

Recipe for Preventing a Narcotics Overdose

Highlights from the N.O.P.E. (Narcotic Overdose Prevention Education) presentation on January 22nd at DASD.

Following a good recipe takes a delicate and patient hand. So does creating trusting and open relationships with your children. Here are some tips that will help you start preparing your elementary school child to navigate the waters of middle school, high school, and beyond when they get there.

Protective Factors:

- Strong family bonds and parental involvement
- Clear expectations and consequences
- Positive social involvement (ie sports and extracurriculars)
- External disapproval of drug use (from parents, family members, and peers)

Instructions:

1. **Know that you have the power.** Teens cite their number one deterrent as their parents. Knowing that their parents do not approve of drug and alcohol use, and that there will be consequences if the rules are broken.
 - **Start now.** Set boundaries and demonstrate consequences. They may have nothing to do with drugs right now and everything to do with putting away their legos, but by starting small and early you are setting the stage for the scarier years to go a little easier.
2. **Start early.** Don't wait until your child is exposed at school to talk to them about the dangers of drug use; the message needs to come from you. Twelve year olds are using, and kids younger than twelve know about drugs.
 - **Start now.** Research is suggesting eight or nine years old as a good age to start the conversations.
3. **Know what you're dealing with.** Addiction and overdose is a bigger problem than when we were growing up, largely because of the prevalence of prescription drug use. More drugs are available, and doctors more readily prescribe them. Kids can easily obtain them and don't know the dangers of mixing them with each other and with alcohol. An overdose takes One Time...it doesn't just happen to addicts, and any child can be at risk.
 - **Start now.** Lock up your pills now if you need them, and get rid of what you don't need. There is a drop box at the Upper Uwchlan Township building...use it! Lock up your alcohol as well.
4. **Prepare for some hard work.** Getting your child to talk to you about what is going on in their lives can be like pulling teeth...but if you don't attempt to crack that nut when they are in first grade, imagine how hard it will be in seventh!
 - **Start now.** Talk to your kid every day. The more they feel like they can talk to you, the more likely it is they will come to you with a problem later on.
5. **Focus on the end result.** Teach your kid to be a hero. Too often, when kids are partying together, no one reports life-threatening situations to their parents or dials 911 because they are afraid to get in trouble, leading to preventable tragedies. Plus, our kids are getting mixed messages about reporting...“tattling” is frowned upon, and “squealing” is socially unacceptable. Help your child to know the right thing to do and feel okay about doing it...it could make a lifesaving difference when they are faced with more difficult judgment calls.
 - **Start now.** Show your kid that it's ok to come to you when they have a problem, and that they can trust you not to yell at them for speaking up when they are concerned. They are never too young to start learning how to help a friend in need. Pose simple, age-appropriate scenarios to your kids (ex. if you are playing with your friends and someone wants to play a dangerous game, what should you do?)

In 2013, 33 people in Chester County died of accidental narcotics overdoses. 3 of those people were aged 13-14.

Cooking for an entire family every day can be an overwhelming task, and many of us turn to our local pizza joint for help every once in a while. Likewise, Safe Homes is here to help you tackle the difficult talks with your kids, friends, and family members.

Contact your school's Safe Homes representative for more info; like the Safe Homes and Communities that Care Facebook pages; and look for more pizza/dinner related handouts.

And KEEP TALKING!

