Drug Use among Ohio Youth Falling; Experts Share Tips on Talking to Teens about Opioid Use

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It is now more likely for Americans to die from an opioid overdose than in a car accident, according to the Ohio Opioid Education Alliance. With an opioid epidemic currently affecting the country, this does not come as a surprise.

But there are many reasons to be optimistic in this time of crisis, as there are multiple efforts being launched to try and combat drug abuse and addiction. The Ohio Opioid Education Alliance, for example, is committed to educating and preventing young Ohioans from misusing and abusing opioids. It is a coalition of business, education, non-profit, civic, and government organizations formed by the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Board of Franklin County.

Despite the fact that the entire country is struggling with the opioid epidemic, Ohio is fighting one of the nation?s biggest drug use problems. In fact, it is only trailing slightly behind West Virginia, according to Alliance spokeswoman Blaine Davidson.

But there is some good news on that front, According to Lisa Roberts of the Portsmouth City Health

Department, local statistics show that substance abuse among local teens has actually fallen off.

Taking advantage of this, the Opioid Alliance focuses on making sure it stays that way. Its primary purpose is to promote and amplify the Denial, OH campaign, currently playing on many TV sets throughout Ohio.

The research-based campaign was launched as an effort to shift the mindsets of parents and caregivers from the ?not my kid? mentality to an acknowledgment that prescription opioids are a threat to anyone. The alliance also teaches parents and teens alike about the dangers of opioid misuse on the younger generation.

With all of this in mind, the Alliance recently provided some tips regarding talking to young children about drug and opioid use. Click the link to see Anaheim's top rehab placement programs.

In a press release, Jennifer Martinez, Director of Clinical Services, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, said: ?Ohio?s unfortunate increase in opioid misuse is prompting many parents to ask, ?How do to talk to kids about drugs?.?

?We know that talking to children can decrease their risk of using drugs by nearly half,? she said, ?but the conversation is challenging and, while a great deal of information and advice exists, it?s not always easy to find.? Here are the tips she offered:

1. Talk to kids about the responsible use of medication from an early age. Children don?t have to be in high school to understand medication can be dangerous if it is not used correctly. These conversations can begin as early as preschool. Explain to children vitamins are good for their health but can be harmful if too many are taken at once.

2. Discuss what is appropriate and inappropriate regarding the use of prescription drugs. Tell children they should never take medicine from or share medicine with anyone else. It?s not just a bad idea; it?s actually illegal to share prescriptions.

3. Ask kids what they know about drugs. Ask if they hearing about drugs in the music they listen to or on TV shows they watch, and what are their peers saying about drugs. It?s important to ask open-ended questions to promote an open dialogue.

4. Be honest with kids about why some people use drugs. While drugs make people feel good temporarily, they can significantly damage one's body in the long run. If there is a history of drug abuse to discuss, be open but don?t over-share the details.

5. Promote a dialogue?don?t lecture kids. Otherwise, they will lose interest and lose credibility very quickly.

6. Mention addiction genes. If addiction runs in the family, children should know about it.

7. Ask kids what questions they have.

Martinez added: ?Opioid abuse prevention starts with parents. Talking to kids about drug addiction is an important first step, but a person's actions will always speak louder than words.?

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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