



## TIPS FOR PARENTS: PRESSURES ON TEENS

### What to Watch For:

Parents can safeguard their teenage children from risky behaviors by understanding the many pressures in their lives. Teens often make unhealthy and unsafe choices, such as using drugs and alcohol, to fit in, to cope with an underlying problem, to feel stimulated or to address some combination of these. Liberation Programs' Youth and Family Resources urges parents to keep an eye on their teen and watch for these red flags:

- Sudden dramatic change in behavior, such as sleeping or eating habits
- Frequent sadness or over reactions to everyday events and disappointments
- Less interest in activities, absences from school or poor grades
- Problems with relationships or more isolation than usual
- Needing constant support or reassurance
- High levels of irritability, hostility or anger
- Self-injury, such as cutting or scratching oneself
- Extreme eating patterns or unhealthy obsessions with appearance or weight
- Unusual borrowing or spending of money, or secretive behavior
- Blood shot eyes or confusion

### What Parents Can Do:

Parents can positively influence how their teen handle pressures, here's how:

- Be involved. Encourage other adults to also be active in your teen's life
- Use everyday opportunities to talk about topics affecting their world like alcohol and drug use
- Model and teach positive stress management and coping skills
- Listen carefully and watch to make sure your teen isn't taking on too much
- Provide opportunities for independent decision making
- Focus on the positive, praise your teen's special talents and nurture his/her interests
- Set and enforce limits on your teen's media use
- Challenge your teen to be an individual or a leader and encourage independence and integrity