

# WHAT TEENS ARE UP AGAINST

HELPING PARENTS  
UNDERSTAND  
TODAY'S SUBSTANCE  
USE RISKS

with STEPHEN BOGAN, MA

## The most powerful prevention tools?

- The strength and clarity of your convictions....what you say and don't say have tremendous power...whether you think your teens are listening or not.
- Delaying the onset of early use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Brain development in process and ongoing until at least age 26.

## The power that parents have...

- Teens who have close relationship with their parents less likely to become involved with alcohol and other drugs.
- Children, teens watch their parents carefully.
- One of the most consistent risk factors for adolescent drinking/drug use is parental approval.
- Adolescents who report low parental monitoring are more likely to use substances.

## Remember who's the most powerful influence in your child's life. You.

- Even though often it may not feel like it, parents have more influence over their child than friends, music, TV, the Internet, and celebrities.
- Parents need to be the mature, calm, and reasonable Pre-Frontal Cortex for their kids, guiding them and integrating emotion, judgement, regulation, reason.
- Stay calm, focused, and confident.
- Parents who become aware of adolescent brain development can feel less injured when their 'good' kid does a 'bad' thing.
- Brain development explains why teens are so quick to try new things and forge into the unknown... BUT also explains why they still need their parents!

## Three Positive Parenting "Take Home" Things To Do

1. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should work on what their message is about alcohol and other drugs before they sit down with their children. Past experience and current knowledge can be turned into a powerful message, but being clear, organized, and consistent helps with your credibility and sincerity.
2. START EARLY! Start a conversation about alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs by 4th grade (or as soon as possible in case you have not started yet.) It's never too late, and the sooner the better. Be clear and specific, and engage them in educating you on "what kids are up against."
3. Learn about who their friends are, and ask if any of them seem to be struggling with "saying no," or having problems with early use of substances. This can be a way for them to show care and concern for their friends, and also allow them to tell you about issues they may be struggling with too.

More information: [varsanetwork.org](http://varsanetwork.org)

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## Books for Parents

- The Teenage Brain: Frances E Jensen (Harper 2015)
- From Binge to Blackout: Chris & Toren Volkman (New American Library 2006)
- What's Wrong With My Kid?: George E Leary Jr. (Hazelden 2012)
- Getting to Calm: Laura Kastner, PhD and Jennifer Wyatt. (Parent Map, 2009)
- Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You & Your Teen: David Walsh, PhD (Free Press 2005)
- Parenting from the Inside Out: Daniel Siegal MD
- Brainstorm - The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain: Daniel Seigal
- Marijuana - What's A Parent to Believe?: Tim L Cermak MD (Hazelden 2003)
- Drugs, Brains, and Behavior - The Science of Addiction: National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA 2014)
- A Parents Guide to Preventing Underage Marijuana Use: Seattle Children's Hospital (Social Development Research Group)

## Websites and Blogs:

- Talking to teens about alcohol and marijuana: <http://starttalkingnow.org/parents>
- Marijuana: <http://www.drugfree.org/MJTalkKit/>
- Alcohol: <http://starttalkingnow.org/parents/resources/alcohol>
- About Marijuana: <https://www.drugfree.org>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: <http://www.nida.org>
- For Teens: <http://abovetheinfluence.org>
- Teens - the Science Behind Drug Abuse: <http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov>