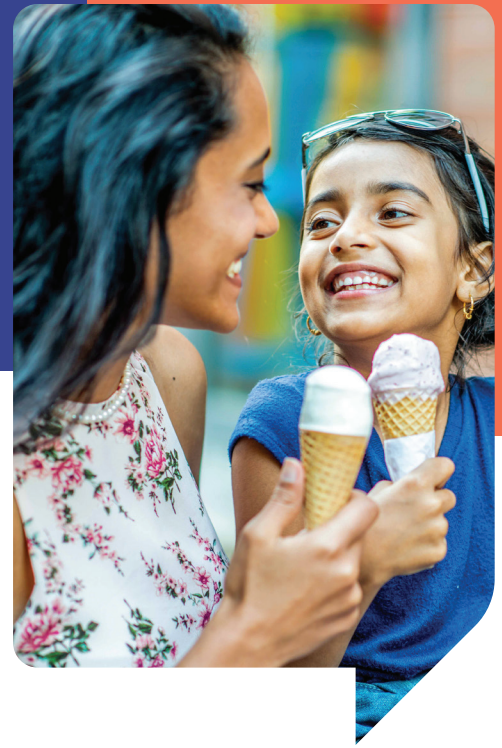


All role models can make a difference.

Together, we can help Wisconsin youth lead substance-free lives.



Start with Small Talks

Having small talks with kids, starting around age 8, can make a big impact on preventing substance use. These short, casual conversations help role models connect with kids on the important stuff, like underage drinking and drug use. And they can happen anywhere, and at any time. Together, parents and other role models in the community can keep the conversation going, giving kids the confidence to move through life substance-free.

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.



Educators and counselors

Research shows that many children identify educators in their lives as trusted adults. This means that teachers and school staff can play a large role in prevention. Use this time to add a life lesson for your students about the impacts of substance use on learning and growing.

Coaches

Thousands of Wisconsin kids play organized sports every year. And most kids look up to their coaches. Take the time to educate your athletes on how substance use affects their performance and health, and overall well-being.



Community leaders

Local leaders are everywhere—in government, business, faith communities, neighborhood volunteer groups, and law enforcement. 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 youth on how substance use can affect their future.



Extended family

Kids rely on all the adults in their lives — in fact, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins can offer a no-judgment, safe place to share difficult feelings. Together, family members can offer a network of support that helps prevent youth substance use.



What can you do as a role model?

Be an open book

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

Listen to what kids are saying

When kids are away from their parents, they talk about a lot of stuff and ask a lot of questions. Be a good 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 exposed to messages about substance use constantly in ads, on social media, in videos, television, magazines, and music. Talk to kids about what they watch and listen to and stay up to date on their influences and get 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 they stay involved and informed. A role model can serve as a source of support and helpful resource outside of the home. But it's always important to work with parents and respect their boundaries and parenting choices. Here are some ways you can work together:

- 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.

