

DavisPARENTSDO

What are some warning signals that tell me my child may be moving towards using drugs or alcohol?

As parents, we are the first line of defense for our children against drug and alcohol abuse. The **DavisPARENTSDO** committee offers some questions to help you think about whether your child is at risk.

Most parents want to focus on the positive aspects of their children. So it is often a surprise or shock for parents when they find out that their child is using any type of substances, whether it is marijuana, alcohol, or other drug of choice. With hindsight, parents realize that there were warning signs that pointed to their child's attraction towards substance abuse.

Has my child been shutting me out *excessively*? Is she not talking like she used to ... not bringing friends over to the house ... staying in her room for long periods of time ... or pulling away from family activities?

Has there been an *on-going change* in moods and attitude towards being *chronically* negative? Is he keeping the shades drawn in his room ... a feeling of being down or depressed ... change in clothing and body language ... refusing to do or try anything ... loss of interest in old friends and enjoyable activities?

Has there been a *downward change* in her school performance and attendance? Is her school performance erratic ... are there many tardies ... is she skipping classes?

Have there been instances of surprising rebelliousness? Has he gone somewhere without letting you know where he is, and you have been frantic because that was *so out of character* for your child?

If you have been concerned for some time about your child's behaviors, trust your "gut" and take steps to search out what is happening! One way is to educate yourself about how to stay connected to your teen and learn about teen substance abuse. If you suspect your child has a problem, contact a mental health expert. Jen McNeil is the district's Prevention and Crisis Counselor. jmcneil@djsd.net.

For more information on the realities of substance use by Davis teens, visit our website at davisparentsdo.org. **DavisPARENTSDO** is a district wide PTA committee.



