

WHY IS MY CHILD TAKING DRUGS?

No parents will ever want their child to become a drug abuser. It is traumatizing for a parent to find out that his lovely little prince or princess is hooked on drugs. To keep your child safe from the menace of drug abuse, we share with you some of the risk factors to look out for, in order to be aware of and to spot the tell-tale signs early.

LEARN HOW TO LOWER THE RISK FACTORS:

- Create opportunities to know your child's friends better by inviting them over to the house. This way, you will know personally the kind of company he is mixing with. By knowing the character and background of your child's friends, it allows you to assess whether he is at risk of being negatively influenced.
- Encourage your child to participate in healthy activities that will enable him to find positive influences in the right environment.
- Network often with other parents to share a common set of expectations and to learn from different experiences. In a group, solutions can be devised to help one another. Parenting tips are also shared and discussed at these networking sessions. This allows you to listen and learn from the experts or other parents who are raising or have raised children in the same age group.
- Be an involved parent and show interest in what your child is doing as well as what is going on in his life. Be more accepting rather than constantly pointing out mistakes. Listen to what he has to say with an open mind before passing any judgment.

UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS BEHIND DRUG ABUSE CAN HELP LOWER THE RISKS OF YOUR CHILD TRYING DRUGS JUST 'FOR THE FUN OF IT'.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RISK FACTORS?

DESIRE TO LOOK APPEALING

Adolescents are usually conscious about the way they look in front of their friends and some of them may also be obsessed with impressing their peers. As a result, they may start abusing drugs like "Ice" as a 'shortcut' to lose weight and look slimmer, especially if their close friends are already doing so.

ESCAPE FROM SCHOOL OR FAMILY PRESSURE

Some children could be facing immense pressure at home or in school and are not able to find an adult figure to help resolve these problems. Such problems could range from difficult schoolwork to bullying. Therefore, they could be dabbling in drugs to seek relief from the pent-up stress. It is hence important to nip the problem in the bud by laying a good foundation of listening to their problems and sharing ideas. This means providing them strong parental support to prevent them from turning to drug abuse as a way out.

WANTING TO BE ACCEPTED BY PEERS

Sometimes teenagers want to feel that they are part of a group and thus participate in the same activities so as not to be left out. When they refuse to be part of a common activity, the fear of being ostracized from the group may be strong. Some of them may have also faced rejection from friends or society and thus resort to drugs as a way to rebel against the system.

CELEBRITIES AND THE 'COOLNESS' OF DRUGS

Media reports of celebrities taking drugs may have trivialized the issue of drug abuse so some youths believe it is 'cool' to do the same thing, especially if their favourite idols are doing so. Also, some of these youths may think that it does not hurt to try drugs just once and that they can quit anytime they want, which is a risky thought.

THE ALLURE OF REBELLION

Taking drugs, like many delinquent behaviours, could be seen as getting away with something and not having to be accountable for their actions. By doing so, it allows them to bond with friends who oppose the rules. Through rebellion, youths could also be trying to get the attention of adults by provoking them into a reaction.

It is also essential to understand other risk factors such as the child having a difficult temperament or the family having members who take drugs openly. All these can potentially add more stress to his life, which may lead the child to take the easy way out, or create the wrong impression that drug abuse is acceptable.