What can parents do? Reducing the risk of crystal methamphetamine use in the family

As a parent or guardian, it is normal to feel responsible for your child's life and the decisions they make. Research has shown there are many ways in which parents can minimise the chances that a young person will use drugs, including crystal methamphetamine ('ice'), or experience harms from their use.

1. **Be a good role model**
   It's important to set a good example, as your behaviour and attitude towards ice and other drugs can have a big influence on your child's behaviour. Avoid contradictions between what you tell them and what you do and try to find fun ways to deal with problems that don't involve drugs.

2. **Be involved in their lives**
   Get involved and show an interest in their hobbies and activities. Aim to spend time with your child regularly where you can give them your undivided attention. One way of doing this is to set up a routine of having meals together or helping them with their homework. If they go out, ask them about where they are going and who they are going with and make this discussion a regular part of your conversation. Knowing who your child is with and where they are can help reduce risk. It's also important to restrict internet access to central areas in the house.

   Peer influence exerts a huge effect on your child's behaviour, so it is natural to want to help your child choose the right friends. If you pick your child up from school or after school activities, be open to inviting their friends to your house. You can also build a support network by getting to know their parents. If you have good reason to believe your child's friends are involved in ice or other drugs, be prepared to support them to find a new set of friends by engaging them in some new activities.

3. **Establish and maintain good communication**
   Encourage them to share their thoughts, feelings, and opinions to show you value what they think. This will allow them to be honest and not just say what they think you want to hear. Try not to lecture them, it is important to listen to their thoughts and concerns and offer help and support. Try and make yourself somehow available most of the time. For example, make sure your child can contact you easily if they are at a party. And most importantly, let your child know that you are always ready and willing to talk and listen.

For more information on starting a conversation about drug use with a young person, visit starting the conversation with a young person.

Want more information about how to protect your child from drug related harm? Visit Positive Choices for accurate, up-to-date drug education information and resources for parents and school communities.