

# My Son is Hanging with the Wrong Crowd and I'm Concerned He May Be Doing Drugs, What Do I Do?

By Rick Deboest, Clinical Director

One of the things that can scare a parent more than anything else is when one suspects that his/her son or daughter may be using drugs. We as parents have such high hopes for our children and desire what is best for them. One of the things that scare us the most is the idea that they may get into something like drugs that could jeopardize their future. If you suspect that your son or daughter may be using drugs, you need to have a straight forward conversation with them. You must deal with the truth, whatever it is. Just like with a medical issue, it cannot be treated until you know what it is. If you suspect that your child is not being totally honest with you a comprehensive drug screen may be needed to help them be more honest about what is going on.

If the crowd that your son or daughter is hanging out with is not a positive influence on them, restricting contact and finding other friends that would be positive for your child is crucial. I Corinthians 15:33 tells us that "bad company corrupts good character." If we keep regular company with people with people who do not desire to live a godly life, it will corrupt our godly character. Talking with your child about the importance of friends and the influence that they have on a person, coupled with your love and concern about their wellbeing may help them accept this transition in friends better.

Finally, if regular drug use is discovered, several treatment options may be appropriate. Seeking accountability with a neutral mentor, participation in individual counseling, or attendance in NA or AA may prove to be helpful. It is important to remember, that your son's or daughter's first response may not be positive. You are getting in-between something that they probably enjoy, something that they use to cope with stress or problems, and sometimes something that they feel that they cannot live without. It may be helpful to think of the most serious romantic relationship you have had. How would you have reacted if someone would have tried to prevent you from seeing this person? You would have done everything you could to see that person that you liked and reversely, you would have really disliked the person who was getting in your way.

At times the pull of drugs is so strong that when someone tried to interrupt a person's use the person will respond to them in a very negative way. You must be strong enough, you must persevere enough, and you must love them enough to stick through their negative reactions and help them get the help that they need. Act now.

## Other Resources

- *Safe People* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

- *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices: Help and Hope for Hurting Parents* by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick, Jim Newheiser, and Dr. Laura Hendrickson
- *Effective Parenting in a Defective World: How to Raise Kids Who Stand Out from the Crowd* by Chip Ingram
- *Hanging with the Wrong Crowd* by Bluefish TV
- *Toe---to---Toe with Your Teen: Successfully Parenting a Defiant Teenager Without Giving Up or Giving In* by Jimmy Myers