FOR INFORMATION IN OTHER LANGUAGES, PLEASE SEE PAGE 23.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
This booklet has been guided by a range of published information sources. In part, the Commonwealth would like to acknowledge the following:

Centre for Education & Information on Drugs and Alcohol (1994).
A Booklet for Parents Talking to Teenagers about Drugs, NSW, Australia.

Health Education Authority (1998).
A Parent’s Guide to Drugs and Alcohol, London, United Kingdom.


Parenting Skills: 21 Tips & Ideas to help you make a difference, USA.

The Government of Western Australia (1999).

Authorised by the Commonwealth Government, Capital Hill, Canberra.
Written by E. Abetz, Special Minister of State, Canberra
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I believe that the best drug prevention programme in the world is a responsible parent sitting down with their children and talking with them about drugs.

A recent national survey found that 76 per cent of 15 to 17 year olds were willing to talk to their parents about drugs and 71 per cent said that parents could influence them not to use drugs*. This is a good reason to sit down and explain to young people the consequences of using drugs and the importance for all of us to take personal responsibility for our own actions.

So many Australians are already working to tackle the drug problem – from family members, health professionals, police officers and teachers to representatives of churches and voluntary agencies. Inspired by their example, I want to encourage even more individuals and families to play a part in our drug prevention effort.

As parents we need to remember that, sooner or later, our children are going to learn about drugs, and they should learn about drugs from their families – what drugs are, what they do and exactly what we think about them.

If we don’t talk to our sons and daughters about drugs, you can be sure that our children will hear the wrong message from someone else.

This booklet will help you talk with young people and draws upon similar effective material issued by State and Territory Governments and Governments overseas.
In 1998, 38.3% of teenagers aged between 14 and 19 had used an illicit drug of some type, including cannabis. This includes 1% of teenagers who reported use of heroin.

(Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

Nearly 9 out of 10 illicit drug users obtained their drug from friends or acquaintances.

(Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

In several jurisdictions where surveys were recently done, 86% of adult males detained on property offences tested positive to a drug of some type (excluding tobacco and alcohol).

(Source: Australian Institute of Criminology)

In 1997-98, there were more than 14,400 hospitalisations attributed to illicit drug use.

(Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

The estimated cost of illicit drug abuse to the Australian community each year is $1.7 billion.

(Source: National Drug Strategy, Monograph Series No. 30)

In 1998, 1,021 deaths were attributed to illicit drug use, including 648 in the age group 15-34 years.

(Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)
WILL YOUR CHILDREN LISTEN TO YOU?

When a child is considering whether or not to take drugs, an important issue for them is "What will my parents think?". This means that it is very important to make your position absolutely clear that you don't want them to use illicit drugs. Ever.

Again, by being involved in your children's lives, their friendships, school and sporting activities, they will be more likely to look to you for advice, and their self-esteem will be enhanced so they can more confidently resist any pressure to take drugs.

In talking to your children about drugs, be honest, frank and don't assume for a moment that they already know where you stand. They expect you to talk about drugs, so be very plain about what you think. You owe it to them not to leave any room for misinterpretation.

It is also important to talk often about the dangers of drug use and that your rules apply at home, at school and everywhere else.

When it comes to talking about drugs, extensive research conducted with Australian parents and their children tells us that young people will appreciate your guidance and look to you for your views. But they will expect you to be informed, up front and honest.

As someone who has more than 25 years' experience as a Salvation Army officer working with drug addiction, I have seen just how important families can be in deterring young people from taking up drugs in the first place and in supporting those caught up in drug use.

Major Brian Watters OBE, Chairman, Australian National Council on Drugs

WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO ABOUT ILLICIT DRUGS.

The most effective deterrent to drug use amongst young people is a parent who is devoted to spending time with them.

Someone who talks with them about their friends, what goes on at school, the sport they play, what interests them.

The more parents and other family members get involved in children's lives, the more positive young people will feel about themselves and the more likely they will be to respond favourably to their family's views.

Monitoring a child's activities doesn't mean you don't trust them, it means that you care enough to be involved.

Always remember that contact with illicit drugs involves the risk of criminal penalties and possibly a criminal record. This means that it is worth spending some time to check a few facts so that you can talk confidently about drugs.

This will ensure that you don't exaggerate or make false claims that may make young people less likely to take your advice.

Remember that you don't need to be an expert about drugs to help a young person choose not to use them.

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Major Brian Watters OBE, Chairman, Australian National Council on Drugs
**STIMULANTS**

**Product:** Stimulants, Amphetamine, Methamphetamine, Ritalin, Dexamphetamine, Tenuate, MDMA (ecstasy).

**Street name:** Uppers, ice, crank, speed, meth, crystal, whiz, snow, gooe, shabu, MDMA, E, ec, xtc, love drug, eggs, point, paste, base, zip.

**Symptoms:** Excitability, tremors, insomnia, sweating, dry mouth and lips, dilated pupils, weight loss, paranoia, hallucinations, cracked teeth through grinding.

**Potential consequences:** Weight loss, chronic sleep problems, high blood pressure, paranoia, anxiety, nervousness, decreased emotional control, severe depression, violent behaviour, death from heart failure or suicide, nerve cell damage.

**HALLUCINOGENS**

**Product:** LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), Psilocybin, MDA (methylenedioxyamphetamine), PCP (phencyclidine).

**Street name:** LSD – acid, trips, wedges, windowpane, blotter, microdot. Psilocybin – mushies, blue meanies, magic mushrooms, gold tops. PCP – angel dust, hog, loveboat.

**Symptoms:** Trance-like state, excitation, euphoria, increased pulse rate, insomnia, hallucinations, paranoia.

**Potential consequences:** Impaired judgement and coordination can result in greater risk for injury, self-inflicted injury, violent behaviour, paranoia, depression, anxiety, unpredictable flashbacks.

**OPIOIDS**

**Product:** Heroin, Morphine, Cadeine, Methadone, Pethidine, Dilaudid, Kapanol, MS Contin.

**Street name:** Heroin – horse, hammer, H, dope, smack, junk, gear, boy. Morphine – M, Miss Emma, Mister Blue, morph, Methadone – done.

**Symptoms:** Lethargy, drowsiness, euphoria, nausea, constipation, sores on nose or mouth, nosebleeds, diarrhoea, bizarre or reckless behaviour, sudden death, suffocation.

**Potential consequences:** Dependence, overdose, mood swings, chronic constipation, high potential for addiction, death from overdose, HIV and hepatitis infections through the sharing of needles.

**COCAINE AND CRACK COCAINE**

**Product:** Cocaine, Crack Cocaine.

**Street name:** Cocaine – coke, flake, snow, happy dust, Charlie, gold dust, Cecil, C, freebase, toot, white girl, Scotty, white lady. Crack Cocaine – crack, rock, base, sugar block.

**Symptoms:** Excitability, euphoria, talkativeness, anxiety, increased pulse rate, dilated pupils, paranoia, agitation, hallucinations.

**Potential consequences:** High risk for addiction, violent or erratic behaviour, hallucinations, cocaine psychosis, eating or sleeping disorders, impaired sexual performance, ongoing respiratory problems, ulceration of the mucous membrane of the nose, collapse of the nasal septum, cardiac arrest or respiratory arrest, convulsions.

Photos supplied by the Australian Drug Foundation.
what other facts should you know?

There are some basic facts about illicit drugs that everyone should know.

- All illicit drugs carry risks and are dangerous. There is no safe level of use.
- No one can ever be sure of exactly what they are taking.
- There are no guarantees about purity or strength and no one knows exactly what illicit drugs have been mixed with.
- No one can be sure what effect a drug will have, even if they have used it before.
- Mixing drugs, including alcohol and prescription drugs, can be very dangerous.
- The initiation of heroin use usually occurs after a lengthy history of drug use, with early intoxication with alcohol at age 12-13 being the most common starting point of the heroin career.
  (Source: National Drug Strategy, Monograph Series No. 43)

HOW DO DRUGS AFFECT DIFFERENT PEOPLE?

It is possible for different people to have different reactions to the same drug just as one person may have a different reaction each time they use it. A person’s reaction to a drug will vary according to different factors:

- The type of drug.
- The amount and strength of the drug.
- How the drug is taken.
- A person’s body size.
- Whether a person has used the drug before.
- The person’s mood and the setting at which the drug is taken such as at a party with friends or on their own.
- Other drugs taken. The consequences of mixing drugs can be very severe.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE TRY DRUGS?

Some parents think that young people use drugs only if they are having problems at home or at school. But there are many other reasons:

- Availability and acceptability of the drug.
- Curiosity and experimentation.
- Wanting to be accepted by peer groups.
- Rebellion.
- Depression.
- As a way to relax or cope with stress, boredom or pain.
- To experience a high or a rush.

WHEN DO YOUNG PEOPLE TRY DRUGS?

There are no hard and fast rules about when young people start trying different types of drugs.

However, cannabis use tends to start from the early to mid teenage years while experimentation with drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines (speed) generally begins in the mid to late teens.

Remember that many young people will never use drugs, but some will try them while they are still very young.

“By preventing the misuse of drugs we can dramatically reduce the suffering in our communities, as well as the social and economic cost that drugs can cause.

Families can play a critical role in preventing the misuse of drugs by providing a supportive and safe environment.”

Professor Ian Webster AO, President, Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia Member of the Australian National Council on Drugs
Here are some of the reasons young people give for using drugs and some ideas about how you might choose to respond to them.

"SOMEONE HAD SOME AND I JUST THOUGHT I'D TRY IT."
Express your concern and question their decision. Ask whether it was what they expected and talk about the risks of further use. Try and find out if they felt pressured — this may lead to better ways for them to handle a similar situation in the future. Consider using examples of times when you have had to deal with a similar situation.

"I ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY THAT STUFF."
Ask what made that particular drug appealing, and what they expected to get from it. Questions such as "What did you think it would be like?" and "Why that drug?" may be worthwhile. You may be able to discuss whether they have tried other drugs and if so, why. Say that you’re concerned with their behaviour and try to establish some ground rules.

"ALL MY FRIENDS WERE DOING IT SO I THOUGHT...WHY NOT?"
Make your feelings about drug use clear and explain why you don’t want them involved. Ask if they felt it was safe because their friends were using it.
Ask why they thought their friends use it and whether they are aware of the risks. Discuss the dangers of experimenting with drugs. It may be useful to talk about the importance of being able to make their own responsible decisions instead of following the crowd.

"IT MADE ME FEEL REALLY GOOD."
Try exploring the main reason the young person took the drug. Find out how they have been feeling. This is a good time to offer help and to test the water to see if there is anything you can do for them or if they want to talk about another issue. Talk about less risky ways of feeling good.

"ALL MY PROBLEMS FROM SCHOOL, HOME AND LIFE JUST WENT AWAY."
This statement is a chance to really confront other issues. You can express your concern about your teenager using drugs as a means of coping. Let them know that if there are problems, you would like to talk about them. Ask what can be done to make things better. Discuss whether the problems returned after the effects of the drug wore off. Express your feelings about the dangers of using drugs to deal with problems. Make it clear that you want to work together to find a better way of solving their problems.

"IT GAVE ME MORE CONFIDENCE."
Let them know that this is of concern to you and explain that they don’t need drugs to feel good about themselves. Share your own experiences where you also found it difficult in social situations and explain ways that helped you gain more confidence. These can be both positive and negative experiences. By acknowledging your own behaviour, you will increase your credibility with the young person. Consider ways in which you can help to improve the young person’s confidence and self-esteem.

"WELL, YOU USED DRUGS."
You should be prepared for this type of response if this statement applies to you. You need to be frank and open with your child. Acknowledge that illicit drugs are dangerous, that you would make a different decision now and that you do not want them to make the same mistakes. You are an important role model.
1. BE PART OF THEIR LIVES
Make sure that you make time for your children. Take an interest in their interests and establish a routine for doing things together. Don’t be afraid to ask where your teenagers are going and who they will be with. Spending time together as a family is important. For example, try to talk and eat together every day and find other opportunities to enjoy time together as a family.

2. LISTEN TO THEM
Showing a willingness to listen will help your children to feel more comfortable about listening to you. Ask for their input about family decisions to demonstrate that you value their opinions. Try not to interrupt or react in a way that will stop further discussion. Encourage them to feel comfortable about telling you their problems.

3. BE A ROLE MODEL
When it comes to illicit drugs, there is no such thing as “do as I say, not as I do”. If you take illicit drugs, you can’t expect your child to take your advice. Don’t underestimate the influence your behaviour can have on your children, particularly any use of tobacco or misuse of alcohol and medications.

4. BE HONEST
It is important to be informed but don’t pretend to know everything. Be prepared to say “I don’t know but I will try and find out”. Be honest and clear about where you stand so that your children will find it easier to be honest with you.

5. PICK YOUR MOMENT
Choose the right time to discuss the topic by looking for natural opportunities as they arise. This might be watching TV, when talking about someone at school or in response to something that was similarly difficult to talk about.

6. BE CALM
Being calm and rational is also important and don’t overreact. You should keep the lines of communication open and don’t ridicule or lecture. Remember that getting angry will just close the door on further discussion.

7. AVOID CONFLICT
It is difficult to solve a problem when there is conflict. Try to see their point of view and encourage them to understand yours. If a confrontation develops, stop the conversation and return to it as soon as both of you are calmer.

8. KEEP ON TALKING
Once you’ve had a discussion, it’s important to have another. Ensure that you are always willing to speak to your children about drugs and start early.

9. SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES
Most young people expect and appreciate some ground rules. Allowing them to take part in setting the rules encourages them to take more responsibility for sticking to them. Once you have rules, enforce them and ensure young people know of the consequences of breaking them. Find and agree to ways young people can act should they find themselves in a situation that exposes them to drugs. For example, let them know that you will always collect them if they need you to, even if it is late at night. However, make it absolutely clear that you would rather they didn’t put themselves in a situation where they are likely to be exposed to illicit drugs.

10. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE
Reward your children’s good behaviour and emphasise those things they do well. Encourage them to feel good about themselves and let them know that they deserve respect.
what to do if you think your teenager is trying drugs.

It is important that you discuss the issue with your teenager. Let them know that you are concerned about their well-being and that they might be using drugs.

Be open with them so that they are encouraged to be open with you. Otherwise, you won’t get the full story of what is going on in their life.

Discuss with them what they consider to be the benefits and consequences of using drugs. This may provide an opportunity to give them new information about the dangers of drugs.

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR HELP?

Don’t be afraid to ask for help. A range of services and support is available to help both the person using drugs as well as their family and friends. Remember that you don’t need to handle a drug problem on your own.

There are many places in your community – doctor, schools, churches and other organisations – that can provide support. Use the phone numbers at the back of the booklet to get in touch with people who can help and support you.

“We who are parents have a particular obligation to confront this social problem and to make our sons and daughters aware of the risks and possible consequences of drug use.”

Major Brian Waters (Ret.), Chairman, Australian National Council on Drugs

how will you know if your teenager is trying drugs?

WARNING SIGNS

Be aware of the warning signs that may signal that a young person is experimenting with drugs.

The following is intended only as a guide as many of these signs may be as a result of other changes related to their development through their teenage years.

Please consider how often these warning signs occur, if a number occur at the same time and the extent to which a young person’s behaviour or actions have changed.

• A drop in school grades • a reduction in organised extra-curricular activities (such as an unexplained dropping-out of sport, etc)
• reddened eyes • lethargy • an unexplained change of friends
• unusual or irregular behaviour • mood swings • minimal interaction with the family • valuable items or money missing
• changes in eating patterns.
strategy, the commonwealth government has put over $27 million into funding new and innovative drug education programmes for students and training for teachers. these include:

- helping teachers learn more about how to handle the issue.
- providing information and support to parents.
- developing better ways for school communities to fight against drug misuse in schools.
- providing material for schools to hold their own local ‘summit’ to bring the community together on this issue.

every parent has a perfect right to know where their school stands on drugs. they also have the right to expect clear rules if students are found with drugs at school.

providing more treatment

the commonwealth government, in cooperation with state and territory governments, is well on the way to establishing a national drug treatment network across australia’s cities and towns.

in cooperation with health professionals, private and charitable organisations, this network will help bring treatment, education and support services within reach of those who need it. advised by the australian national council on drugs under the chairmanship of the salvation army’s major brian watters (ret.), the government has granted more than $57 million to 133 non-government treatment programmes. this supports the crucial work of charitable and non-government organisations in tackling the drug problem at the grassroots level.

the australian national council on drugs represents a range of views to advise the government from the front line on the development and implementation of the tough on drugs policy.

educating young people at school

schools are critical places to educate young people against drugs. that’s why a national school drug education strategy has been put in place to help parents, teachers, principals and school communities send a strong anti-drug message.

the commonwealth, state and territory governments are working together on the strategy which emphasises prevention and makes it clear that illicit drugs have no place in our schools.

resources are being made available to improve teachers’ skills and knowledge about drug prevention education and to help inform parents and the wider community. under the national school drug education strategy, the commonwealth government has put over $27 million into funding new and innovative drug education programmes for students and training for teachers. these include:

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- developing better ways for school communities to fight against drug misuse in schools.
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a strong effort has been made to ensure that resources reach those in rural and regional areas who have an illicit drug problem.

“as a police practitioner, my experience convinces me that education is a vital element in minimising the chances of our young people commencing drug use.

as a parent, i believe establishing and maintaining open and honest communication with your children is essential to parental credibility. without question parental credibility is crucial if parents are to prevent their children using drugs.”

mj palmer ao apm, commissioner (1994-2001)
australian federal police
DIVERTING USERS

In a major new initiative, the Commonwealth Government is providing more than $110 million to establish a national system of diverting illicit drug users into compulsory expert assessment and on to necessary education and treatment.

Drug diversion says to users that if they want to be free of the criminal justice system they have a personal responsibility to work to be free of drugs.

Importantly, this new approach has the support of State and Territory Governments who will ensure that the diversion programme will not be available to persistent or violent offenders or those dealing in drugs.

Those who fail to participate in the scheme as directed will be sent back to the criminal justice system and will face the possibility of gaol.

In this way drug users will be encouraged to take responsibility for themselves so that they can regain control of their lives.

FINDING THE ANSWERS

The Commonwealth Government has sought to provide a stronger focus on proven treatment methods to return drug addicts to a valuable place in the community.

Funding for practical research into drug addiction has been provided to support the evaluation of trials of new treatments such as naltrexone, buprenorphine and LAAM.

Along with current methadone and other outpatient, residential and drug-free programmes, these treatments offer new hope to many people addicted to illicit drugs.

Tough on Drugs is also supporting the development of an early warning system for emerging drug problems and the creation of the Australian Drug Information Network as a single point of contact for website information on drug education, prevention, treatment and research.

STOPPING TRAFFIC

Under the Tough on Drugs Plan an additional $212 million has been allocated to stop trafficking and dealing in illegal drugs. Customs officers and federal, state and territory police are working together around Australia to apprehend those who are supplying and distributing illicit drugs.

Across the country, there are more than 41,000 police officers who are working to keep local neighbourhoods, towns and cities safe from crime including drug related offences.

Police in local communities are supported by specially trained federal agents and by the more than 2,300 Customs officers who are patrolling our borders.

In addition Customs has commissioned eight new boats and acquired advanced electronic detection equipment to combat the importation of illicit drugs. Customs has also established a new Coastwatch National Surveillance Centre and operates two more long-range surveillance planes and a new Torres Strait helicopter. Additional resources have enabled Customs to increase coastal surveillance and intercept more illicit drugs. Ten Australian Federal Police mobile strike teams have been established to pro-actively target drug trafficking networks and gather intelligence.

The supply and trafficking of illicit drugs is an international problem and Australia is working with other nations to address it. The Commonwealth Government has increased cooperation with overseas authorities by establishing a Law Enforcement Cooperation Program and expanding the Australian Federal Police overseas liaison officer network.

These and other initiatives have contributed to the seizure of record quantities of illicit drugs in Australia in recent years. In 1998-1999, federal agencies seized over 600 kilograms of heroin and over 300 kilograms of cocaine. The record seizures continued in 1999-2000, with 620 kilograms of heroin and over 800 kilograms of cocaine being seized by federal authorities. On average, these hauls are around five times larger than the average seizure of heroin and cocaine for each full year between 1990 and 1996.

These actions send a clear message that Australians do not tolerate drug crime and that offenders will be caught and punished.
For more information about this booklet or to order extra copies, call 1800 250 015 (toll free) or visit the website at www.drugs.health.gov.au

For information on counselling services or further drug information, including about alcohol, contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service in your State or Territory.

STATE AND TERRITORY ALCOHOL AND DRUG INFORMATION SERVICES:

**New South Wales**
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service (Regional) ........................................ 1800 422 599
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service (Metropolitan) .......................... (02) 9361 8000

**Victoria**
- DirectLine (Metropolitan) ............................................................................. (03) 9416 1818
- DirectLine (Country freecall only) ................................................................. 1800 136 385

**Queensland**
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service ....................................................... (07) 3236 2414
- Freecall Country Queensland ........................................................................ 1800 177 833

**South Australia**
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service .................................................... 1300 13 13 40

**Western Australia**
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service ...................................................... (08) 9442 5000
  - Toll free number (Country callers) ........................................................... 1800 198 024
  - Parent Drug Information Service ............................................................ (08) 9442 5050
  - Toll free (Country callers) ...................................................................... 1800 653 203

**Northern Territory**
- Alcohol and Other Drug Service ................................................................. (08) 8922 8399
- Central Australian Alcohol and Other Drug Service ............................... (08) 8951 7580

**Tasmania**
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service 24 Hour ...................................... 1800 811 994

**Australian Capital Territory**
- 24 Hour Alcohol and Drug Telephone Line ............................................. (02) 6205 4545

**Family Drug Support** .................................................................................. (02) 9818 6166 or 1300 368 186

**Kids Help Line** .............................................................................................. 1800 55 1800

**Lifeline** .............................................................................................................. 13 11 14

If you find someone who you suspect has passed out from drug or alcohol use, phone 000 immediately for an ambulance. Do not hesitate. If you would like information on how to be prepared to handle a drug overdose, phone the Alcohol and Drug Information Services listed above.

For advice on how to quit smoking, call the National Quit Line on 131 848.