

OTHER TITLES

Create It

Teaching your children to talk about their feelings

How can I help my young child learn to get along with others?

If you're a parent, you're a role model: How to teach your children by example

Nurture It

How can I teach my young child to deal with peer pressure?

Teaching your children the truth about drugs and gambling

How can I help my young child to be more confident?

How to listen actively to your children

Choose It

How can I help my child if my partner is addicted?

Helping your teen work through anger

The truth about popular drugs

How do I know if my teen is using drugs?

How do I talk to my teenager about drugs?

Raves and club drugs: How do I protect my kids?

Get It Back

Helping teens evaluate their drug use

How bad is my teen's drinking or drug use?

Does your teen's drug use leave you feeling like you're losing your sanity?

How to get through to your teen

Intervening when your teen is using drugs

Getting help for your son or daughter who is drinking, using other drugs or gambling

Supporting your son or daughter in recovery

ARE YOU WORRIED THAT YOUR SON or daughter is in trouble with alcohol, other drugs or gambling? Are you feeling stuck, afraid, bewildered? Are you feeling like the situation is beyond your control? Do you feel like there's nothing more that you can do?

The first step is to remember that you know your teen better than anyone else does. You can still do more to help yourself and your child than anyone else can. The fact is that this might be a situation where you and your teen may also need someone else's help.

As a parent, you have more influence over your child than you know. There are many different treatment options available, and if parents can convince troubled youth to help themselves, they can help those teens to choose the treatment that suits them best.

At the very least, parents can change how they respond to this challenging situation. They can get help to keep themselves healthy, which is a must when your child is in trouble.

Many people have been down this road before, and you don't have to figure out the next step by yourself. Addiction counsellors have helped thousands of parents to get their own lives back, and thousands of kids to come back from addiction.

Are you sure that what you're dealing with is a problem with alcohol, other drugs or gambling?

You may want to check out the Alberta Health Services (AHS) brochures, "A Drinking Problem: How Can I Tell?", "A Drug Problem: How Can I Tell?" and "A Gambling Problem: How to Tell?"

An addiction counsellor can help

You may also want to speak to a counsellor, who can help you identify the signs of use.

A counsellor can also help you find the best way to talk with a child about their use of alcohol or other drugs, or their gambling. No matter what you and your child decide to do, a counsellor can help you to help yourself.

There are many treatment options


There are many treatment options for young people in Alberta. An addiction counsellor will help you and your son or daughter choose between group counselling, a support group, regular visits with an addiction counsellor ("outpatient" treatment), or more intensive treatment.

In Alberta, there are also residential treatment programs, and programs set in an Aboriginal context. There are also many treatment opportunities for families, because when someone has an addiction problem, usually everyone in the family has been affected.

Your local addiction service office can tell you what is available in your community

There is a wide range of services for youth and their families in Alberta.

For youth aged 12 to 17 whose lives are severely affected by problems with alcohol, other drugs or gambling, a counsellor may recommend intensive treatment at one of the youth addiction facilities. There are day programs lasting approximately 12 weeks, focusing on what teens most need to learn and the best ways to help them learn. Clients continue to attend school at the treatment centre. In addition



to learning how to stop using and prevent relapse, they learn the skills they need for life, such as making decisions, dealing with their emotions and relationships with others, and finding healthy ways to have fun. Much of the learning is experiential (for example, games, special outdoor trips, problem-solving exercises, and other hands-on group and individual activities). The programs also provide family counselling and support for parents.

There are also detoxification and residential treatment programs available to youth in Alberta. Youth detox provides stabilization and support to help youth withdraw from substance use and get ready for treatment. Youth residential treatment offers intensive live-in programs for substance abuse and related issues. Information and referral for youth day treatment, detox and residential treatment are available through AHS addiction services offices.


Helping the rest of the family

Addiction counsellors say that when they ask parents, “What are you doing to help yourself?” the answer is often, “Nothing. I’m too worried about my kid.” A difficult message for many parents to hear is that they have to look after themselves, or they will not even be able to help their child.

The health of the family is very important when a teenager goes into treatment. When one of your children seems to be in urgent trouble all the time, it is easy to forget to put energy into keeping yourself, your partner and the other children in the family healthy.

For more information

We can help you consider the options for your teen and your family. For more information and to find an addiction services office near you, please call the 24-hour Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.



Activity Page

Below is a set of questions that will help you see whether your son or daughter is willing to change, and will also help them decide whether they need to change.

Work through the questions with your teen. They answer the questions.

Keep in mind that it may take time for your teen to decide to change destructive habits. Those habits did give them something they liked or needed, or they would never have started (for example, using drugs can give immediate acceptance, a group of friends and entertainment). Letting go of the things they like about drugs or gambling will require some adjustment. The activity sheet is helpful in giving teens a chance to explore what they like as well as what they don't like about their habit, and what they would gain and lose if they quit. Unless they examine both sides, they will not truly be making a considered decision.

Accept your teen's answers without judgment. For example, it is typical for teenagers who are involved in destructive habits to answer the first question ("What do you think has to change?") by pointing to others: "My mother has to get off my back." "My teacher should give me better marks so I can pass and stay with my friends." You, on the other hand, may think there is only one answer, that your son or daughter has to stop gambling or using alcohol and other drugs. Allow the exercise to be a learning opportunity for both of you. Try not to think of where you want your teen to be, but try to see where they are right now.

Talking to Adolescents About Change

What do you think has to change?

What could you do now?


What is going to happen now?

How would you like things to turn out for you, ideally?

What are some of the good things about how things are now (still using or still gambling)?

What are some of the not-so-good things about how things are now?

What would be some of the good things about making a change (getting control over or giving up the using or gambling)?



What would be some of the not-so-good things about making a change?

What do others (parents, teachers, etc.) think you should change?

Five years from now, what will your life be like if you continue using or gambling?

Five years from now, what will your life be like if you change that behaviour?
