STRAIGHT TO YOU FROM PARENTS

STRAIGHT
A Direction for Youth

STRAIGHT, INC.
P.O. Box 9
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survivingstraightinc.com

I knew my child was using pot and (I thought) alcohol occasionally, but I thought it was just on weekends, or at parties. I didn't consider this "occasional use" a big problem. I knew a majority of the other kids her age got high at parties and I thought it was just a part of being young, etc., and she'd outgrow it. Meanwhile, I noticed emotional and behavioral problems but didn't connect them with drugs. I thought the problems were due to the fact that her father treated her badly; she didn't make cheerleading, I wasn't a good mother, etc.

J.S.

Don't give up. There is hope, not only for you but also for your child.

M.S.

For three years I excused my son's unpleasant, withdrawn and sometimes hostile behavior as adolescent "growing pains". I accepted the school psychologist's and private psychiatrist's advice that "you're too hard on him, he's a good kid, and he's not that bad", because they were professionals and should know. They didn't!

B.R.

Don't hesitate to search your child's room, listen in on phone conversations or read his or her notes. These are very good ways to find out what has happened, what is happening or is being planned. By being aware, you may be able to prevent some serious problems. We were!

F.Q.

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WHEN YOU SUSPECT DRUG USE

It is often difficult to determine when children are using drugs, Sometimes the changes that occur in them are subtle. As Straight parents who have lived with this problem, we would like to share with you some thoughts we have in retrospect. It is our hope that this will be of help to you.

It is very difficult to determine if your child is drug dependent. There is no simple test for dependency and it is often very hard to detect. Parents should watch for behavior, school performance, and physical changes as evidence. Look at all aspects of your child's life. Educate yourself, read, talk to parents, listen to teachers, study adolescent drug dependency. Above all do not ignore suspicions. Adolescent drug dependency is widespread, strikes in all types of families, is devestating, and is best addressed and treated as early as possible.

G.A.

Our son was not coping with his life. He had a negative change in attitude and behavior toward family, friends, school, activities and most important his own self-respect. We saw changes in personal hygiene, choice of friends, sleep schedule, curfew, and eating habits. We justified his apathetic, rebellious behavior by telling ourselves he's going through a phase, he's depressed over friends, he has school problems. When in fact, the source of his problems was drug usage.

C.K.

Don't delay in getting your child into a full time drug treatment program like Straight. We suffered 4 1/2 years with family turmoil, court cases, juvenile detention centers, counselors and doctors, who meant well, but could not help.

D.P.

Dare to involve yourself in your child's life whether he or she likes it or not

J.H.

Drugs are not something you can afford to treat lightly as does our society. "Responsible use" of illegal drugs is a mixed message. You must have the conviction to assert your own values. What you know and suspect about your child's drug use is just the tip of the iceberg. Follow your gut feelings and do something immediately. Seek help.

D.R.

We knew our child was drinking. We caught him smoking marijuana twice. Each time we confronted him he swore he would discontinue drinking and smoking. We believed him. We subsequently leanrned he never stopped drinking or using other drugs for more than 3 days. Teen-agers involved with alcohol and/or drugs will tell you what you want to hear in order to continue using.

W.G.

Seeking help for someone who is destroying him or herself unwittingly, is one of the most courageous and loving of all human acts. Anything short of an all out effort usually fails.

D.R.

If your child had the disease of cancer, you wouldn't wait around to see if he started to die before you sought treatment. A characteristic of the disease of drug dependency is that the user doesn't know what it is doing to him and doesn't care to look at it when it is pointed out.

D.R.

He did not want me around him, especially when his "friends" were in the house. He was sneaky and secretive about phone calls and names of "friends". He did not communicate with me unless he wanted something.

P.K.

There's a big difference between drug or alcohol experimentation and abuse. Abuse of drugs -chemical dependency- is a disease, a fatal disease. Will power alone seldom can break the cycle of chemical dependency. Treatment is necessary. Because will power is not enough, beware if your child says, "yeah, I'm on drugs. But I'll get off them. I can do it." He needs help; he cannot do it alone.

G.K.

Don't delay. Things can only get worse. If your child is on drugs, it won't get any better by itself. Don't wait for a crisis, do your child the biggest favor you can for him, and get him to Straight right away.

R.E.

Love your child enough to look for the truth and love yourself enough to do something with it when you find it.

L.M.

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