



Preparing for Moments.

No one likes to be caught off guard. Prepare yourself to capture a memorable moment with your child when you discuss underage drinking. It's important to know your facts because the conversation will change as your children move through middle school and high school. Starting with the basics and evolving into "what if" scenarios is perfectly logical.

- Let's say your teen is at the driving age. Make sure they know that alcohol-related deaths and injuries are a major risk of underage drinking.

As your child gets older, realize they probably already have their ideas about alcohol or may have been exposed to it at some point. Be open to hearing their experiences and build trust with your teen through listening.

- What-if, what-if, you've heard this from your child at one point or another. Discuss the what-ifs of underage drinking. What if they are in a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable? Discuss an exit plan. Also, tell them that standing up to underage drinking can make their friends strong to do it, too. There is strength in numbers.

Preparing for the "What-ifs".



Peer pressure that your child experiences may be positive and help them try new hobbies and develop into well rounded adults. However, negative pressure has the potential to put them at risk. Helping your child recognize the tricks their peers may use to pressure them into drinking underage, and equipping them with useful tools to refuse, is an important part of keeping the conversation going and preparing them for life's what-ifs. Here are some examples you can use during conversations with your child.

The Tricks

Rejection: This is when someone threatens to end a friendship or a relationship. This type of peer pressure can be hard to resist because nobody wants to lose friends.

"WHO NEEDS YOU AS A FRIEND, ANYWAY?"

"IF YOU DON'T DRINK, WE WON'T HANG OUT ANYMORE."

"WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DRINK WITH US?"

Possible Responses:

"You used to. Is alcohol more important than our friendship?"

"I don't want to lose our friendship, but I'm not willing to risk my health for it."

"There's a lot of fun stuff we could do instead, but if you'd rather drink I'll go hang out with someone else."

Put Downs: This is when a person insults someone or calls them names to make them feel bad.

"YOU'RE NEVER ANY FUN."

"YOU'RE SO ANNOYING."

Possible Responses:

"What? I'm a blast! Alcohol is the vibe killer. Not me."

"No, drinking is annoying. It can really mess with your senses."

Reasoning: This involves telling a person why they should try something or why it would be OK if they did. Sometimes these are good reasons, but when it comes to drinking underage, there is never a good reason.

"IT WON'T HURT YOU."

"YOUR FRIENDS DO IT."

"YOUR PARENTS WILL NEVER FIND OUT."

"YOU'LL HAVE MORE FUN."

Possible Responses:

"It can, actually. Brain damage, messed up senses. I have a game tomorrow. I can't risk all that."

"Not that I know of. We have better things to do."

"My parents always find out."

"Nah, getting sick isn't my idea of fun."

Unspoken Pressure: This is something you feel without anyone saying anything to you. You feel unspoken pressure when you want to do the same things others are doing. How would you respond?



The Huddle: A group of peers standing together, talking and maybe looking at something you can't see, joking and laughing.

The Look: Cassmates who think they're cool give you a look that says, "We're cool and you're not."



The Example: A group of students decides to get the same thing, like a smart watch, and you want one too.