

TRANSFORMATION RESOURCE SERIES

Today, our world is surrounding our families with so many obstacles, challenges and decisions. Each day, we are faced with ideas and beliefs that counter what we may believe or what God wants for us and our children. As Christian parents the challenge is great, and the enemy would love to grab our kids' hearts before they can grow in their relationship with Christ. Right from the start the enemy wants to keep our children from growing into committed Christ followers; he wants to destroy the family. This is clearly seen from the very beginning. Even the first family on earth was lured away from God, and the first murder was within the same family.

2014 in the United States, 36 percent of 12th graders smoked marijuana, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Fifteen percent used prescription drugs illegally, and more than a fourth had gotten drunk within the past month.

Area experts implore parents not to treat underage alcohol use lightly, what with 5,000 people younger than 21 dying each year of injuries related to underage drinking.

The age of trial continues to drop: It is now as early as 10 or 11.

Denial is usually the first barrier that parents must overcome, said Rochelle Dunn, a mental-health coordinator.¹

So, what do we do to protect our children? How do we train them up to make good godly choices regarding their friends and entertainment? What can we do to help them to say no to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco even though the world is saying yes more and more?

"Kids hear about drugs everywhere, it seems: on TV, the radio, and the news; in music and movies; and sometimes even on the street or on the playground. But, research shows that when parents tell their kids they don't want them to do drugs, the kids are less likely to do drugs." (NIDA)

¹ Allison Ward, *The Columbus Dispatch* • Friday January 2, 2015

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

FAITH FOCUS:

www.lighthouse.network.org
www.focusonthefamily.com
www.nacr.org

GENERAL INFORMATION:

www.treatmentsolutions.com
www.destinationstorecovery.com
www.ncadd.org
www.drugfree.org
www.teens.drugabuse.gov

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CONTENT BY:

Dr. Lynne Jahns

Director of Barbara's Place
866-234-9024 x 1070
ljahns@americakeswick.org

For 119 years the ministries of America's Keswick have been helping set men, women and children free from the chains of addiction.



601 Route 530 Whiting NJ, 08759
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TRANSFORMATION RESOURCE SERIES

HELPING OUR KIDS
Say No to Drugs
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE



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HOW TO HELP YOUR KIDS SAY NO TO DRUGS

- Be a part of their lives. Spend time together. Even when times are hard, kids can make it when they know that the adults in their life care about them.
 - Know where your children are and what they're doing. Keeping track of your children helps you protect them. Invite them into your home with their friends; make your home the welcome place to hang out. It gives them fewer chances and opportunities to get into drugs.
 - Be watchful. Know your children's habits, friends, grades, and attitudes because any diversion from or change in those things demonstrate that something is up and that you need to address it with them.
 - Set clear rules and enforce them fairly. Kids need rules they can count on. That is how they learn for themselves what is safe and what can get them in trouble. Your children need to know you care enough to disciple and follow through on your policies. Failure to disciple is a failure to love them.
 - Be a good example for your children. You might not think so, but kids look up to their parents. Show them how you get along with people and deal with stress, so they can learn how to do it.
 - Teach your children how to refuse drugs. Kids often do drugs just to fit in with the other kids. Help them practice how to say no if someone offers them drugs.
 - Make your home safe. Do not have people in the house who abuse drugs and alcohol. Keep track of medicines and cleaning products.
- Live with integrity. If you claim to love them – show them. If you claim to be a Christian – be one. Any hypocrisy in a child's life from the adults teaching them will only create a model to repeat the same behavior in their own life. Or, they will reject anything you tell them if you do not model it and live it.
 - Talk with your children about drugs. Explain how taking drugs can hurt their health, their friends and family, and their future. Tell them you don't want them to do drugs.
 - Let them see you walk the Christian walk. Go to church, enjoy church, be involved in personal devotions, and model a joyful Christian life through the ups and downs of living.
 - Love your children. Show affection, affirm them, encourage them, and believe in them. Avoid putting them down; constant criticism or lack of attention will create a wall between you and them. Be certain that they will look elsewhere for what they are not getting from you or at home.
 - Be available to talk. Your child may need to be open with struggles, to ask questions about life and choices and they need to be able to come to you. Let them talk; let them express the hardships of what they are going through in school, with friends, and within themselves. Help them to make good decisions and choices. Teach them how to think through circumstances and disappointments.
 - Don't fix everything for them. Today, so many who go into drugs at a young age discovered early on that their parents will cover for them and make consequences go away. If they have done something wrong, we need to let them understand how to correct behavior as well as live with the consequences of their choices. Teach your child negative actions have consequences.
 - Educate yourself about the signs of drug addiction and never assume that your family and children are exempt or immune to the snares of drugs and alcohol.

*Addiction doesn't discriminate, it cuts across all social and economic levels, races and religions, and it can happen in any family. Believing it can't possibly happen in your family could be your biggest mistake.*²

² "Addicted Kids; Our Lost Generation: An Integrative Approach to Understanding and Treating Addicted Teens." By Drs. Ron and Cherie Santasiero,

WARNING SIGNS AND TIPS FOR EARLY DETECTION

- Physical signs of drug use include bloodshot eyes, an unkempt appearance, tiredness and slurring.
- A teen might use candles and incense or spray cologne to cover up the smell of smoke. Parents might find unusual items in a child's bedroom. They may start using mints and mouthwash, or chewing gum more than they have in the past.
- Drugs are hidden in a number of places, including in everyday items – a computer mouse, aspirin bottle or book bags – with hidden compartments.
- Parents might notice money and gifts missing or pills may disappear from family members' prescriptions more rapidly than they should.

When drugs are involved, Matson said, more than one realm – appearance, social circles, school performance, interests – are typically affected, thus allowing parents to discern between a potential substance-abuse problem and normal teenage irritability.

"The first people drug users victimize are their family."³

If you realize that your child is having difficulty with drugs, it is important to get help for yourself immediately. It is important you find out exactly how big and ugly the problem has become. Be willing to deal with it directly. Talk to your pastor and seek help from people experienced with treating drug problems. Find a support system for yourself as you walk through this season with your children.

Remember the story of the Prodigal Son. Often, we must love by allowing our children to face the consequences of bad decisions and choices. Remind them you love them and that it is deep and secure, but that you cannot help them or watch them destroy themselves. Hold on to hope through prayer, and keep watch for reconciliation and restoration when your child is ready and comes knocking.

³ Dr. Steven Matson. *The Columbus Dispatch*.

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