

GET RESULTS WITH BETTER CONVERSATIONS

What do you do about drugs?

First, don't be shocked. Despite all the precautions we take to protect our kids, drugs are pervasive in our culture. Kids

who have been mistreated can be trying to medicate their pain. For kids who have come from families where drugs were part of their norm, they likely don't have a healthy understanding of the danger of drugs.



Here are some suggestions for healthy responses for dealing with drugs:

- ☑ **Calm down.** Pause and take a deep breath before you do or say anything.
- ☑ **Always respond in terms of the safety** of the young person. Explain how the behavior can lead to dangerous or even deadly results, saying something like, *“Drugs can result in terrible pain for you. I care about you and want to help you stay safe and have a good life.”*
- ☑ **Put some time between the event and the correction.**
- ☑ **When everyone is calmed down, ask what the young person is trying to achieve** from using drugs.

Sit down with the kids within your influence and look at the resources available to families from the Drug Enforcement Administration at www.justthinktwice.com

☑ **Ask the young person for ideas** on what he or she could do differently to feel better, fit in, or whatever other result he or she hopes to achieve.

☑ **If you issue consequences, make sure they are directly related to**

the offense. For example, if the drugs are connected to a friend or group of friends, consider taking away privileges to be with those friends.



It will take time, patience, and a commitment to love and listening to heal the youth in your care. **They are worth it.**

“Many foster kids have been exposed to drugs, drug growing or manufacturing, and drug dealing. For them, it’s normal. Life with you is teaching them a new normal.”

—RHONDA SCIORTINO

Instead of telling kids what NOT to do, let’s show and tell them what TO DO. If they’re trying to medicate their pain, talk to them about healthy ways to do that, like running or other cardio exercise, which releases “feel good chemicals” in the brain, yoga, or outdoor activities. If they are trying to fit in, suggest they participate in some kind of team sport, drama group, or some other group activity.

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successful survivors!**

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