

# **What can I do to help prevent substance abuse and support those in recovery?**

## **Be Careful with Language**

Use person-first language. When a person breaks their leg, people say, “A person with a broken leg,” not “A broken legged person.” Therefore, when talking about substance use, say, “A person struggling with a substance use disorder,” instead of, “an addict.” The way we speak about things can either contribute to or work to dismantle negative stigma and stereotypes.

## **Learn**

Choose to attend a conference, join groups, take trainings, ask questions, etc. in order to better understand mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

## **Talk**

Talk to young people about the dangers of substances. It is important for youth to understand what drugs and alcohol can do to their brain so that they understand why it is not in their best interest to use. Research shows that when expectations are set for kids (no drug/alcohol use) and consequences are outlined and followed through, it is 80% effective in keeping them substance free so they can reach their full potential.

For additional information and conversation starters, visit [YouthConnectionsCoalition.org](http://YouthConnectionsCoalition.org)

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