

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Talking to kids about drugs: "What if she finds out the truth?"



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"Debbie" has been drug-free for years. She wants her daughter to stay away from drugs. But she's afraid to talk to her daughter about her past. (This story is based on the experiences of real people whose names have been changed.)



There's one main rule in our house: Respect others, and respect yourself. My daughter knows that means no drugs, no booze, no smoking.

She doesn't know that I was addicted to all those myself.

I started drinking a lot and smoking cigarettes and pot when I was in high school. I liked how smoking and drinking made me feel—less worried, more fun. But then I'd be hung over and sometimes skip classes, and I didn't feel like doing homework. I got bad grades, and everyone was angry at me. I felt like a failure. Soon I was getting drunk and stoned every day—not to have fun but to try to feel less awful.

I was in my 20s when it seemed like my life was falling apart. I called my company's Employee Assistance Program. They help workers who are dealing with personal problems and they keep it private. They connected me with a substance abuse counselor and a support group. I won't say it was easy, but I stopped smoking pot and drinking, with a few slip-ups along the way. Without the drugs I was able to think more clearly than I had in years.

I finally decided to quit smoking cigarettes when I became pregnant with my daughter. I got help from a quit-smoking hotline this time. And my doctor gave me a lot of support, which really helped.

I never wanted my daughter to know about my drug history. I thought it would send the wrong message. But what if she finds out the truth? Would she respect me then?

She's almost in high school. Soon, she could face the same choices I did. I want her decisions to be different.

I want to tell her how it was for me. She needs to see that drugs can take over a person, even a tough lady like her mother. My daughter is so bright, so beautiful. I hope she can use my past to build her future.

Learn more: [Help Children and Teens Stay Drug-Free.](#)

