

All role models can make a difference.

Together, we can protect our shared story and make an impact on substance use.



Start with Small Talks

Help protect our shared story by having small talks with kids about the impacts of substance use, starting around age 8. These short, casual conversations can impact kids' choices and help role models connect with kids on important stuff, like alcohol and other drugs. And they can happen anywhere, and at any time. Together, parents and other role models in the community can keep the conversation going and give kids the confidence to live substance-free lives.

You can be an effective role model!

Think kids won't listen? Think again. Research shows that parents and other caring adults are the most powerful influence on children's choices about substance use.



Educators, counselors, and coaches

Research shows that many children identify educators and coaches in their lives as trusted adults. This means that teachers, staff, and coaches can play a large role in prevention. Take the time to educate your students and athletes on how substance use can affect their performance, health, and overall well-being.

Elders and extended family

Elders and extended family play a vital role in protecting your shared story. You are often seen as mentors, teachers, keepers of wisdom, and cultural knowledge. Use your influence to continue the messaging about the impact of substance use and how it can affect your community and future generations.



Community leaders

Local leaders are everywhere—in government, business, faith communities, and neighborhood volunteer groups. And each one is dedicated to the health and safety of the people in their community. Whatever your role, you can help teach kids that their choices shape the health and safety of everyone around them.

Youth organization leaders

Kids look to youth organizations to find mentors. These leaders help teach kids life skills and prepare them for success. Take the time to educate them on how substance use can affect their future.



Law enforcement

Law enforcement is only part of the job. Police are an important part of the community; they interact with kids all the time around Tribal lands and at school. This is the perfect opportunity to connect and develop positive, trusting relationships with kids.

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What can you do as a role model?

Understand your own story

Substance use can be a sensitive topic, stirring up emotions and past experiences. It's essential that you feel protected and supported, too. If you need help at any time, connect with a trusted prevention partner or counselor.

Be an open book

Share some of your experiences with substance use or peer pressure. Give kids ideas for healthy coping strategies.

Connect to your culture

Involve kids in activities that focus on traditions designed to help guide and improve overall health and well-being.

Listen to what kids are saying

When kids are away from their parents, they may open up and ask questions. Be a resource for nonjudgmental answers.

Be a good source of information

Know the facts about substance use. Share how making poor choices can affect their health long term.

Let kids know you're available

There are always topics that kids find hard to discuss with their parents. Let kids know you're always there to talk about anything.

Know what influences kids

Kids are surrounded by messages about alcohol and substance use. Talk to kids about what they watch and listen to, ask about what influences them, and listen to their opinions.

As a role model, it's important to stay up to date about the facts so you can keep the small talks going.

Learn more by visiting SmallTalksWi.org



A role model is an ally!

Parents are always the greatest influence on kids, and it's important that they stay involved and informed. But we all play a role in protecting our shared story. Role models like elders and other community members can be a helpful resource. Here are some ways you can work with parents while respecting their boundaries and parenting choices:

- Talk with parents about the importance of small talks.
- Help parents learn by sharing useful resources about substance use.
- Keep parents informed about what kids are talking about.
- Reach out if you're concerned about their child.

