



# Talking With Your Teen About Drugs

**Parents Matter!** You are an important role model for your teen.

## Communication is Key!

- Talk regularly & often. Many 'mini-conversations' about drugs are better than long lectures.
- Think about their point of view & listen respectfully to what they have to say.
- Enforce the boundaries you have set but let your teen know that you are setting rules to keep them safe & healthy.
- Take advantage of 'teachable moments'. They can happen while in the car, while watching a news story, or at the dinner table.
- Eat dinner together as often as possible – this provides an effective way to strengthen communication.



**Talking openly about alcohol & other drugs will help strengthen your relationship with your teen.**



## Watch for Signs

Changes are normal for teens, but watch for these signs:

- **Change in social circle** – Moving away from old friends to people he/she doesn't talk about.
- **Change in personal priorities** – Suddenly stops or losses of interest in usual activities.
- **Change in school performance** – Lower interest in school/grades, attendance issues or behaviour problems.
- **Change in behaviour & personality** – Highly secretive or extreme need for privacy, unusual outbursts, mood swings, unprovoked hostility, signs of depression.
- **Change in health** – Changes in sleeping & or eating patterns, weight loss.
- **Paraphernalia** – Look for equipment such as pipes, cans or bottles, rolling papers, razor blades, syringes, needles, spoons, etc.

**Help Teens Make the Right Choices**

- Help build their social skills (i.e. sports, after school activities, socializing).
- Support positive friendships.
- Help them stay connected with school.
- Do things as a family to promote strong attachment.
- Encourage them to become involved in their community.

If you are concerned about your teen, contact your local Mental Health & Addictions office or your family doctor.

**NL Health Line: 1-888-709-2929**



Western Health