

# What to Say When Your Teen Reacts Defensively About His or Her Alcohol or Drug Use

Your teen may not be happy that you're approaching him about his drug or alcohol use. That's to be expected. What you might not expect is to be called a snoop, a hypocrite or clueless. Think about how you will handle these accusations if they come up. It's good to be prepared. Here are some suggested responses:

1. If Your Child Says: "You went through my stuff?! You're a snoop!"

**Try To:** Defend your choice to look through your teen's things by expressing your concern for his health and safety.

**You Can Say:** "I'm sorry you feel that I broke your trust. But as a parent, my job is to keep you safe and healthy, so I have to be nosy when I believe you're doing something unsafe."

2. If Your Child Says: "You smoke/drink! You're such a hypocrite!"

**Try To:** Focus on the issue at hand — you don't want YOUR CHILD using drugs or drinking

**You Can Say:** "I wish I had never started smoking because it's so hard to stop."

"It is illegal for people under 21 to drink because their brains are still developing and aren't equipped yet to handle alcohol."

If You Are In Recovery, You Can Say, "I love you too much to let you make the same mistakes that I did."

3. If Your Child Says: "I've never done drugs! You're wrong!"

**Try To:** Remain calm and do whatever you can to keep the conversation going.

**You Can Say:** "I love you way too much to let anything happen to you. I need you to tell me the truth so I can figure out how to help you. I have no intention of getting mad or punishing you."

## What exactly is an Intervention?

An intervention can be as simple as a conversation. The purpose? To approach your child directly about his drug or alcohol use.

An intervention can be successful, even if it only tackles small goals at first. Just making it clear to your teen that you no longer want him drinking or using drugs is an accomplishment. Addressing your child about his alcohol or drug use may be uncomfortable for both of you, and you may even think it's unnecessary. But casual or experimental use can quickly turn into abuse, dependence or addiction and can lead to accidents, legal trouble and serious health issues.

That's why it's imperative that you intervene as soon as your instinct tells you that something is wrong.

\* Source, [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)