to have with our kids. They’re never easy, but I hope that while talking them through with experts on our show, parents and caregivers (and anyone, really!) will have the necessary tools they need to help keep their kids safe. While we can’t shield our kids from the dangers out there, we can definitely make sure they are prepared and armed with information that can help keep them safe,” said Jodie Sweetin.

The program will be supported by over **14 million impressions** directing audiences to www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com, a DEA website dedicated to providing valuable resources for parents, caregivers, and educators.

This is the most recent project by the ELKS DAP in collaboration with DEA. Previously they released anti-drug educational videos with YouTubers SMOSH (2017, 2018) and FBE's Teens React (2019), as well as the music video *TRY* (2020). *Awkward Conversations* launched in November 2021 and has reached more than 18 million views and over 85 million media impressions.

About The Elks As a 150-year-old organization, they are 100% inclusive with a membership of close to one million diverse men and women in over 2,000 lodges nationally, and while they consider themselves faith-based, they are nondenominational and open to all creeds. The Elks have always prided themselves on civic duty, and the Elks DAP program is the nation's largest all-volunteer Kids Drug & Alcohol Use Prevention program. The Elks are also strong supporters of our brave men and women in the military, having built and donated the nation's first VA Hospital to the U.S. government. The Elks have donated more than \$3.6 billion in cash, goods, and services to enrich the lives of millions of people!

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