

24 Things to Do If Your Child Is Using or Abusing Drugs or Alcohol

1. Have your adolescent evaluated by a professional drug counselor or treatment facility
2. Immediately admit your child to a drug treatment program if it is recommended
3. Educate yourself and your family about the disease of substance use disorder (SUD)
4. Seek family counseling from a group or a professional specializing in substance use disorder
5. Consider attending Al-Anon or Al-A-Teen meetings
6. Understand that addiction will lead to prison, institutions or death if not treated
7. Understand that no one has any control over the adolescent with substance use disorder except the adolescent
8. Do not give your adolescent cash or credit cards
9. Recognize that adolescents with substance use disorder have a disease and do not reason the same way as a teen without SUD
10. Do not make excuses for your adolescent's behavior; let the natural consequences of their actions occur
11. Do not feel guilty about your parenting skills, your child made the decision to abuse drugs
12. Realize that emotional maturity in adolescents with substance use disorder stops from the time they begin their drug or alcohol use
13. Set and communicate clear behavior standards for the adolescent to live by while living in your home, no fuzzy or gray areas
14. Hold the adolescent with substance use disorder accountable for their actions
15. Consider suspending their driving privileges until the teen achieves sobriety
16. If the adolescent is facing legal problems, do not intervene, let the natural consequences occur
17. Be wary of the adolescent with substance use disorder's skills at manipulating people and events
18. Consider removing or securing all alcohol, narcotic prescription medication, cold medication, etc. from your home
19. Realize that substance use disorder is a lifelong disease that cannot be cured, but can be treated
20. All family members should try to be of the same mindset when setting behavioral expectations for the teen, and when holding them accountable
21. Realize that substance use disorder is a family disease that has a negative impact on all members of the family
22. The recovery program for the adolescent with SUD is their program so, you should not try to work harder than the teen at that program
23. Relapses are common, recovery is achieved one small step at a time
24. Learn to live life with your child with substance use disorder one day at a time, and be grateful for the time you have together

