



## WEEKLY PEP TALK FOR OUR SUPERHERO PARENTS

**Q:** In the past, my teen admitted to using marijuana. Recently, we noticed some alcohol missing from our home. I am concerned that my teen may be drinking. Given that this is already a very stressful time, how do I address this with my teen while not creating another crisis?

**A:** Many teens may be turning to alcohol as a way to cope with this difficult and isolating time due to it being legal and accessible in some homes. The availability and lack of odor makes it easy to hide. When you notice alcohol missing in your home, have this discussion with your teen when you have had time to process your own thoughts and emotions. While many teens may try to deny their guilt, the goal of this conversation is to keep the lines of communication open rather than an admission of guilt. It is also an opportunity to discuss the family expectations and dangers around substance use. GYFS [Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, Mirela Mujcinovic](#), cites the following warning signs of teen substance use/abuse: changes in child's mood, academic decline, rebellion, changing friend groups, and less interest in activities or in appearance. To prevent further attempts of sneaking alcohol, keep alcohol and any prescribed medicine locked away and be aware of any changes. When you notice your teen isolating in their room, try to engage them in a family activity. Get to know your teen's friends, make your home a welcoming place for friends, and stay visible during these teen gatherings. It is most important to [talk early and often about alcohol use](#) with a focus on clear boundaries and consequences.

**Q:** Tension is building in our home as we have now been under a stay home directive for 9 weeks. We are now having more disagreements without resolution. Can you give me some tips on how to reduce conflict and make effective apologies following a conflict?

**A:** Increased sensitivity, irritability, anxiety, and frustration are just some of the emotions that have emerged during this unsettling time. The prolonged uncertainty and lack of social distraction have put even the most easy-going families on edge due to physical and mental exhaustion. Try creating rules as a family to reduce tension, such as: no harsh words, say you're sorry, and accept apologies with thank you. Create a safe space or comfort room where a family member can go for some time alone or with one other person to decompress. When making a sincere apology, keep the focus on your own actions rather than the other person's response. Offer a way to repair the hurt associated with the conflict. Do not overdo your apology or focus on blame or shame. Reflect on ways to avoid a recurrence of the conflict. Allow the other member of your family time to forgive and heal. We all need to empathize with the ones we love in order to [heal together](#).

**Q:** What's a quick self-care strategy for me as a parent during this time?

**A:** Let nature be your stress reducer this month! Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty and let your mind take a vacation while planting a garden. Gardening provides us with an opportunity to create a colorful vision of beauty with our own hands. Whether you are a master gardener or a novice, the quiet of gardening and nature can be quite healing and calming. If you cannot do a garden, try planting an annual in a flower pot. Nurturing them with water will keep them healthy while keeping you happy.

Week of May 25, 2020

Quote of the Week:



**Words from GYFS:**

The Glastonbury Youth & Family Services team of clinicians and school social workers have been fielding questions from our community. Since it is likely you are having similar questions during this unsettling time, we thought we would share these questions and responses with the entire community.



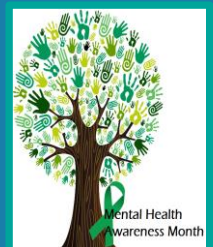
If you want to submit a question, please e-mail:

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