







Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs: A Parent's Guide

Practical advice to help you communicate with your child about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs



#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership and NHS Highland wish to thank the Health Service Executive (HSE) Ireland Alcohol Programme, granting us permission to use and adapt this guide, making it relevant locally for both Highland and Scotland references. This updated version will be integrated into our prevention and education programme. For more information go to: www.highland-adp.org.uk/strategy.

We would also like to extend our thanks to RISE Highlands, RASASH and Police Scotland for their expertise in the updating of this guide.



The guide will be added to our Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit, visit www.h-sat.co.uk.

Other useful helplines and websites are provided at the end of this guide.

#### **REFERENCES**

This guide was created using many existing publications and research papers as references. For any Highland specific information, please visit: www.highland-adp.org.uk

'Teen Talk' are quotes taken from surveys completed by young people.

#### **Planet Youth Model**

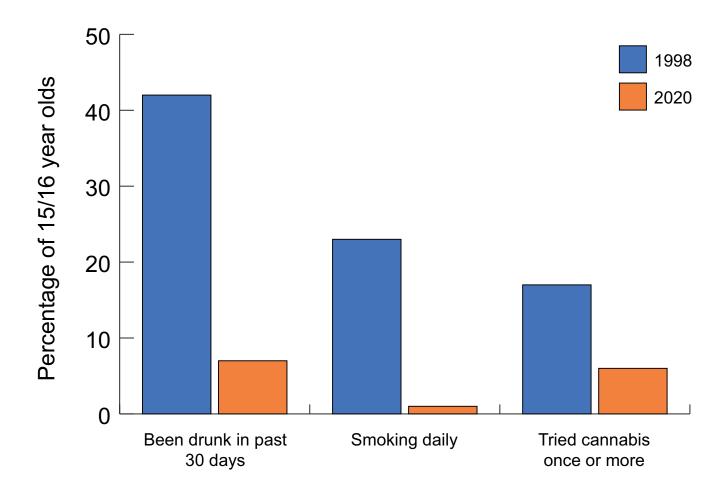
#### What is the Planet Youth model?

The Planet Youth model is a new approach in Highland to help reduce substance use in young people. It is an evidence-based approach which focuses on tackling the underlying issues that lead to substance use. Another benefit of this model is that it can improve the mental and physical wellbeing of young people. The model works in three key ways:

- 1. The project will aim to increase opportunities for young people, this will include many different activities such as sport, music, art, dance and others.
- 2. Working with communities, parental co-operation, local ownership and a proactive approach to tackle local issues.
- 3. Evidence based practice, implementing interventions based on data from your own community which will be collected from a school survey.

#### How successful has it been? Very!

In 20 years, Iceland (where the Planet Youth model was developed) has drastically cut the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in young people (planetyouth.org).

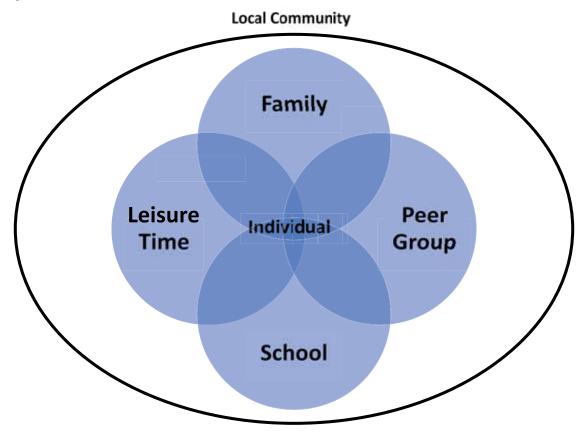


#### How you can help?

YOU can make a difference to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use in your area. Not only will your involvement make a difference for your own children, but it can also benefit other children and the wider community. Working with other parents can reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug use, the Planet Youth model brings communities and parents together to tackle these issues. Parents play a vital role in preventing substance use.

There are 4 key aspects of young people's lives which can be influenced by parents:

#### **Risk and protective factors**



- **Family** Increasing quality family time can reduce the risk of substance use. The Planet Youth model will look to support families and strengthen links within families.
- **Peer group** Aiming to increase the percentage of positive interactions with peers and decrease the negative interactions. Parents will also come together to better understand their children's friends and friends' families.
- **School** The Planet Youth model uses schools as community hubs, where parents will have the opportunity to meet one another to discuss approaches to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Schools will also play a key role in providing education on substance use and provide more high-quality activities for young people.
- **Leisure time** Improving the quality, range and accessibility of leisure time activities. Increasing the amount of time young people are engaging with positive structured activities and reducing the time for substance use.

For further information, see Risk and Protective Factors on page 15.

### Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
REFERENCES	3
PLANET YOUTH MODEL	4
ABOUT US	8
ABOUT THIS BOOKLET	8
QUICK GUIDE: 6 STEPS TO PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS9	
TALKING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS	10
Start young	11
Pick the right moment	11
What should I tell my child about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs?	
Make it a two-way conversation	11
Be realistic about the dangers	12
How to challenge marketing and media messages	
How to set a good example	
RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS	14
What are the risks and protective factors?	
RESILIENCE, EMOTIONS AND THE TEENAGE BRAIN	18
Brain development	19
Dealing with emotional problems and upset	19
Your guide to resilient children and teenagers	20
STAYING CLOSE TO YOUR CHILD	22
Help! My child won't talk to me	23
Your guide to active listening	24
Your guide to staying close to your child	25
SETTING BOUNDARIES	28
Help! Trying to set boundaries always ends in an argument	29
Your guide to setting boundaries	30
How to be the parent	32
Your guide to parties and nightclubs	33
Your guide to parties at your home	34
Your guide to handling resistance	35
Help! All their friends are allowed	36

#### 

FURTHER INFORMATION - HELPLINES AND WEBSITES......51

#### **ABOUT US**

The purpose of HADP is to achieve improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities by preventing and reducing drug and alcohol related harm. As a multi-agency partnership, HADP is responsible for setting the overarching alcohol and drugs strategy and action plan for Highland. The current membership includes Highland Council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Third Sector, Crown Office, Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and local Drug and Alcohol Forums.

#### **ABOUT THIS BOOKLET**

It's reassuring to know that most young people in Highland don't regularly use alcohol, smoke or use drugs, but for some, using substances at this time in their lives can give rise to all kinds of problems.

It is internationally recommended that children and young people should not drink, smoke or take drugs as their bodies and brains are still developing until early to mid-twenties. However, in Highland despite the legal age for smoking and alcohol use being 18 years, the average age for those who do start to experiment with drinking, smoking or using drugs is around the age of 13/14 years. In a pro alcohol environment it can be difficult for parents to prevent children from engaging in this activity. However, the longer that young people can delay drinking, smoking and other drug use the less likely it is that problems will occur in later life.

In Scotland, the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS)<sup>1</sup> informs progress towards Scottish Governments policies to reduce the harms of smoking, drinking and drug use among children and young people. Summary findings for Highland Council area (SALSUS 2018)<sup>2</sup>.

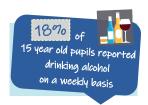
Teenagers and young people's attitudes to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are influenced by many things - friends, social media, advertising and, not least, the Scottish drinking culture. Fortunately, in spite of these many influences, parents remain the single strongest influence on their child's substance use behaviours.

This guide is aimed at parents, guardians and others who care for children. It can help you to understand the risks related to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in teenagers. It offers you practical advice on how to tackle issues that may arise and also gives you tips on how to get the conversation about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco started with your teenager, and how you can help them to protect themselves when faced with peer and societal pressure.

This booklet compliments resources available on the Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit (H-SAT) www.h-sat.co.uk









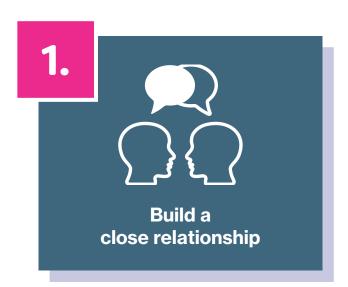


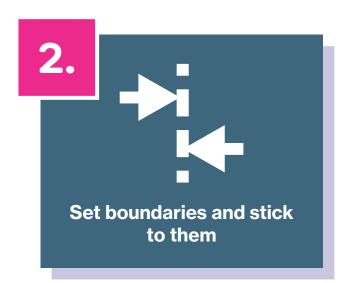
Summary findings for the Highland Council area (SALSUS 2018) $^{2}$ 

<sup>1</sup> https://bit.ly/3jj1B0T

<sup>2</sup> https://bit.ly/3b2gVMH

## QUICK GUIDE: 6 STEPS TO PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS













# TALKING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

CC

"Start a discussion ... be sure to take in their perspective. Be open and don't get angry. Come from a place of care."

95

#### **START YOUNG**

Scottish culture normalises alcohol, with drinking seen as inevitable and part of everyday life. Because of this, it's best to start conversations about alcohol at a young age.

Younger children are more likely than teenagers to be open to hearing what you have to say and to accept your rules. It's also easier to talk to your child before they feel the pressure to drink, smoke or take drugs. Don't worry if you haven't done this yet, as it's never too late to start the conversation.

#### PICK THE RIGHT MOMENT

With a younger child, the right moment can often be when they ask a question about tobacco, alcohol or drugs.

Your teenager may think that they 'know it all', so you may need to wait for an opportunity to talk. For example, if you are watching a TV show that features subtle marketing, drug-taking, drunkenness or dependence, or smoking, you could ask what they think about it. This approach is probably easier than trying to sit down and have a big talk. You could also highlight the risks and ways to stay safe if they are going to a party or teenage disco.

If you find out that your child is drinking, smoking or taking drugs, this can also be a time to have a chat.

### WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS?

#### IT'S HELPFUL FOR CHILDREN TO KNOW:

- Basic facts about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Why it is best to avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, especially while their bodies and brains are still developing.
- Ways to avoid harm.
- Ways to enjoy themselves and cope with life's ups and downs without using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

It is helpful to appreciate that young people may use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, for a variety of reasons. These may include curiosity, pleasure, as a response to stress or problem, or because friends may be doing it.

#### **MAKE IT A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION**

Getting your child's point of view is an important part of any conversation about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Sometimes teenagers don't feel heard - listen carefully to find out what they know, what's happening with their friends and how they feel about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. That way you can find out how best to support them. Ask young people what they might like about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and then ask what are the not so good things?

TEEN TALK

"Support them to make healthier choices. Educate them on drugs and alcohol."

#### BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE DANGERS

Your child needs to know the risks linked to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. At the same time, if you over-exaggerate the risks, they may dismiss what you are saying.

Many young people drink and try drugs without suffering any serious harm. It's good to acknowledge this, as well as pointing out the very real and sometimes tragic consequences of drinking alcohol and drugtaking. Smoking is different; most adults who smoke start smoking as a child.

"Tell them stories about you or friends ... tell them the dangers, but [don't] make them feel you're lecturing them."

#### **HOW TO CHALLENGE MARKETING AND MEDIA MESSAGES**

In Highland, our drinking culture seems to be part of everyday life, and drink and drugs are more available and affordable than ever. Tobacco is also easily available, but is expensive. Movies and TV shows, advertising and sports sponsorship tend to ignore the harm alcohol and drugs can do and just focus on the fun, positive things, this tends to normalise the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Research shows that when children view alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in a positive way, they are more likely to try them.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Try to limit your child's time online and avoid them watching 18 rated films and shows The more children are exposed to positive messages about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the bigger the effect it has on them.
- Draw their attention to the way alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are shown In what ways do they think it influences them? Where do they recognise product placement in TV shows and movies? What do they think of tobacco / alcohol sponsorship? What do they think of showing young people under the influence or getting drunk or smoking? What message does that give?
- Ask them if they feel that alcohol ads appeal to young people
  You could talk about where an alcohol company is sponsoring a sports competition or ask them if they
  ever see alcohol ads when they are online and how they feel about them.

#### Talk about the consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

Chat about news stories that show the harm alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can cause. For example when someone dies after drinking or taking drugs. Point out times where alcohol spoils someone's fun or gets them into trouble. Or how smoking can affect people in the short term, as well as the long term.

TEEN TALK

"My Dad drinks 10 pints on a Saturday night - so, he can hardly lecture me."

#### **HOW TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE**

Research shows the way parents drink and their attitudes to alcohol are one of the biggest influences on how their children drink. If a child's parents smoke, they are three times more likely to begin smoking.

If we overdo things ourselves, give in to pressure to drink from others or use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to unwind, it's difficult to expect different behaviour from our children.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Be aware of low-risk drinking guidelines (see below).
- Keep your drinking, smoking or drug-taking away from your child.
- Avoid drinking at home before going out socially.
- Don't let children see you drunk.
- Be aware of the messages you are giving about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs don't laugh about drunken exploits and hangovers in front of children or say things that reinforce the idea that smoking, drinking or taking drugs is the best way to relax, handle stress, to take time out or enjoy yourself. For example, "I need a drink after the day I've had".
- Try to protect children from older siblings' or other parent's pattern of harmful alcohol use.
- Try to cut down or seek readily available help if you worry about your own pattern of drinking or drug use. Only smoke outside, and try to stop smoking.
- Get informed be aware of low risk drinking guidelines (see below) and other tobacco, alcohol and drug issues on www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living or www.nhs24.com/alcohol











#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

The risks to young people of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are very real. Young people have shared that they or their friends had been hurt or had done something they regretted due to drink or drugs.

#### **RISKS INCLUDE:**

- Anti-social behaviour, like vandalism and fighting.
- Accidents and injuries.
- Alcohol poisoning, drug overdose and bad reactions to a drug, or to smoking.
- Risky behaviour.
- Getting in trouble with the police and/or having a criminal record.
- Doing badly at school.
- Problems with family and friends.
- Anxiety and low mood.
- Self-harm and suicide.
- Arguing or falling out with friends

Risk of exploitation – peers or adults may use substances to target, befriend, and 'groom' a young person into 'owing them something'. They may manipulate, coerce, or threaten a young person to perform acts which are sexual; including sending sexualised images, or criminal; including moving or selling substances. If a young person is using substances, they may be more vulnerable to be used in this way by perpetrators.

#### **PROTECTIVE FACTORS:**

These are protective factors that can help prevent young people from starting to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

#### • Family/Parents/Carers:

Parental support / monitoring

Model sensible behaviour

Clear rules / boundaries

#### Peer group:

Friends that don't use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Not involved in risky behaviour

Pro-social attitudes

#### School:

Positive supportive relationships

Motivation to learn

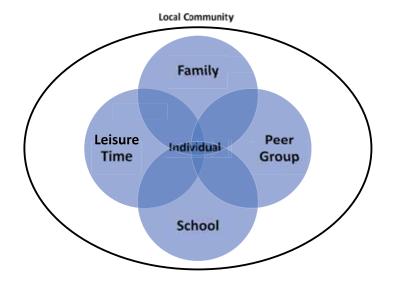
Safety and attachment

#### • Leisure Time and Community:

Meaningful use of time

Hobbies, recreation and sport

Community support



REMEMBER, LEGAL DOESN'T MEAN SAFE:
Alcohol kills more people than all other drugs
put together. Smoking kills far more people than
alcohol and drugs combined. Legal over-thecounter and prescription medicines may be used
in a way that is not described, or prescribed by a
health professional.

#### **LONGER TERM RISKS:**

- Poor mental health, for example; depression and anxiety, difficulties with learning, memory problems, lack of concentration.
- Health problems like cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease, liver damage.
- Later drug and alcohol problems, like dependence.
- Future regret and loss at not having advanced further in your personal life or studies as you had hoped due to your problem drug/alcohol use.
- Being photographed when smoking or drunk and the consequences of these images appearing on social media.
- Anxiety or trauma from an alcohol or drug-related incident.
- Failed relationships due to your alcohol/drug related behaviours.

For more information on the risks see www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living

Research shows that the earlier young people get involved with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the greater the risks. Help them to avoid alcohol for as long as possible and encourage them not to take drugs or smoke.

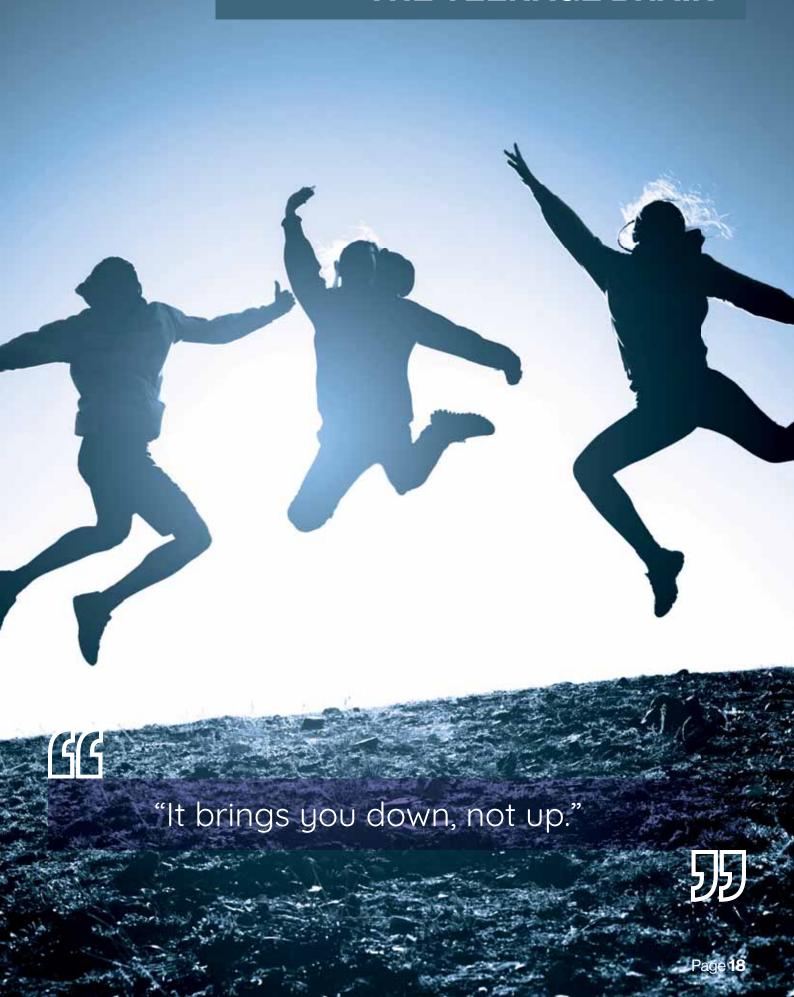
reen TALK

people with alcohol poisoning,

people blacking out, people seriously
harming themselves, people having horrible

comedowns."

# RESILIENCE, EMOTIONS AND THE TEENAGE BRAIN



#### **BRAIN DEVELOPMENT**

From the age of 12 until our mid-20's our brains are constantly developing. Using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs at this time can damage the growing brain, causing long-term emotional problems and difficulties with learning, planning and memory.

#### **DEALING WITH EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND UPSET**

Upsets, disappointments, arguments and broken hearts are just a few of the challenges that young people face. When they rely on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to get through social situations or cope with tough times, they miss the chance to learn the skills of identifying their emotions, sharing problems and asking for help. These skills can help them to cope better the next time and build their confidence and resilience.

Without these skills, they might also find it harder to cope emotionally later in life and be tempted to turn to a chemical 'quick fix'.

TEEN TALK

"It numbs the bad feelings."

Help your child to understand that using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to get a short term 'lift' can leave them feeling worse and make it harder to cope the next time. Set a good example in how you cope with difficult situations.

Young people who drink heavily have more depression and anxiety. Alcohol is also linked to self-harm. Cannabis can trigger underlying mental health problems in some people. Smoking affects mental health as well as physical health.

TEEN TALK

# "Alcohol gave me frequent panic attacks."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO RESILIENT CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Resilience is developed when children are guided and supported to know how to manage and cope with situations so that they do not become overwhelmed.

Resilience helps us to cope and 'bounce back' from difficult times, recover and move on.

Research has shown that children who are resilient are less likely to smoke or be involved in problem alcohol or other drug use. They tend to have better self- esteem, do better in school and have better relationships.

#### **SKILLS TO BUILD RESILIENCE:**

- Being aware of your feelings is really important
  - Strong feelings can be overwhelming for young people. Anxiety or sadness may leave them feeling powerless. Hurt and resentment can make them feel angry or even violent.
- Help your child by asking them how they feel regularly and help them to recognise their feelings

"How are you feeling?" "How did that make you feel?" "What are you feeling about that situation?" "I'd be upset about that; how do you feel about it?" "It would be understandable to feel hurt by that, how are you?"

- Learning to recognise and name our feelings is a skill we can learn
  - This can help us to manage our emotions better.
- Understand problems

This means taking some time to accurately get to the bottom of what is causing a problem. It makes it easier to find a solution, accept things we can't change and avoid blaming ourselves.

- Give yourself thinking time really slow down
  - Don't act on impulse. Practice thinking about your options and what might happen as a result of each choice before you act. Encourage your child to do the same. Then, when you, or they, need to, you will be able to take that time to think.
- Show empathy

Empathy is understanding what it is like to be in someone else's shoes. Encourage your child to think about how other people might be feeling or why they are behaving in a certain way.

- Believe in their ability
  - Show your child you have faith in their ability to get through difficult times and remind them of their strengths. Support them to solve their own problems and to be successful, rather than doing things for them. Praise them when they do well.

#### Stay hopeful (optimistic)

Being optimistic doesn't mean being blind to reality or pretending things are different from how they really are. It means finding a way to be hopeful and look for positives. Remind your child that difficult times will pass and that sometimes when things go wrong or don't go to plan, something good and unexpected can happen.

#### Ask for help

Asking for what we want or need, or being able to say how we are feeling, and why, are powerful skills. Emphasise how important it is for your child to tell someone and get help if they feel they're not coping. Advise them to talk to a friend or trusted adult, if they don't want to talk to you. You could also let them know about some of the places they can go to for help listed in the back of this booklet.

STAYING HAPPY AND HEALTHY: Encourage them to do things that help them to feel good and cope better, like taking exercise, getting enough sleep, eating well, having time to relax and enjoy themselves and having good relationships with friends and family.



#### **HELP! MY CHILD WON'T TALK TO ME**

"My child never talks to me and closes up when I ask about school or their friends. I feel like the only communication we have is me nagging them and I worry I won't know if they are having problems."

It can be hurtful when your once-chatty child won't talk to you and you may worry about how they're feeling or what they're doing. It can be hard to find the balance between respecting their space and keeping communication open.

TEEN TALK

"Just really be there for them."

#### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

#### Accept that things have changed

It may make you feel a little rejected if a child no longer wants to confide in you. But a life and identity separate from parents are vital parts of healthy teen development. Try to see the positives in the fact your child is becoming independent.

#### • Start with small talk

If the best you get from your teenager is an eye roll or a few grunts, then trying to chat about 'big' things like alcohol, tobacco and other drugs probably feels very difficult. It can be hard if you're worried, but you might need to take a step back and work on chatting about small things first.

Take an interest in what they're interested in, even if you find it boring. Ask about how their favourite sports team is doing, ask their opinion on news stories that they might be interested in, or find out about a book they're reading or a computer game they're playing. Try to be interesting company and share jokes or things you've done or read.

#### Watch and wait

A teen may only want to talk for 5 minutes a day, and chances are it won't be the time that suits you best. They may wander into the kitchen while you're making dinner, or chat in the car or while watching TV.

If you can predict when they're most chatty, try hard to be around at that time. Or make some space for a conversation to start – offer lifts so that you will have time in the car together, stay in the same room, take them shopping or ask them to help you with something like walking the dog or tidying up after dinner.

#### Learn to really listen

If your child talks to you, give your full attention and use active listening, so they're more likely to do it again! See our active listening guide below.

TEEN TALK

# "Try to put yourself in the situation of the child."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening can encourage your child to talk and express their feelings. It can also help them to feel respected and valued, to know that you want to hear what they have to say. It may feel a bit weird at first, but keep practicing and it should get easier. Some of the main tips are:

#### **ASK OPEN QUESTIONS**

- This means questions that start with 'how', 'when', 'what', 'who' or 'why'. Questions that don't have a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
- Sometimes 'why?' can make a teen feel they are being judged, which can shut down a conversation so use it wisely!
- Don't interrupt to ask questions.
- Listen until you're sure they have finished what they were saying.

#### **SUMMARISE**

Gather the important parts of the conversation and share: "You feel like an outsider when everyone else but you are drinking", "You feel like there are no risks to using cannabis".

#### REFLECT

Just repeating a word or phrase can encourage them to carry on talking: "Yes, it is difficult.", "You were really worried."

#### **CLARIFY**

Ask for more details: "Tell me more about that", "How exactly did that happen?".

#### GIVE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"Go on", "Ah, I see", "Yes, I know what you mean".

#### **LEAVE QUIET MOMENTS**

Don't feel you have to fill the silence. Staying quiet while keeping your attention on them can encourage them to say something else.

#### REACT

Show that you've understood how they are feeling: "That's really hard", "You must have felt terrible", "It must be very difficult to cope with that". Listening out for the emotion and feeling behind what they say is as important as the facts they state.

#### **USE NON-VERBAL ENCOURAGEMENT**

smiling, nodding, responding to their feelings with facial expressions or mirroring their facial expressions and keeping eye contact shows that they have your full attention.

#### YOUR GUIDE TO STAYING CLOSE TO YOUR CHILD

Research shows that having a strong bond with their parents is one of the things that protects kids when it comes to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. It can be tough to find ways to stay close to your child at a time when it may feel like they're pushing you away, but feeling loved and connected can make a big difference to them.

TEEN TALK

"My parents ... gave me space to speak."

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### • Take – and make – your chances to talk

Your child may only want to chat for a few minutes a day. If your child starts chatting, drop everything and make the most of the moment to listen!

#### Listen more than you talk

Spend more time trying to understand their world and their feelings than offering your opinions or advice.

#### Spend time with them

Try and spend at least a few minutes alone with your child every day. Try to find some activity you can do together, or even just be in the same room while they are watching TV or playing a computer game.

Don't give up on family time as your child gets older. Keep up routines, family outings and activities, and let your child know you expect them to join in.

#### Be loving

Say hello with a smile, go to the door to say goodbye when they leave, say goodnight and good morning. Touch them on the arm and ask for a kiss or a hug when you can. You might get a hard stare 9 times out of 10, but it's keeping the door open for them to come to you at times when they're feeling vulnerable. Be kind and caring, sympathise when things go wrong, without offering a solution or an opinion. These little things can build up your relationship and make your child feel more secure.

#### Protect your relationship

Try not to let disagreements and arguments damage your relationship or let the negatives outweigh the positive. Compensate if you've fallen out by adding something positive – spend good time with them, bring them a snack or drink, smile or make physical contact like a pat or a hug. Forgive and forget: reach out after an argument and try and find out if something is bothering them.

#### • Be the parent

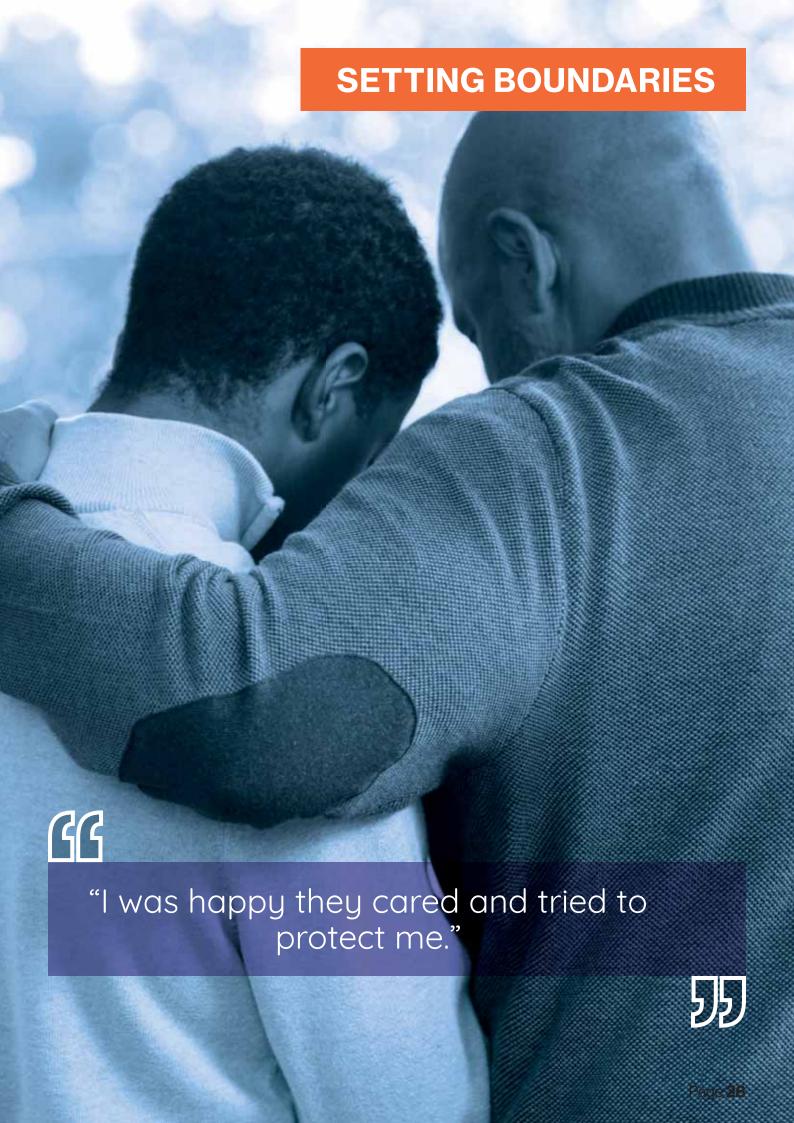
Being close to your child doesn't mean spoiling them or giving in on important issues. As a parent, there are times when you will have to make decisions that your child doesn't like. But attempting to parent when your relationship is damaged is like pushing a boulder uphill. Kill them with kindness when you can and praise them when they're being good and the rest should be a lot easier.

#### Decrease shame & blame

If your child feels manipulated, coerced or threatened into using, moving, or selling substances then they may be the victim of exploitation, a type of abuse, by a peer or an adult. Sometimes these people will blackmail young people, or convince them that they are friends. In these situations, it is important to be open, to believe, and to not place blame on your child.

"I have a very close relationship with my mum ... That bond has always made me think, 'Would she be happy with what I am doing?"

We all love our children, but it's important to find ways to show them, so that they really feel loved.



#### HELP! TRYING TO SET BOUNDARIES ALWAYS ENDS IN AN ARGUMENT

"My child and I are constantly at war. I'm not happy with them going out so much, but I just feel tired of fighting all the time, so I let it go."

If you and your child have a difficult relationship, trying to lay down the law can be a challenge.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### Work on your relationship

If they see you as being on their side – someone who 'has their back' – they're more likely to listen to what you have to say.

#### • Learn how to handle conflict

Treat your child with respect, be aware of your own tone, language and attitude. Listen until you understand and appreciate why they might be upset. As appropriate, say what you think, need and feel.

#### • Give a little, but don't give up

Give your child choices and freedom wherever you can. It will boost their self-esteem and confidence if they know you trust them. But don't turn a blind eye or give in to keep the peace where safety is concerned.

#### Have faith in yourself

Teenagers can put up a good argument, but you still have the right to set the rules and say that you don't want them to drink, smoke or take drugs. Knowing that they may bend the rules doesn't mean you shouldn't have any. See Handling resistance, page 35.

TEEN TALK

"Lack of rules made me feel unsafe and unsure."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO SETTING BOUNDARIES

Having rules can help your child to

- Avoid feeling under too much pressure from friends.
- Avoid situations they can't handle or later regret.
- Feel safer.
- Feel loved.

While they may complain, clear, fair rules let your child know where they stand and show you care enough to protect them.

TEEN TALK

"I stuck by [the rules] because I thought they were fair."

#### **START EARLY**

To help avoid conflict, make sure your child knows what is allowed and what's not allowed before a problem comes up. For example, you could tell a child of 11 or 12:

- They can go only to the local disco once they get to secondary school.
- When they are older they won't be allowed to go to parties unless you talk with the parent first.
- They will not be allowed to stay out past midnight until they are 16.

#### BE CLEAR WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY

Every family has its own values and beliefs. What's right for one family may not be right for yours. Decide what's OK and what's not OK in your family and let your child know. **If there are other parents or guardians in the house, make sure to have a united voice**.

#### TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU EXPECT

Let your child know that you want them to be free to socialise and become independent, but that having more freedom depends on them proving they are responsible enough to keep themselves safe. This means sticking by the rules.

#### **EXPLAIN WHY YOU NEED THE RULES**

In every family and household there are rules. Explain why you need some rules about tobacco, alcohol and drugs to help your child see that you care about their well-being and understand the issues from your perspective. Sharing some of the risks may help. When you have this discussion, listen to your child's opinions, too, without interrupting. It is important to explain to your child that rules and boundaries are needed because they are loved and you want to keep them safe, rather than necessarily punish them.

#### TRY TO INVOLVE YOUR CHILD IN SETTING THE RULES

Children are more likely to stick to rules if they're involved and agree to them. You could say, "I know that some of your friends are going to be drinking at the party. I'm not happy about you drinking at your age, so I want to chat to you about how we are going to handle this." Listen to their opinions and objections. Be prepared to negotiate and give them some of what they want, if possible, such as staying out slightly later.

"Talk about it and ask questions and come up with a plan."

#### MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND THE RULES

If the rules aren't clear, it's harder for a child to stick to them. For example, have a set time they are expected in at each evening.

#### AGREE WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE RULES ARE BROKEN

Try to make the consequences fair. For example:

- Late home?
  - They will have to come home earlier the next time until they get your trust.
- Don't answer their phone when they are out?
- They have to stay at home for a time.
- Buy alcohol?
  - They don't get money for a time.

#### MAKE SURE CONSEQUENCES HAPPEN IF THE RULES ARE BROKEN

Rules without consequences don't work. Consequences don't need to be severe – they just need to happen! Don't give in or make an exception. If you let things go once, it's much harder to try and make rules work in the future.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGE GOOD BEHAVIOUR**

Make sure to notice and thank them if they stick to the rules or help to keep their friends safe. You could make a point of rewarding their good behaviour with more freedom: "Yes OK, you can stay out later. You did stick to the rules last time, so I know I can trust you."

#### **HOW TO BE THE PARENT**

There's strong evidence that knowing what your child is doing and having rules to prevent underage drinking, smoking and drug taking are important in keeping them safe.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Get to know their friends and find out who they will be with while they are out.
- Check that they are where they say they are. Call the parents if they are sleeping over or going to a
  party.
- Insist they keep their phone on and charged.
- Watch how much money they have and be aware how they are spending it.
- Look for signs that they may be drinking like taking rucksacks to parties or drink going missing from your home.
- Keep alcohol, tobacco and medicines locked up.
- Be aware of the effects and signs of using different drugs. See page 46 for more information.

TEEN TALK

"Parents should protect their children."

#### **BE BRAVE**

Keeping a close eye on your child and setting rules is the difficult choice. You may even feel it's making things worse. If your child gets upset with you for 'interfering' or embarrassing them, you may be tempted to let things go and avoid an argument.

But having firm but fair rules to protect your child is the best choice. Have faith in yourself. Even if they protest or get angry, deep down no child is unhappy to know that their parents care enough to try to protect them.

"If I did not come home by a certain time they checked in with me, which was annoying but ... I knew my parents cared."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO PARTIES AND NIGHTCLUBS

- Take time to decide if you are happy for your child to go to a party or nightclub
   You don't need to answer straight away. Contact the host parents or organisers to check they will be
   supervised and if alcohol will be available.
- If you don't want your child to drink alcohol at a party, tell the host parents
   Remember parents can feel peer pressure too and it may be worth you sharing how you feel as the host parent may also have concerns.
- Drop your child at the party or nightclub and wait until they have gone inside
  This can avoid pre-drinking or your child ending up somewhere different to the place you have agreed.
  Some teenagers drink before they go into the local nightclub.
- Don't give them alcohol to take to a party

  Although a common myth, there is no evidence to show that parental supply of alcohol protects
  young people from harm. It is risky, providing another source of access to alcohol for young people.
- Collect your child or arrange for another trusted parent to collect them
  If their rules or collection times are different to yours, make your own arrangements.
- If your child breaks the rules, make sure there are consequences to help them the next time For example, if they don't leave at the agreed time, go inside to collect them. They may be embarrassed, but they probably won't be late the next time.
- Talk to other parents about breaking rules
  Set some rules together. Agree with other parents that you will tell each other if one child is late or has drunk alcohol. Let your child know this will happen.
- Avoid sleepovers after parties
  If they come home, you can check they are OK.
- Be available to collect them early, even if they had planned to stay overnight with a friend It's reassuring for your child to know that they can ring you at any time to be collected. Let them know that you will help them out no matter what, even if they have broken the rules.
- Greet your child when they come home
  It's easy for teenagers to hide the fact that they have been drinking by simply popping their head into their parents' bedroom to say they are home. Stay up or get up so that you can check they are OK.

For older children, our skills section on page 42 gives you some advice for keeping them safe around alcohol and drugs when they are socialising.

TEEN TALK

"I often stayed at a friend's house to hide the fact I'd been drinking."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO PARTIES AT YOUR HOME

#### Don't feel you have to say yes

If you don't feel comfortable, suggest alternatives like a trip to the cinema, a shopping trip with friends or an activity at home.

#### Find out who they want to invite

It's easier to manage if you know the people who are being invited, and ideally their parents. If you know one of the friends has a reputation for drinking, drugs or making trouble, don't be afraid to say no to them.

#### • Check for guests bringing drink

If you have told your child that alcohol is not allowed at their party, make sure their friends don't bring drink into the house. Greet the guests at the door and look out for people bringing bags or rucksacks.

#### Let parents know if alcohol will be served and if you will allow people to smoke, be clear where it is allowed

If alcohol is allowed, you should let the other parents know as they may wish to have a conversation with their child around alcohol and what is expected of them. Parents will welcome this information to help them make an informed choice. They may also make a decision to not allow their child to attend the party.

#### Let parents know the times their child will be at your house

Tell other parents when the party starts, and finishes, so that they know when to expect their child home. Offer to text them to let them know when their child arrives or leaves.

#### • Don't cover up for other people's children

Make sure your child and their friends know that if they get drunk or take drugs, you will have to let their parents know.

TEEN TALK

"I sometimes think parents are too soft."

#### YOUR GUIDE TO HANDLING RESISTANCE

Faced with a determined teenager, it can be easy to back down. Have your answers ready. Being prepared can help you to stay strong.

#### • "Everyone else is allowed to go."

I know you don't want to feel the odd one out, but it's my job to do what I think is best. I'm not happy about you being there with no adults when people are going to be drinking.

#### • "You don't need to worry. I can look after myself, I'm not stupid."

I know you're not stupid. That's why I'm letting you go. But if you want that freedom, you have to stay in contact with me so I know that you're safe.

#### • "Everyone else will be bringing a few cans."

I know you feel left out, but you can still have a good time without drinking. I'm not going to give you alcohol while you're underage.

#### • "You don't understand. It's just a bit of fun."

I do understand why you want to drink. And I know it can be fun. Kids get hurt and injured every day and do things they regret when they're drunk. I care about you and I'm not going to put you in that position. You can have fun without alcohol.

#### • "You smoke. Why are you trying to stop me?"

I started smoking when I was your age, and you've seen how hard I've found it to stop. I don't want that for you.

#### "You drink. Why are you trying to stop me?"

You can drink when you're older. But your brain is still developing, and alcohol messes with that. And it's unhealthy to start drinking young. I want you to wait as long as possible.

#### "I hate you!"

I can see why you feel that way. It would be easier for me to give in. But I care about you and I'm going to do what I think is best for you. Even if it makes you unhappy right now.

While it's OK to negotiate, don't give in to pressure. Listen to any objections, but once you have made your mind up, don't get drawn into any more discussion. Just repeat your position and let them deal with it.

#### **HELP! ALL THEIR FRIENDS ARE ALLOWED**

"All my child's friends are allowed to bring alcohol to parties. I don't want my child to drink, but I worry that they will feel bad if they are the odd one out."

For most teenagers, friends are a big part of their life. Evidence shows that kids are more likely to drink, smoke or take drugs if their friends do.

It's a common belief that giving your child a small amount of alcohol can help them to drink more responsibly. However, the research says giving your child alcohol can mean they drink more and more harmfully. The earlier young people start to drink, the more likely they are to develop problems with alcohol later on.

TEEN TALK

they can absolutely have fun at a party with drunk people without being drunk."

When asked, lots of young people suggested giving a non-alcoholic drink disguised as alcohol, to help a teenager who is finding it hard to deal with peer pressure.

TEEN TALK

"Tell them to be their own person ... nobody's going to remember in a week's time that you were the one not drinking at the party."

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### • Be understanding about peer pressure

It's hard to deal with the pressure to fit in and drink, even for us adults.

#### • Be there for your child

Teenagers are under a lot of pressure and can feel very vulnerable. Your child needs the security of knowing you're on their side and want to keep them safe.

#### Talk to your child's friends' parents

If you're worried, it can help to talk to friends' parents or to the school. If other parents are worried too, see if you can set some rules together. This can help to avoid the argument - "Everyone else is allowed..."

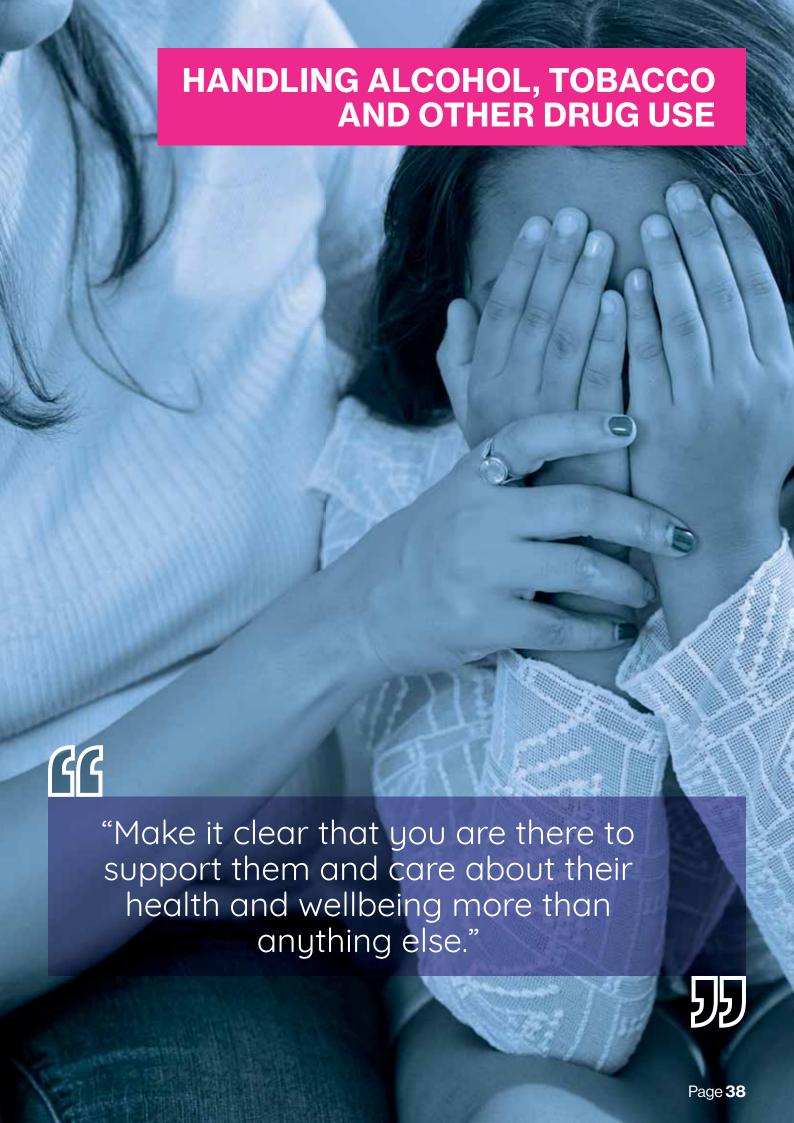
#### Let your child's friends know what your rules are

Though your child might be mortified, it can reduce pressure on them if their friends know your rules. For example:

- They have a fixed time to be home.
- You will call their friends' parents if necessary.
- Friends will not be allowed to bring alcohol into your house.

TEEN TALK

"Talk to your kid and find out what they want ... Teach them to say no to things they're not comfortable with."



#### **HELP! MY CHILD GOT REALLY DRUNK**

"My child went to a school dance and I was called to come and collect them, they were in such a state. I just don't know the best way to handle it."

While you might have been upset to see your child drunk, try to put your emotions aside and use the opportunity to have a talk about alcohol.

It might be easier to ignore the drinking, or even laugh it off. But alcohol is risky, especially for teenagers.

#### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

#### Listen

Wait until they have sobered up and you are both calm. Use active listening (see page 24) so you can find out as much as possible about what happened. Think about what your child needs to know so that it doesn't happen again. For example:

- Were they aware of how much they were drinking?
- Did your child drink before they left the house?
- Did they feel anxious or under pressure?
- Had your child planned to get drunk?
- Where did your child get the alcohol?
- Were there any risky situations, for example, walking on dark roads where there were no pavements or being sick due to the alcohol?
- Is there anything else they want to talk about or need help with/more information about?
- Did it ruin their night or the following days?

#### Help your child learn

Without overwhelming your child, give them some information, based on what they tell you. You could talk about:

- The amount of alcohol in different drinks and how it's dangerous to mix drinks, or drink very quickly.
- How too much alcohol in the blood stream shuts down the central nervous system, and can lead to unconsciousness and even death.
- The risks of accidents and injuries.
- How being out of control can lead to someone behaving in a way they may later regret for
  example getting in trouble with the law or falling out with people. Drinking too much can affect
  someone's ability to make decisions. A person cannot consent to sex if they are drunk.

#### If your child has broken the rules, give a consequence

This doesn't mean blaming them, but instead giving a clear message that you don't approve of drinking underage and the very good reasons why. Give a consequence, such as taking away their phone, reducing pocket money, expecting them home at an earlier time in future, or grounding them for a couple of weeks.

#### Stop it happening again

Show your child that you will put rules in place to stop this happening again. This doesn't mean locking them in their room, but taking steps so that you can let them go out without worrying about this happening again. Make sure they know that you're doing this because you care about them and want to keep them safe. See from page 28 for some hints

#### **HELP! I FOUND CIGARETTES IN MY CHILD'S ROOM**

# HOW CAN I TALK TO THEM ABOUT NOT SMOKING, WITHOUT SOUNDING HYPOCRITICAL OR LECTURING?

Most adult smokers begin smoking as children, and want to quit. We know that the younger an individual starts to smoke, the more likely they are to be an adult smoker, the heavier they are likely to smoke during adulthood and the more likely they are to fall ill as a result of smoking.

Young people don't often realise how quickly a person can become dependent on nicotine. Talking with them can help them gain confidence in their ability to make healthy, independent choices. Children whose parents speak with them about smoking are much less likely to start. That's especially true if a parent smokes.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### Start a conversation

An item on the evening news, a film where a character lights up, a family friend who quit, are all great opportunities to start a conversation. Start talking to children about smoking when they are young and continue through their secondary school years and beyond. Many children that do smoke start around age 11 and some are dependent on nicotine by age 12.

Try to keep the conversation relaxed by talking when you are side by side rather than face to face. Or by using open-ended questions to help turn a conversation into a discussion rather than a lecture. e.g. "What would you say if one of your friends started smoking?"

#### Keep your home and car smoke-free

Children whose parents have made their home and car completely smoke-free are far less likely to start smoking themselves. For information and support see the useful contacts section in the back of this book.

#### • If you do smoke, avoid smoking in front of children and young people

Discuss the downside of smoking, especially the immediate aspects.

Less money to spend, bad breath, yellow teeth, smelly hair, etc. If your child is physically active and into sports, you could talk about the shortness of breath and the loss of endurance that smoking causes.

#### Correct the myth that most young people smoke

Many children try smoking because they think everyone else is doing it but the truth is the majority of people (both young and older) don't. Try saying: "I read that most young people in Scotland don't smoke. What do you think?" Also avoid implying benefits of smoking and perpetuating myths around smoking (for example stress relief, weight loss).

#### Explain how hard it can be to guit

The longer that someone has been smoking, the more difficult they will find it to quit. The nicotine in cigarettes is an extremely addictive drug. Sometimes young people try smoking, just to see what it's like, but then find it difficult to stop. For information and support see the useful contacts section in the back of this book.

#### Help children and young people practice resistance skills

The more often a child thinks (and plans) about how they would refuse a cigarette, the more likely they are not to smoke in the long term. Try asking questions such as: "what could you say if someone offered you a cigarette and you didn't want one?".

#### Help young people with school-based homework assignments

All schools should deliver to bacco prevention activities as part of the curriculum, and this can be a great opportunity to start a conversation.

#### Proxy purchasing

It's against the law to buy tobacco and associated products for people under the age of 18, this is known as proxy purchase.

#### E-cigarettes and vaping

Nicotine vaping products (aka vapes or e-cigarettes) have become more popular over recent years. Although e-cigarettes are less harmful than smoking tobacco, it's still important to discourage young people from experimenting with them.

Vaping is not risk-free, and potential long-term health effects of using e-cigarettes are still to be determined.

Although nicotine-free e-cigarettes are available, most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is addictive.

There are concerns that e-cigarettes may appeal to young non-smokers, potentially introducing nicotine to young people. It's best that young people don't use nicotine in any form.

E-cigarettes are an age-restricted product and the laws on buying and selling them to under 18s are the same as for tobacco.

#### HELP! I THINK MY CHILD IS TAKING DRUGS

"I'm really worried about my child. I know some of their friends take drugs and lately my child's mood has been awful and they are not doing well at school."

This can be concerning for parents, but try not to panic.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### Stay calm

First of all, try to stay calm. Getting angry or emotional probably won't help. Take some time to get more information and plan how you want to deal with the problem. It may help to remember that most young people that do experiment with drugs don't become dependent.

As a parent it is important to create a safe space and opportunity to have discussions with your child.

If your child discloses that they are being abused or exploited, there are services who can provide further support and information (RISE pg.52)

#### Inform yourself

Be sure there is a problem and find out what they are taking. You may need to keep a close eye on them for a little while to be sure. Some of the signs of drug use like moodiness or losing interest in hobbies are normal for teenagers.

#### Find out why

Try to understand why your child is using drugs. The best way to help depends on the type of drug and how they are using it:

- If it's occasional drug use with friends, you may need to keep a closer eye on them and limit their freedom.
- If they are using substances to cope with stress or problems, try to get to the bottom of what's bothering them and support them to cope in a healthier way.
- If you feel they may be dependent, bring them to your GP and learn about how to support them, or contact your local Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service, details on page 51.

# GET SOME PROFESSIONAL ADVICE IF YOU DON'T FEEL YOU CAN MANAGE ALONE

#### Talk to them

- Find a time when you won't be distracted or interrupted and you are both calm.
- Listen to them and get as much information as possible. Try not to give your opinion, get angry or interrupt, as this may shut down the conversation.
- Don't be afraid to take some time, especially if you are feeling very emotional or overwhelmed: "OK. I need to think about this and I'll talk to you about it tomorrow." That way you can get more information, advice and support, from a friend or professional.

#### Don't ignore it

Things are not going to get better if you turn a blind eye, especially if they are using alcohol or drugs to cope with a problem or they are at risk of dependence.

Your child may not want to talk, may get aggressive or just deny the problem. It may take a little time to get through to them and you may need to get extra help or advice, but don't give up.

For more information see https://knowthescore.info/help-and-support/

#### TIPS FOR SAFER SOCIALISING

#### PREPARE THEM FOR PEER PRESSURE

- Ask them how they feel about drinking, smoking and/or taking drugs and if they feel pressured to join
  in. Warn them not to tease or pressure people who aren't joining in and not to let their friends do this
  either.
- Let them know that they can say no and give them reasons:
  - "I don't want to smoke like my parents."
  - "I can't go home drunk, my parents would kill me."
  - "I have to get up early tomorrow for training."
  - "Nah I prefer to stay sober."
  - "No I'm worried about taking it. I don't like the idea of being out of control."
  - "It makes me feel ill I'll enjoy the night more without it."
  - "I'm on antibiotics."
- Reassure them that it's sometimes better to avoid a situation where they will be under a lot of pressure
  or where things might get out of control because of alcohol or drugs.

#### JUDGING ALCOHOL INTAKE

Talk to your kids about:

- What a 'unit' is (a drink containing 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol (ethanol)). Show them what a unit of alcohol is and why there is a limit.
- How different drinks have different strengths for example, some beers can contain twice the amount of alcohol as others. Show them the % alcohol content on drinks' labels so they understand.
- How it's hard to judge the amount of alcohol in mixed drinks and drinks that other people give to them.
- How even a small number of units can affect their judgement. It takes time for our bodies to process alcohol. This means the full effects will not be felt immediately, while the alcohol level rises in our blood. This is especially true if they drink a lot of alcohol in a short space of time.
- The danger of drinking spirits and strong beers, where a small amount contains the same amount of alcohol as a much bigger drink of beer or cider.
- The danger of sweet-tasting drinks like alcopops, which don't taste of alcohol and are easy to drink.

#### **LOOKING AFTER THEIR MATES**

Talk to them about the risks and give them tips to help keep their friends safe. Talking about 'other people' helps to make your child aware of their own safety too. You could tell them:

- "Do you know what to do if one of your friends drinks too much? I didn't realise but apparently it can be really dangerous to let them sleep it off."
- "Keep an eye on your friends at the party-make sure they don't do anything they wouldn't do if they
  were sober."
- "If you see one of your friends getting out of control, try and make sure they don't drink any more alcohol and give them a soft drink otherwise they might go unconscious."
- "Don't let your friends take any risks or go off on their own if they're drunk or high I heard about some lads who went swimming after drinking and one of them drowned."

"Talk to them about the experience.

Be supportive and don't complain - it
doesn't help."

At the same time, let them know they don't need to 'fix' a friend's problems. This is too much responsibility for a teenager. If they feel a friend is in trouble, they should always look for help from an adult.

- Help them to understand about alcohol poisoning and drug effects and what to do. Teenagers need
  to know that drinking black coffee, getting fresh air, getting or taking cold showers won't help once a
  drug is in the bloodstream.
- Encourage them to call you or get medical help if they are worried about someone or something goes
  wrong. Explain that the consequences of not getting help can be very serious and they shouldn't
  worry about getting into trouble.

It can make a teenager feel valued and behave well if they know you trust them to do the right thing.

#### **GETTING HOME SAFELY**

- Be available to pick them up or insist on picking them up, depending on their age, or pre-book a taxi at the time they are due to leave.
- Let them know that mixing drugs (including alcohol) with other drugs (including prescription medicines) can have unpredictable or dangerous effects. Mixing prescription drugs with other drugs (including alcohol) can stop a prescription medication from working.
- Warn them not to drive after drinking or taking drugs and never to take a lift with someone who is
  under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Have a back-up plan for when a designated driver ends up
  drinking or taking drugs.
- Tell them never to leave a party or club alone or to let their friends go off alone in case you or your friends hurt yourselves/pass out or need help.
- Advise them to stay in groups of three or more.
- Let them know the dangers of walking home under the influence, especially on poorly lit roads.

#### **MIXING DRINK/DRUGS**

Let them know that mixing drugs, including alcohol, with other drugs including prescription medicines, can have unpredictable or dangerous effects. For example, alcohol and ecstasy together can increase the risk of dangerous dehydration. Mixing drugs can also stop a prescription drug from working. If you want to know more see <a href="https://www.crew.scotor.www.knowthescore.info">www.crew.scotor.www.knowthescore.info</a>

TEEN TALK

make sure your child has good friends. Educate them about effects. Don't be judgemental or you will push your child away. Try to find out why they are doing it, if it's just for fun or if there's a deeper problem. Make sure they keep up sports and exercise."

#### SPIKED DRINKS

Drink spiking is when someone deliberately adds alcohol or another drug to your drink without your knowledge. Warn them:

- To never spike someone's drink.
- To watch how much they drink so that they will notice anyone messing with their drink or if they start to feel weird.
- Not to share or steal drinks, or take drinks from strangers. Not to leave a drink where it could be spiked.
- To get help straight away if they feel strange and suspect their drink has been spiked.
- Never to leave a friend who is acting strangely, in case their drink has been spiked.

#### STAYING SAFE SEXUALLY

Help your child to understand that getting 'out of it' means they may not be able to judge how safe a situation is or 'read' the other person's feelings. Help your child to understand the importance of consent and how alcohol or drugs can affect someone's ability to provide consent.

- Consent is not a case of one person seeking and the other person providing. Consent should be a
  mutual process which doesn't only mean asking for and relying upon verbally obtained consent, but
  being aware of body language and non-verbal responses, as an ongoing process.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- Consent is required every time sexual activity takes place, even if a person has consented before.
- Make sure they keep an eye on their friends and intervene if it looks like either person may be too drunk/incapacitated to consent.
- If someone is drinking too much they may not be able to consent, even if they seem willing to get intimate. It is important that there is active and mutual consent throughout.
- Sex and consent if someone is too drunk or incapacitated they are unable to consent. This includes if someone is unconscious or asleep. Sex without consent is rape.
- Let them know you'll be there for them if anything happens, that they can tell you, and that they are not to blame if they are sexually assaulted or raped.
- Discussing contraception with your child will support informed choices, and can encourage correct and consistent use of contraception. Remember, only condoms and femidoms help protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as pregnancy.
- Substance use can impact on the effectiveness of contraception. For example if vomiting within
  two hours of taking a contraceptive pill. This would also be the case if someone was experiencing
  diarrhoea for more than 24 hours. People may find it more difficult to use a condom correctly.

#### YOUR GUIDE TO RECOGNISING ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

It can be really frightening to see your child under the influence of drink or drugs. But most times kids will recover, perhaps a bit wiser than before. Knowing what to do can give you confidence that you can look after them and will help you to stay calm.

Please note: whilst we have included some physical signs regarding drugs, please note that they affect different people in different ways and this information is given as a general guide that won't apply to everyone.

#### **GENERAL TIPS**

- Stay calm and try not to panic.
- Gently reassure them and try and keep their surroundings quiet.
- Try to find out what they have taken remember that they may have taken drink and drugs, so don't assume it's one or the other.
- Stay with them. Don't leave a very drunk person to 'sleep it off'. Blood alcohol can carry on rising for a time after a person stops drinking, so things may get worse.
- Keep checking on them when they feel better.
- Call the doctor or NHS24 on 111 if you are concerned, if you're worried about their immediate health dial 999 for an ambulance.
- Don't try and discuss their drink or drug use while they are under the influence. Wait until they have recovered and you feel calm and ready to talk about things.

#### SIGNS OF ALCOHOL POISONING

- Irregular breathing.
- Unresponsiveness.
- Pale, clammy and bluish-tinged skin.
- Low body temperature.
- Vomiting.
- Seizures.
- Confusion or incoherency.
- Comatose.

#### SPECIFIC DRUG EFFECTS

#### • If they are tense, 'freaked out' or anxious (speed, cannabis, LSD or magic mushrooms)

- Make sure they are somewhere quiet and calm, away from other people, noise and bright lights.
- Try to calm them. Tell them to breathe slowly and deeply.

#### If they are very hot or dehydrated (ecstasy and speed)

- Keep them cool. Open a window and take off excess clothing.
- Encourage them to sip water, no more than one pint per hour.

#### • If they're drowsy (alcohol, heroin, solvents, benzodiazepines - e.g. diazepam)

- Keep them calm and encourage them to stay relaxed, sitting, lying down on their side or in the recovery position.
- Try to keep them awake, but don't slap them, scare them or shout at them and don't give them
  coffee.

#### SIGNS OF CANNABIS USE

#### Behaviour

- Laughing, giggling.
- Being hungry and eating a lot of snacks after suspected use (known as the munchies).
- Being forgetful, distracted or finding it hard to concentrate.

#### Physical

- Bloodshot eyes.
- Smell of smoke.

#### Other signs

- Cigarette rolling papers ('skins').
- Torn bits of cardboard from cigarette packets, rolled up to make a filter.
- Clean cigarette filters left over from removing the tobacco for a 'joint'.
- Bits of loose tobacco.
- Small pipes.

#### SIGNS OF SOLVENT USE

#### Behaviour

- Not paying attention.
- Being clumsy or irritable.
- Appearing drunk.
- Slurred speech.

#### Physical

- Smell of chemicals.
- Spots or rash around the mouth.

#### Other signs

- Empty containers like aerosol cans or bottles of glue or gas.
- Rags or plastic bags stained or smelling of chemicals.
- Paint stains on face, hands, or clothing.

#### SIGNS OF STIMULANT USE (COCAINE, ECSTASY, SPEED)

#### Behaviour

- Hyperactive.
- Talking non-stop.
- Acting very confident or arrogant.
- Being hyperactive or full of energy.
- Excessive tiredness or very low mood (day after suspected use).
- Not eating much.
- Sucking lollipops or chewing gum (to ease the urge to grind teeth or drinking a lot of water).

#### Physical

- Runny or itchy nose.
- White powder around the nose.
- Large, dilated pupils.
- Pulling faces, grinding jaws.
- Sweating.
- Dry mouth or white spit.

#### Other signs

- Small (3cm) plastic 'jiffy bags' that powders or pills may be sold in.

#### SIGNS OF HEROIN AND OTHER OPIATE USE

#### Physical

- Very small pupils, like dots.
- Glassy eyed look.
- Being very drowsy or falling asleep unexpectedly.
- Slurred or slow speech.
- Shallow breathing.
- Itching and scratching.
- Lines on the arms (injection sites) or other parts of the body.

#### Other signs

- Burnt tinfoil, spoons or needles (heroin).
- Empty pill packets or bottles (prescription drugs).
- Prescription drugs going missing.
- Blood stains on clothes or bloody tissues (injecting).

# Remember that if a child is drunk, it may be hard to tell if they've taken other substances.

#### YOUR GUIDE TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

#### If someone is unresponsive or unconscious or having difficulty breathing

- Call an ambulance on 999 and put them in the recovery position.
- Be careful when moving them in case they have needles in their pocket.
- Stay with them.
- If you know what they have taken, tell the paramedics. Save any
  packaging or other containers for the paramedics to help them know
  what they have taken to assist with treatment.
- The HOPE app is a source of information for people with drug and or alcohol problems, as well as their families or friends, which helps prevent overdose and encourages engagement with services that can help. It is free to download, and is available on the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store by searching for HOPE Highland.

# The Recovery Position Support face Place the arm nearest to you at right amples to the body Place their other hood agents their cheek. Lift Leg Out hold at the for try just atmost the kines and poll or you, keeping the foot face on the ground. Red over Resp their hand grassed agents their cheek and poll on the suppor key for you'll their liments you and sees their side.

#### WHERE TO GET HELP?

If you need advice about coping with another person's drinking or drug problems see the useful contacts section in the back of this book.

#### ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS AND THE LAW

#### Alcohol - it's illegal:

- for under 18s to buy alcohol or to pretend to be 18 to buy it.

#### Tobacco - it is illegal:

- to sell tobacco or e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 18.
- for anyone under 18 to buy or attempt to buy cigarettes.
- for anyone 18 or over to buy tobacco or e-cigarettes on behalf of anyone under 18 (this is called proxy purchase).
- for an under 18 to refuse a police officer's request to hand over tobacco in a public place.
- to smoke in enclosed or partially enclosed public spaces.
- to smoke in a car if it has a passenger who is under the age of 18.
- Warn your child not to attempt to buy alcohol or tobacco for themselves or others, especially if they look older than their friends

#### Drugs:

- Possessing or supplying drugs is an offence.
- This doesn't just mean big-time street dealing. Buying a few pills and selling or giving to friends is still an offence. Aside from the legal issue, how would your child feel if they gave a friend drugs that caused a bad reaction or made them very ill?

#### Young people are at more risk of getting into trouble with the police if they have taken drink or drugs

- Being under the influence of substances can affect judgement and decision-making skills.

#### Lifelong consequences

- Having a criminal record can exclude people from some jobs and, for some offences, prevent them from travelling abroad.

#### THERE ARE LEGAL ISSUES FOR ADULTS TOO

- It is illegal to sell alcohol to someone under the age of 18 or to buy alcohol for people under the age of 18.
- If you drive or attempt to drive while unfit due to alcohol consumption (being unfit means having a Blood Alcohol Concentration of over 50mg per 100ml), you face an automatic disqualification ('driving ban'), a large fine and the possibility of a prison sentence.
- It is an offence to drive a motor vehicle whilst impaired through the use of drugs.
- Causing death by dangerous driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs will result in a maximum 14-year jail sentence and a minimum 2-year driving ban.

For more information see www.crew.scot or www.knowthescore.info or www.talktofrank.com

### **FURTHER INFORMATION – HELPLINES AND WEBSITES**

If you are worried about your own or your child's alcohol, tobacco or drug use, talk to your GP, the Highland Smoke-free Service, the NHS Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service, or one of the following organisations:

<b>Drugs and Alcoh</b>	Drugs and Alcohol Information				
Addictions Counselling Inverness (ACI)	Addiction counselling service based in Inverness who provide free and confidential 1-2-1 counselling for those experiencing problems with their substance use including alcohol and gambling issues	www.addictionscounsellinginverness.org Tel: 01463 220 995 Email: info@addictionscounsellinginverness.org			
Alcohol Focus Scotland	Providing accurate and accessible information about alcohol to practitioners and the general public	www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk Tel: 01415726700 - however they do not provide a counselling or support service			
Crew	Free and confidential text service for anyone aged 13-25	www.crew.scot Tel: 07860 047 501			
Drinkline	Supports people who are worried about their own or someone else's drinking or drug use.	Tel: 0800 7 314 314 (free) (weekdays 9 am – 9pm, weekends 10 am – 4 pm) Webchat function also available.			
Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership	Highland Drug & Alcohol Recovery Directory of Services for Highland available.	www.highland-adp.org.uk			
Highland Alcohol & Drug Advice &	Drug and alcohol information including types of drugs, drug effects, information for parents and where to get	www.highland-adp.org.uk/services-for-adults Tel: 01463 717 594 or			
Support Service	help.	www.alcoholconcern.co.uk or			
	Support, information, guidance available to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use. All calls are confidential.	www.talktofrank.com Tel: 03001236600			
Highland Substance Awareness Toolkit	An online resource for young people, parents / carers, and professionals, providing information about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.	www.h-sat.co.uk			
Know the Score	Whether you've taken drugs, are thinking of taking them, or are just curious and want to know more, it's important to know the real facts about drugs.	www.knowthescore.info Tel: 0800 587 5879, Calls are free Mon-Fri 9am-9pm & Sat-Sun 10am-4pm.			
		Webchat, Available Mon-Fri 9am-9pm & Sat- Sun 10am-4pm			
NHS 24	Information on all aspects of alcohol, including risks, support for parents, advice for when alcohol is affecting a family and list of support services.	www.nhs24.com/alcohol			
We Are With You	Help and support if you're worried about someone else's drinking or drug use	www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/advice-friends-family/			
Alcohol and Drugs Treatment & Support					
Beechwood House	Beechwood House is a Residential Rehabilitation service for individuals who require treatment for problematic alcohol and drug use. Treatment is delivered through Group Work, Key Working sessions and support in structuring meaningful use of time.	www.crossreach.org.uk Tel: 01463 711 335 Email: beechwood@crossreach.org.uk			
Osprey House, Drug & Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS)	Highland DARS Teams offer community based support related to Drug and Alcohol problems. Assessment is against individual need with onward referral progressed where necessary.	Tel: 01463 718 666 Email: nhshighland.ospreyhouse@nhs.scot This service is for adults over the age of 18, or 16 & 17 if not in full time education			
Youth Action Team	The Youth Action Team is a multi-agency service to young people who are offending, at risk of offending or have substance use issues.	The North (Caithness and Sutherland) and the Mid (Mid and East Ross) phone 01955 605792 or 01349 855 502 or 01349 868 700 The South (Inverness, Badenoch and			
		Strathspey) phone 01463 256 603			

Talking Services	for Young People	
A.D.A.M	A.D.A.M. (Another's drinking affects me) is a website for young people who are concerned about or may be affected by another person's drinking.	www.chatresource.org.uk/adam/
	The person may be your Mum, Dad, a grandparent, a brother, a sister or a friend.	
	A.D.A.M has been developed in consultation with young people who have experienced harm as a result of someone else's drinking and offers an opportunity to explore IF and HOW you are being affected	
Alateen	Alateen is for teenage relatives and friends of people who have alcohol problems.	020 7407 0215
Childline	24 hour free talking helpline and online chat for children up to the age of 18	www.childline.org.uk
Mental Health St	upport for Young People	
Child &	We work with you to understand you/your child's	Tel: 01463 705 597
Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	difficulties and offer a range of therapeutic interventions to help you make the changes you want to make.	Email: nhshighland.pheonixcentre@nhs.scot
Highland Mental Wellbeing	A collection of resources to support mental wellbeing, for children and young people, adult, parents, carers, and teachers	www.highlandmentalwellbeing.scot.nhs.uk/
Whole Family Su	pport	
Parents Helpline	Emotional support and signposting about a child or young person up to the age of 25.	Call Free on 0808 802 5544
Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs	SFAD exists to support those affected by the substance misuse of a loved one, because families need to recover too. They facilitate a Scotland-wide network of family support groups and run a helpline service.	www.sfad.org.uk Tel: 08080 10 10 11 Email: helpline@sfad.org.uk
Sexual Health ar	nd Relationships	
Rape And Sexual Abuse Service Highland	RASASH provide support, information and advocacy for anyone aged 13 or over who lives in the Highland Council area and who has experienced sexual violence or abuse.	rasash.org.uk Tel: 03330 066 909
Rape Crisis Scotland	Provides crisis support for anyone in Scotland affected by sexual violence at any time in their life.	www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk Tel: 08088 010 302
RISE Highlands (Reducing	Aims to reduce the risk, harm and impact of exploitation for young people & families, provide support,	Child Sexual Exploitation Project Advisor (RISE Highlands)
the Impact of Child Sexual Exploitation)	training and consultancy to agencies, and assist the identification & disruption of perpetrators.	Tel: 07523 944 995 Email: hollie.drever@barnardos.org.uk
Sexual Health Clinic - Teen Clinic	Please visit site for more information.	highlandsexualhealth.co.uk Tel: 01463 888 300
Wave Highland	Positive about Young People's Sexual Health and Relationships in Scotland	wavehighland.com

Tobacco and Smoking				
Highland Smoke- free Service	Here you will find information to help you if you are thinking about stopping smoking, or if you are someone who wants to help or encourage someone you know to stop smoking or if you want to make your home and car smoke free.	www.smokefreehighland.scot.nhs.uk		
Quit Your Way	Quit Your Way Scotland is an advice and support service for anyone trying to stop smoking in Scotland.	www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and- rights/nhs-services/helplines/quit-your-way- scotland		
		You can contact Quit Your Way Scotland for free by phoning a Quit Your Way Scotland advisor on 0800 84 84 84		
		Chatting online with a Quit Your Way Scotland advisor		
		The helpline and webchat services are open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm		
Tobacco and the Law fact sheet	Developed in conjunction between the Highland Council and NHS Highland	www.highlandsubstanceawareness.scot.nhs. uk/tobacco-and-the-law-fact-sheet/		

Notes

Notes

You can order or download your copy of this guide from Health Information Resources Service (HIRS)

http://healthyhighlanders.co.uk/HPAC







