



Abbotsford Police Department

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Bob Rich
Chief Constable

"Protecting with Pride"

May 2016

Dear Parents:

Thank you for taking the time to read this important notice. Being a parent is the most important job any of us will ever have.

As some of you may be aware through media, friends or family, more than 200 people in the Province of British Columbia have died as a result of fentanyl since the beginning of this year. The families of these people have been left devastated and their lives will never be the same.

In examining several recent fentanyl-related deaths/injuries in the City of Abbotsford, the Abbotsford Police Department is issuing a warning to parents about the dangers of fentanyl and other drug use. Fentanyl is a synthetic opiate narcotic; a prescription drug primarily used to help cancer patients deal with extreme pain. Fentanyl is up to 100 times more toxic than morphine and small amounts can be lethal. In the illegal drug trade, fentanyl is added "cut" into other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, oxycodone and ecstasy. It can be cut into powder, liquid, or pill form as a way to save money in production. You can't see, smell, or taste it, and since there are no quality control measures in the drug trade, a drug user has no idea if and how much fentanyl may be in the drug they are about to consume.

Being a parent in today's world is more difficult and complex than ever before. Our children are exposed to external pressures at unprecedented levels and the "digital age" has had more influence on young peoples' lives than many of us can fully understand.

We have often heard parents say, "Not my son...not my daughter" and fortunately in many cases that is true, but we also have heard many youth say "My parents have no idea that I am using drugs". This includes teens from all social-economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Although there are many behaviours/signs to watch for it is important never to automatically assume your child hasn't already or isn't thinking about experimenting with drugs - it's not always as obvious as we think.

We believe arming you with information is an effective way to reduce the risk that your child will ever experiment with/abuse drugs. We know our kids are curious about drugs and as teens they will take more risks during this phase of their life than at any other. We need them to understand that trying something even just once can lead down a path of despair and/or death.

Following this notice are some things we would like parents to consider when addressing issues of drug use with their teens. We believe if you take the time to learn about drugs and drug prevention, it will lead to a meaningful discussion with your son/daughter that will make all the difference.

The Abbotsford Police Department is committed to doing everything it can to help keep our kids safe. *We want their lives to be special and together we can help them prosper and meet their full potential!*

Please contact Sgt. Casey Vinet of our Youth Squad to discuss any drug or other issues you may be having with your teen. Sgt. Vinet can be reached at 604-864-4830.

Sincerely,

Bob Rich, Chief Constable
Abbotsford Police Department

Our Mission:
To make Abbotsford the safest city in BC



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Why Kids Use Drugs

Curiosity - usually only once or twice - almost always with alcohol or marijuana

Escape - usually from emotional pain

Peer pressure

Adult examples

To feel grown up

For kicks

Older siblings do

Become more creative

Deal with negative feelings

Look for spirituality

Relate to others better

Low self-esteem

On a dare

Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use among Kids

Abrupt change in mood or attitude

Sudden decline in attendance or performance at school

Sudden resistance to discipline at home or school

Increased borrowing of money from parents or friends

Heightened secrecy about actions or possessions

Talking to Your Kids

This is the tough part. No one can do this for you. And there's no script for it. But, you have to start somewhere. Here are a few things to keep in mind when talking with your teenage child about drugs:

Think first. Act second

How often have we acted on impulse and regretted it? Having a sound mind before approaching children will help keep a balance between what you're thinking and what you're saying about drugs to your kids.

Get in the habit

Develop the habit of talking regularly with your child on a variety of subjects. This will greatly facilitate the discussion on the issue of drug use when the time comes.

Just the facts

Everyone can get emotional around this issue. Some feelings are important but using facts can help keep the focus on the issue, while judgment can lead to misconstrued feelings and spiral the conversation downward toward unproductive ends.

Be clear and focused

You may not be listened to not because of what you're saying, but what your teenager thinks your motivation is for saying it. Keep focused and balanced, and this should steer the conversation in the right place. Staying well-tuned into your motivations and aligning your actions with children accordingly demonstrates a consistent personality that will help the message resonate.

Be inclusive

Reassure your child that you want them to decide for themselves and be independent (that's what teens want, really), but that you're simply trying to help them make an informed decision by providing them with information from a valuable source...you.

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Use the News

You can use an external reference like a newspaper article or TV show about drugs to start a conversation with your teenage child. Talking about an external situation can help you discuss the issue of drugs without your teen feeling like you are accusing him or her of drug use.

Offer them control

Teenagers will often test boundaries and at times may try to get control of situations. It's best to try to engage your teen in dialogue on drugs by respecting his or her preferences about when to talk. So, spin the tables around by mentioning that you'd like to talk about drugs with them and let them decide what works for them. By allowing them the control to pick the time, date and location, this also shows respect for their schedule, which will make them feel important.

Constant praise

Rewarding positive behaviour, unexpected praise, showing respect and demonstrating interest in their lives will make you more approachable when they are running into difficulties and need someone to talk to about their problems.

Consistent boundaries

The tried and tested parenting method of setting boundaries is crucial when it comes to drugs. The lines must be clear, enforced and consistent for teens so they can understand the difference between right and wrong. Once boundaries are established, they must continually be repeated, and therefore easier to hold teenagers accountable when the boundary is broken. Talk to your teen about your rules around curfews, choice of friends, and knowing where they are at all times and develop appropriate boundaries together.

Evaluate the Dialogue

After all that, how did it go? The goal of any conversation is to feel as though an exchange of ideas and thoughts has happened. Did it? Were you doing most of the talking or did they? Remember, if you tell them, they might forget, if you show them they might remember, but if you involve them, they'll understand. Give them room to engage and encourage them to participate by asking the right questions.

For further information on drug prevention please visit us at www.abbypd.ca

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