

Drugs and Drink

There are many reasons people turn to using drugs (including alcohol), whether it's at a party or trying to cope with anxiety during exams we all come into contact with different types of substances on a regular basis. Misusing substance can affect behaviour, decision making and cause serious harm physically and mentally, so it is very important to talk that a parents talks with their daughter to explore how they deal with pressures at home or at school and especially during the exam season.

Parents should know where their daughter is when invited to a party and ensure they know where they are going, who they are with and whether a responsible adult will be present..

Under 18's should not be consuming any alcohol but we are all aware a number of young people do drink. In recent years one type of drink has become very popular, 'Jagerbombs' (mixing a brand of spirits with an energy drink like 'Red Bull'). Only until recently have some studies started to raise some concerns with this type of mixing drinks. Spirits are a depressant substance and Energy Drinks (packed full of sugar and caffeine) are a stimulant. Questions are being asked about the effect of this on an individual's heart, alongside the rapid onset of feeling drunk

Like any other community, Guernsey is affected by drug misuse. The main types of substances misuse tend to be the following;

Alcohol, Cannabis, Heroin, New Psychoactive Substances (used to be known as legal highs), Over the counter medication (including paracetamol), Prescription Medication (including opiates).

Other drugs do occasionally come into the island, but Guernsey does have an effective border control.

Each type of drug can have lots of alternative names linked to them. As a parent, do not worry if you are not sure about the slang term for a drug, as you can find out very easily using the Internet. Either visit a website like www.talktofrank.com or on a search engine type in 'drug' followed by the name and this should reveal which type of substance it is.

Drugs mainly fall into two categories, stimulants and depressants.

Depressants: Alcohol, Cannabis, Painkillers, Opiates (Morphine, Heroin, etc...)

Stimulants: Caffeine, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Ecstasy etc...

Possible signs of drug abuse:

Using stimulants: Restlessness, not able to sleep, hyperactive, rapid speech, not able to focus, loss of appetite and weight.

Using depressants: Drowsiness, speech is slow, unable to focus.

Prevention is always better than cure so the most effective way of raising this sensitive subject is to talk openly. This can take time but keeping the communication channels open and creating an environment where a young person feels safe to talk about this subject will be beneficial. It is also very important to avoid jumping to conclusions. If a parent has a concern about their daughter's behaviour, appearance or their routine is changing, it could easily be something else and a parent should try to speak to them first. If the concern is serious then it is important that the matter is raised with the school (or school nurse) and an appointment can be made to see your family doctor.

Keeping communication channels open is important, yet parents may find that their daughter chooses the time they want to talk, as opposed to the parent!

Useful resources to look at: www.talktofrank.com www.drugconcern.org www.thehub.gg
<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>