



Tools to Talk with your Young Person about Anything

(including substance use)

Tool	Detail	Key Concept	Example
Listen	Ask Open-Ended Questions	Ask questions that can't be answered with a short or one-word response.	"What is your plan to get home?" vs. "What time will you be home?"
	Affirmations	Sharing positive feelings (attributes, appreciation, support) encourages conversation.	"I like how you handled that conversation with your sister."
	Reflections	Respond to your person using words that capture what you think they are saying.	If your young person says, "These rules are dumb," you can say, "You don't think these rules are smart."
	Summaries	Gather key ideas from your conversation and make a pivot to next steps.	Recount the key points of your conversation and then ask "What do you want to do next?"
Offer	Invite to Talk	Ask your young person if they want to hear what you have to say before saying it.	"Can I share something I heard?"
	Information	Your facts, concerns or ideas.	"Some kids are getting fake pills that are laced with fentanyl from social media sites. It's caused a lot of young person deaths."
	Check back	Give your young person an opportunity to respond and confirm understanding.	"What do you know about this?"
Validate		Make your young person feel that you acknowledge their feelings are real, to them.	"It makes sense that you'd be really upset about this."
Empathize		Empathy is genuinely and compassionately understanding the other person's perspective.	"I understand that it can be hard to feel like the only person who is doing something different."

DO:

- Explain the dangers using language they'll understand
- Explain why you do not want them to use drugs
- Be there when your child wants to talk
- Praise your children when they deserve it. This builds their self-esteem and makes them feel good without using drugs.

DON'T:

- React in anger—even if your child makes statements that shock you.
- Expect all conversations with your children to be perfect. They won't be.
- Assume your kids know how to handle temptation. Educate them about risks and alternatives so they can make healthy decisions.
- Make stuff up. Get the facts, together.



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What I like about my young person (use for Affirmations)

Open-Ended Questions to ask my young person

Information I want to share with my young person (using
Offering / Information Sandwich)

To find substance use treatment help visit
www.findtreatment.gov or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)



www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com

For Parents & Caregivers



For Young People



For Teachers & the Workplace



For Higher Education



www.dea.gov/togetherforfamilies

Resources for Families



www.DEA.gov/OnePill



DEA Prevention
Resources and
Publications