

# What Do You Know About Your Child's Drug or Alcohol Use?

## Collect Evidence

A big question parents must ask themselves is their feelings on snooping in their child's room. Whatever you decide, be prepared to defend yourself. If you have a reason for concern, say so. And remember, it's your house, and your primary responsibility is to the well-being of your child.

### Good places to look:

- Dresser drawers, beneath or between clothes
- Desk drawers
- CD/DVD/Tape/Video cases
- Small boxes – jewelry, pencil, etc.
- Backpacks/duffle bags
- Under a bed
- In a plant, buried in the dirt
- Between books on a bookshelf
- In books with pages cut out
- Makeup cases – inside fake lipstick tubes or compacts
- Under a loose plank in floor boards
- In fake soda bottles with false bottoms
- Inside over-the-counter medicine containers (Tylenol, Advil, etc)
- Inside empty candy bags such as M&Ms or Skittles

## Keep Track

There is much information to keep track of, even if you have definitive proof that your teen is doing drugs. Use checklists to record everything that concerns you during this period—the date, time, where it occurred, what was found, and changes over time. You'll need it, because your child will work hard to convince you that things didn't happen the way you remember, or that the things you found are not what you think they are. In addition, all of this information will be invaluable when you seek outside help for your teen's problem.

### Information to Track:

- When did your teen start using?
- How did it start? / How did they get it?
- Did it progress to harder drugs?
- Who are your child's friends? And their parents?
- Who has your teen been chatting with online?
- Who is in their cell phone address book? If you cannot look on his/her phone, look at the monthly bill and note numbers that are not familiar to you.

### Helpful Things to Note:

- When your teen comes home late
- Who your teen is hanging out with
- The amount of prescription pills you have
- The amount of time your teen spends alone in her room and online
- Anything suspicious found in his room or belongings
- Drug-related terms or slang in text messages or IMs (ex: "Mary Jane" for marijuana, "Vitamin R" for Ritalin, or "OCs" for Oxycontin)

## Start Monitoring

Now is an especially important time to use the rules and consequences you've developed as tools to keep a close eye on your teen, his friends, activities, communications, coming and going, and much more. It's a lot of work – and it's ongoing – but you'll find that it pays big rewards.

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