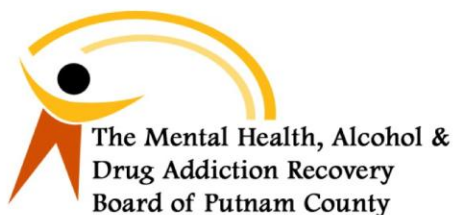




Speaking with your children about drugs and suicide does **not** have to be a difficult conversation.

**TALK**  
respond like a parent



**LET'S**  
Listen like a friend,

for more information, conversation prompts, and videos on how to talk with your children about their strengths, drugs, and suicide.

# STRENGTHS

Children whose parents help them to discover their strengths acquire the emotional health that will help them succeed in life — and prevent them from using substances.

## How can I help my children discover their strengths?

- Watch your child at play to learn preferences and socialization skills.
- Keep a 'Strengths Journal' to take note of things your child does well, and anything that strikes you about his/her behavior.
- Resist the urge to evaluate and overstate expectations. The more children are free to explore and try new things, the easier it will be to discover their real strengths.
- Leave them words of encouragement on the bathroom mirror, in their lunch box, or even in a text message.
- **Build them up now so they will be strong when it counts**



# SUICIDE

When you suspect something serious may be wrong with your child, it can be hard to know where to begin. When you suspect suicidal thoughts, it is even harder.

## Warning signs from your child

- Constant irritability, sadness, or anger
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or just "wrong" in some way
- Too much or not enough sleep
- Crying all of the time
- Weight loss or gain without trying
- Loss of concentration
- Seclusion or isolation
- Social media posts with hopeless messages

## What can I do?

### Be blunt.

Ask your child if he/she has ever thought about suicide. Don't be afraid to use the word "suicide."

### Gauge intent.

Ask your child if he/she has ever thought about how they would complete suicide.

### Get help.

Call the Hopeline together at 1-800-567-HOPE(4673) and speak with a mental health professional 24/7. If there is a serious concern, the Hopeline staff will guide you to the Crisis Center or any local hospital emergency room.



# DRUGS

Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Remember to listen like a friend, but respond like a parent.

## ■ Ages 3-5

Children at this age still seek your approval. Teach them about good nutrition, proper hygiene, and a healthy lifestyle, as well as dangerous substances like bleach, cleansers, and tobacco.

## ■ Ages 5-8

Children enter school and become influenced by media and the world around them. Have factual discussions with your child about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

## ■ Ages 8-12

When it comes to drug use, this is one of the most important times for a discussion. Keep conversations in the present tense and explain how using drugs and alcohol will spoil the fun of school and friends. Practice what they will say when a friend offers drugs.

## ■ Teens

Let them know they can talk to you no matter what.

## If you are worried your child is drinking alcohol or using drugs:

- Show concern and love
- Intervene and be direct
- Visit [wecarepeople.org](http://wecarepeople.org) to learn how

