

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Base your parenting on who your kids are, not who you want them to be.
- Strike while the iron is cold! Start talking to your kids BEFORE they start going to parties.
- Be authentic and lead by example. The more you show your humanness, the more you are lovable.
- Delay onset of first use of substances. The longer you can delay, the less likely substance use will become a lifelong problem.
- Let your kids know they can contact you at any time, in any condition, no questions asked
- Be explicit about family rules: “never get into a car with anyone under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or other drugs”, “underage drinking/vaping is not allowed in our house”, “we believe underage drinking and tobacco use is harmful to you and don’t want you to use” , “I hope you know that there’s nothing you can say about what you may have done that would make me love you any less”, “If you find yourself in a unsafe situation where there are drugs/alcohol involved, and you may not have made the best decision at that time, you can always text me for help no matter what”
- Ask questions: “Where is the party?” “Are you staying there or going someplace else too?” “Will the parents be home?” “Will there be alcohol at the party?” “How will you refuse the alcohol if all your friends are drinking?”

All teens experience feelings of anxiousness, sadness and loneliness sometimes but when do you reach out for help?

- When the signs of distress are not getting better for 2 weeks or more
- When school, family and/or friendships are being negatively affected
- When there are changes in sleep and eating patterns
- When there is loss of interest in things they normally enjoyed and no new interests are developed

Can start with a primary care provider, school social worker or guidance counselor for help. See a list of resources on <https://www.greenwichtogether.org/resources> or on the Get Help page

****Tips courtesy of Kim Lisack, Clinical Director of Safe Haven at Kids In Crisis and John Hamilton, CEO of Liberation Programs****