



Strong Families, Safe Futures



A Parent Toolkit for
Preventing Youth Substance Use



Simple, practical ways to help your
child grow up substance-free

Provided by BKR Coalition





Welcome— You Matter More Than You Think

**Parenting isn't about being perfect.
It's about showing up, staying
connected, and doing small things
consistently.**

**Research shows that strong
relationships, clear expectations,
and open communication are some
of the most powerful ways to
prevent youth substance use.**

**This toolkit gives you simple tools
you can actually use in everyday life.**

“

**“The goal isn't
control—it's
connection.”**

Understanding the “Why”

Kids don't usually use
substances just to “be bad.”
Often, they are:



Trying to fit in



Curious or
experimenting



Coping with stress, anxiety,
or boredom



Influenced by what they see
online or around them



What might your child
need more of right now?

What Really Prevents Substance Use



I spend one-on-one time with my child each week



My child knows my expectations about alcohol and drugs



We talk openly—even about hard topics



My child has activities, hobbies, or responsibilities



My child has at least one trusted adult

Small moments = big impact

Simple Ways to Stay Connected

You don't need big talks
—just consistent small
moments.

Try This:

- Ask one open-ended question each day
- Sit together during meals (even short ones)
- Do something your child enjoys

Conversation Starters:



“What was the best part of your day?”



“What’s something kids your age are dealing with right now?”



“What do you think about vaping or drinking?”



Stay Connected to Your Child's Social Circle



Knowing who your child spends time with is an important part of staying connected and keeping them safe.

Try This:

- **Know your child's friends and encourage them to spend time at your home**
- **Ask about who they sit with, talk to, and spend time with at school**
- **Stay in touch with teachers, coaches, and other trusted adults**



**Home + school =
a fuller picture of your child's world**

Talking So Kids Will Listen

Instead of → Try This



**"Don't ever
drink."**



**"I care about
you and want to
help you stay
safe."**



**"Because
I said so."**



**"Here's why
this matters to
me."**

Tips:

- Stay calm
- Listen more than you talk
- Keep conversations ongoing (not one-time)



Helping Kids Say No

Give kids simple, realistic responses:

"No thanks,
I'm good."

"I've got
practice
tomorrow."

"That's not
really my
thing."



Parent Tip:

Practice these out loud—
it builds confidence.

Mini Activity:

What would your child say in
a tough situation?





Teaching Better Ways to Cope

Kids need tools—not just rules.



**Physical activity
(sports, walking, chores)**



**Music, art,
or creative outlets**



**Talking to someone
they trust**



Quiet time to reset



Boredom + stress = risk

Connection + coping = protection

What Kids Are Seeing

Social media often makes substance use look normal or harmless.



Talk about what they see online



Set reasonable screen boundaries



Follow or explore content together



“Have you seen anything online about vaping or drinking lately?”

When to Pay Closer Attention

Possible signs:



Big changes in mood or behavior



New secrecy or withdrawal



Drop in grades



Sudden change in friends



One sign doesn't mean something is wrong—but patterns matter.



Clear Rules Help Kids Feel Safe

In our family, we believe:

**Our expectations about
alcohol/drugs:**

If rules are broken, we will:



**Be clear, calm,
and consistent.**

Something to Try This Week

Pick one:

☐

**Spend 10 minutes doing
something your child chooses**

☐

**Ask a new question at
supper**

☐

Go for a walk or drive together

☐

**Talk about a real-life situation
(TV, social media, school)**

Reflection:

What did you notice?



What To Do Next

You are not alone—support is available.

Steps:

- 1 Stay calm**
- 2 Start a conversation**
- 3 Listen without jumping to conclusions**
- 4 Reach out for support if needed**



Early conversations can make a big difference.

Support is Here When You Need It



Mental Health/Substance Abuse Support Services

Heartland Counseling Services (O'Neill) – 402-336-2800

Midwest Country Clinic (Bassett) – 402-684-2908

Oasis Counseling International (O'Neill) – 402-379-2030

Ally Counseling Services (O'Neill) – 402-336-1306

Counseling and Enrichment Center (O'Neill) – 402-992-1512

Joyce Enterprises (O'Neill) – 402-340-7419

A Better Spirit Counseling Agency (Ainsworth)– 402-992-1512

Lotus Counseling (Ainsworth) – 402-382-0155

Debby Linse, LIMHP (Stuart) – 402-608-9754

Jessica Sawyer, PMHNP (Bassett) – 402-684-3366

Medical Support Services

Brown County Family Clinic – 402-387-1900

Devine Health Care (Ainsworth) – 402-382-3555

Rock County Clinic (Bassett) – 402-684-2906

Greater Sandhills Family Healthcare (Bassett) – 402-684-2285

Rock County Hospital (Bassett) – 402-684-3366

Avera Medical Group – Gregory, SD – 605-835-9611

Need Immediate Help?

 **Call or Text 988**

Free, confidential support is available 24/7.

You're Doing More Than You Think



Strong families build strong communities.

Resource Provided By BKR Coalition

in partnership with

North Central District Health Department (NCDHD)

📍 422 E. Douglas St., O'Neill, NE

☎ 402-336-2406

🌐 ncdhd.ne.gov

