

Words and phrases - to use and avoid

TRY	AVOID	WHY
Healthy, legal.	Good.	These words give a reason and help explain why.
Unhealthy, illegal.	Bad.	These words give a reason and help explain why.
	Good drugs vs bad drugs. Hard drugs vs soft drugs.	This oversimplifies things. Good drugs (medicines) can be harmful if used in the wrong quantities, for the wrong reason or by the wrong person. Soft drugs implies some illegal drugs are safe and risk-free.
	Drinking alcohol relieves my stress and helps me relax.	There are lots of ways to relax and relieve stress.
Someone struggling with a drug use problem.	Junkie, druggie.	These words can shame or judge.
Drinking or using substances.	Partying.	This word glamorises something which has risks and consequences.
	Recreational use.	This normalises risky behaviour and can downplay potential risks.
	Everyone does it.	Data suggests this isn't true and this phrase is used to encourage others to join in.
Consider the consequences of what will actually happen.	Get into trouble/get caught.	Doesn't always mean anything without the next step.
	Because I said so.	Might make children feel judged for being curious.
	You'll understand when you're older.	Could close off future conversations. They've asked a question so must be curious and ready for an age-appropriate conversation.
	Don't ask questions like that. I don't want to talk about this.	Make them less likely to come to you when they need help. You aren't in control of what they are told if they go to someone else with the question. Shuts down conversations.
By knowing accurate information and using the right skills, we can avoid that happening to you.	That will never happen to you.	We don't want to scare or shock, but explaining how to avoid it happening to you is more effective.
Let's think about the possible risks and consequences of trying drugs.	One try and you're addicted forever. Your brain will be destroyed.	Research has proved scare tactics and exaggeration don't work. Children will lose trust in you when they find out this isn't always true. It can backfire and make drugs seem more exciting or rebellious. A list of possible consequences is more powerful than one shocking statement which isn't necessarily true.
You can always come to me. You can always ask me anything.	Your friends are a bad influence.	We aren't looking for blame or fault; we want to open up conversations so the right topics are discussed and understood.
Let's talk about what you might do if...	You'd better not ever... If I catch you...	This focuses on the threat of punishment rather than an understanding of why things shouldn't be done.