



# Keys to Drug Abuse Prevention

a newsletter for people who care about self-esteem

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to **WE**, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support, examining attitudes, and learning new skills.

This issue of **WE** features research about American youth and keys to helping children grow in healthy ways. The twenty-four keys are from **Help! for Parents About Drugs** by Jean Illsley Clarke, Carole Gesme, Marion London, and Don Brundage. This **Help!** book will be published early in 1993 by HarperCollins. I invite you to use the keys and send your responses and your ideas for use to **WE**.

We authors used a wide variety of research as well as our own experiences as the base for this book. Much of the research data we already had found was echoed and extended in the new study by Search Institute. **It is clear now that the first line of defense against drug abuse is the family. Peer pressure is secondary.**

We are sending you a pamphlet about this research, "The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth." It is troubling. It is also exciting to have all of these findings collected in this usable format. I appreciate the Respecteen and Search groups for making this information available. This broad-based research has been conducted through schools. If you are interested in getting this survey into a school in your community, call the **Respecteen** toll-free number: **1-800-888-3820**.

*Jean Illsley Clarke*

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

### For a Family or With a Group of Parents Who Care About Each Others' Children

1. Discuss each key and rate it on a 1 to 5 scale. One - we are doing this well, to five - we definitely need help. This is a challenging job. You may want to do it in more than one session.
2. Listen carefully to family or group members who disagree with the rest and plan some course of action to support that person.
3. Plan and carry out a "Celebrate Our Family (Families)" event and highlight those items you are doing well.
4. Choose one key to work on first. Ask each individual to choose three things he can do to improve that key. Contract to support and reward him for doing those things.
  - As a group, choose one or two things to do to improve your chosen key.
  - After one month's efforts, assess your progress and celebrate your successes. If you can't see any progress, this may be the time to get some outside help for your family or group.
5. Add another key as soon as that will be helpful, but not so soon that you will crowd the action on the first key.
6. Keep in mind that this effort is very important. Affirm yourself. Choose a poster or a saying to read or repeat daily. Get other people to support you.

What you  
need is  
important  
to me.



# Keys to Drug Abuse Prevention

The following twenty-four keys can be used as guidelines to halt drug abuse before it starts or to help families change direction if someone has already been using alcohol or other drugs. Start with the key that you are most likely to succeed at. Practice and explore it. Then add others.



## **Key 1 Provide Love and Structure**

The love and consistent structure that parents offer is the first line of defense against drug/alcohol abuse.



## **Key 2 Build Self-Esteem**

It is important for parents to encourage, reward, and celebrate self-esteem in their children and themselves.



## **Key 3 Affirm Each State of Growth**

Every age is a good age at which to affirm your children of their right to be healthy and to enjoy life without using drugs.



## **Key 4 Teach Values**

The family is the hearth at which values are forged. Parents teach their values by words and deeds.



## **Key 5 Parents Are Active Role Models About Drug Use**

Children need to see responsible attitudes and behavior concerning drug use in their most important role models, their parents.



## **Key 6 Talk About Drugs**

Children want their parents to initiate talking knowledgeably about drugs/alcohol and their effects.



## **Key 7 Value Drug-Free Celebrations**

Learning ways to celebrate, play and have fun without the aid of alcohol/drugs is an important deterrent to drug abuse.



## **Key 8 Cherish Rituals and Traditions**

As parents we need to realize that tradition and rituals are part of the consistent structure that gives stability to children's lives. It is our job to create rituals and traditions that are meaningful for every family member.



## **Key 9 Promote Spiritual Growth**

Children need guidance in their spiritual growth.



## **Key 10 Care About Others - Teach Empathy**

Children need to be helped to know not only that caring about others is important, but they need to practice, with their parents, how to care for others.



## **Key 11 Resolve Grief**

Children need the family to be a safe place for them to mourn the many losses they encounter while growing up.



## **Key 12 Practice Delayed Gratification**

The degree of freedom children will experience as adults may depend partly on how they learn to defer the urge to "have it all" now.



**Key 13 Share History of Drug Use, Abuse or Addiction in the Family**

Children deserve to know that they are more likely to develop drug/alcohol problems if there is a history of these problems among family members.

**Key 14 Make Decisions, Plan for Action**

It is important for children to know how to make decisions and solve problems before they are confronted with pressures to use drugs.

**Key 15 Respect Feelings**

As parents it is our job to teach and model for children how to accept, understand, label and appropriately express feelings.

**Key 16 Negative Peer Pressure**

Resisting peer pressure is a skill that allows children to make their own decisions about their behavior. The parents' job is to teach children this skill.

**Key 17 Positive Peer Pressure**

Children need to learn how to make and maintain healthy friendships.

**Key 18 Practice Positive Communication Skills**

Children need to practice effective communication skills - both speaking and listening - within the family.

**Key 19 Resist Media Messages**

The media sends constant, persuasive messages that drug abuse is OK. Children deserve to know how to recognize and resist those messages.

**Key 20 Drugs, Needles, AIDS and Sex**

AIDS has added a whole new fatal aspect to drug abuse.

**Key 21 Connection with Community**

Children need to understand the importance of their membership in several communities, including family, school, neighborhood, nation, and humanity.

**Key 22 Adult Support**

Grade-school age children and adolescents need at least three adults outside of their family to ask for help. The teenager, to help form identity and expand values, needs to have frequent, serious conversations with an adult who is not his parent.

**Key 23 School**

Children need to feel connected with school and have positive experiences socially and academically. Parents need to be directly involved in the school.

**Key 24 Be Informed About Drugs**

In order to be a credible and reliable resource to their children, parents need to know about the effects of different drugs on the mind and body.

These keys are not arranged in order of importance and the length of each key section will not imply how important that key is for your family. That will vary from family to family. Preventing drug abuse is a complex problem. You can think of it as a door with twenty-four locks. You probably have many of the keys already.

From **Help! for Parents About Drugs** by Jean Illsley Clarke, Carole Gesme, Marion London, and Don Brundage, ©HarperCollins, 1993.



## Opening Activity

For focusing on Drug Abuse Prevention

- Hand out name tags.
- Choose a partner. Make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you what she thinks in her own background helped her avoid abusing drugs or contributed to her drug abuse.
- Introduce your partner and tell the group the factors she mentioned if she is willing for you to share that information.

## Closing Activity

**That Offers Everyone a Positive Personal Message**

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share what they will do this week to help prevent drug abuse.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.

DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke  
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16535 9th Avenue North  
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## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Facilitator Training

A week-long workshop for people who want to learn group Facilitation skills.

**June 22-26, 1992, Seattle, WA**

**September 21-25, 1992, Minneapolis, MN**

**Reminder:** Facilitators who have taken the workshop anywhere may repeat it in Minneapolis for half price.

### Growing Up Again

A three day workshop for people who have taken the Self-Esteem Facilitator Training.

**September 28, 29, 30, 1992, Minneapolis, MN**

### Transactional Analysis 101

A Friday evening and all day Saturday overview of TA theory and practice.

**September 18, 19, 1992, Minneapolis, MN**

### Transactional Analysis Training

Three of a series of workshops on the psychological system of Transactional Analysis for beginners, for professionals, and for those who want to become certified Transactional Analysts.

**May 8, 9, 10 - Script**

*The Story of My Life*

**September 11, 12, 13 - Ego States**

*How I Came to Be Who I Am*

**October 9, 10, 11 - Symbiosis**

*How Much Dependence is Too Much?*

Write to **WE** for details on the workshops.

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