

Don't Start Initiative

“You never have to quit if you don't start!”

What Is The DSI?

The Don't Start Initiative (DSI) is about giving adolescents the tools they need to make positive choices. Most children grasp the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' from a very early age. However, studies have shown that teens are poor decision-makers when they are stressed or feeling pressure from their peers.

Independence in decision-making is important to a teen's development, and it is often said that the best way to grow is to learn from your mistakes. While that may be true in some instances, we want to protect our children from making serious, illegal, and life-threatening choices.

Simply being told not to do something is not enough. So, what can you do to help your children make the positive choice when confronted with a decision?

The answer is as simple as **ABC**.

The ABC Decision-Making Process

ABC is a simple 3-step process to assist adolescents in the decision-making process and guide them toward making positive choices. It was designed to be easily remembered and help teens (or anyone) retain control when a quick decision needs to be made.

Awareness

- ◆ Recognize that you are being presented with a choice.
- ◆ You are still in **control**, yet you are aware you must make a choice.
- ◆ Remember, choices precede consequences.

Breathe

- ◆ Take a moment and ***breathe***.
- ◆ Buy yourself a moment to process your emotions before responding.
- ◆ Think:



- ◆ Remember, you are still 100% in ***control*** of you!
- ◆ Have 3 planned out 'trigger' responses.
Example: I can't drink alcohol because...
 - I just started a new medication, and I can't mix it with alcohol.
 - I don't want to.
 - I need to drive myself home.

Choose

- ◆ Make a choice - no middle ground.
- ◆ Remember, you are 100% in ***control*** of you at all times.
- ◆ Consider the long-term consequences, not just the short term.
- ◆ There will be consequences for every choice, either good or bad.