



Parent Fact Sheet 2:

Is my child using drugs?

A drug is a substance other than food, which is taken to change the way the body and/or mind function.

Mood altering drugs are called psychoactive drugs. They can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves.

It is hard to tell when a person might be using drugs. While changes in mood or behaviour may be due to drug use they may also be signs that the person is not coping with something in their life which has nothing to do with drug use at all.

Some behaviours that may cause concern include:

- tiredness or changes in sleeping patterns
- changing friends and social activities
- lack of energy
- avoiding talking and being with family
- mood swings
- unwillingness to answer questions
- absence from school, declining marks or discipline issues
- out of character behaviour
- dishonesty
- trouble with police.

It is important to remember that many of these behaviours are common for young people who are going through puberty or challenging times.

What should I do if I think my child is using drugs?

Rather than jumping to conclusions, the best thing to do is talk to them to find out what is going on and then find ways to reassure and support them. (For more information see *Parent Fact Sheet 1: Talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs* on the SDERA website.)

If your child shares with you that they are using drugs, remember that most drug use, such as experimental drug use, does not always lead to dependence or problems with drugs.

When talking to your child about drug use:

Choose a time and place to talk

It can be difficult to talk to your child about drugs. Find a time when your child feels comfortable to talk with you. Ask what drugs they have tried and how they feel about their use. Speak calmly and listen carefully to what they are saying. If you get angry or overreact, you are unlikely to have an open and helpful conversation.

Share and acknowledge concerns

Share your concerns about your child's drug use. If there are other problems going on with your child, encourage them to share these with you. Be prepared to hear what they say and respond in a non-judgemental way that shows you are concerned and you only want the best for them. Let your child know you are there for them and that together, you can find a way forward.

Seek help and advice

You are not alone. There are services you can access to get the best help for your situation. You can also talk to your doctor, your local Community Alcohol and Drug Service or:



FOR INFORMATION

SDERA

p: (08) 9402 6415
e: sdera.co@education.wa.edu.au
w: www.sdera.wa.edu.au

Australian Alcohol and Drug Foundation

w: www.adf.org.au

Drug Aware

w: www.drugaware.com.au



FOR HELP

Meth Helpline

24/7 free & confidential, counselling and referral
p: 1800 874 878
e: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au
w: alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Alcohol and Drug Support Line

p: (08) 9442 5000
p: 1800 198 024 (country callers)
e: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Parent and Family Drug Support Line

p: (08) 9442 5050
p: 1800 653 203 (country callers)
e: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service

p: (08) 9221 1411
e: info@aada.org.au
w: www.aads.org.au

TRANSLATING SERVICES

If English is not your first language, you can get free translation support through the Translating and Interpreting Service
p: 131 450

SPEECH OR HEARING DIFFICULTIES

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment contact the National Relay Service
p: 1800 555 660
e: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au
w: www.relayservice.gov.au

