



Recovery is Possible

Parents, did you know?

- Children who discuss and learn about the dangers of underage alcohol use from a parent are 50 percent less likely to experiment with alcohol.
- Studies repeatedly show that as parents, you are your child's number one influence.
- People who start using alcohol and other substances in adolescence are more likely to develop an addiction in adulthood.

Talking to your kids about substances while you are in recovery:

People who are in recovery may feel pain that being a parent isn't enough to keep them from struggling with addiction. However, there is no shame in having a substance use disorder, and having an SUD does not preclude a person from being a good parent. The important thing is to ask for, and receive, help.

- Be honest with your children if you have a history of alcohol use disorder. Even young children notice when something is wrong. It's preferable that children know the reasons for confusing situations than to be left wondering. Use language that is appropriate to your child's developmental stage.
 - Explain to young children that alcohol use disorder is like an allergy—a person's body reacts to a substance that isn't harmful to everybody.
 - When talking to kids who are in middle school or above, convey that alcohol misuse is not a choice or a moral failing, but is a disorder caused by physical and emotional dependence on alcohol.
- Give the message that addiction is a condition.
 - Talk to your kids openly about how you started drinking, and how experimentation progressed to addiction.
 - Explain how addiction can make people behave in ways they normally wouldn't—this is not a choice, but is how substances affect the body and mind.
 - Avoid demeaning people who use alcohol or other drugs.
- Reassure your child that they did not cause your substance use disorder, that they can't control it, and that they can't cure it. Make it clear your recovery is your responsibility.
- Make sure kids understand alcohol is illegal for those under 21. Talk to your kids about their plans, and how substance use can interfere with their aspirations.
- Share the message that recovery is possible, but that it requires a lot of hard work and support. Avoid making promises that you will never relapse again.
- Explain to your child that because you have alcohol use disorder, they may be at increased risk because their bodies respond differently to alcohol. They should be especially careful about avoiding substances.

Learn more:

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