



How Do You Rebuild Trust?

Teens want to rebuild trust as soon as possible after a breach. For a parent, losing the ability to trust your child can be very concerning. This can be one of the most difficult parts of having an adolescent who was using drugs or alcohol. Parents want to be able to trust their children, but they often feel like their trust was misplaced or violated when their children lie to them and steal from them.

You may feel like it's important to trust your child as soon as your child stops using. In reality, trust that is being rebuilt as a part of the recovery/change process takes time. Immediate trust doesn't usually happen. Parents need to feel as though their adolescent is being truthful and therefore trustworthy. They need to let go of their own anger over past behaviors and feelings of naïveté or guilt.

Verification

The first stage in renewing trust is [verification](#). Are you being told facts or a fiction devised to manipulate? Parents can verify their children's use and activities by:

- Running drug screens
- Checking their child's phone
- Calling their child's friends to verify plans
- Calling and meeting parents of their friends

- Connecting on social media

Teens can begin to rebuild trust when they are being consistently truthful.

Improve Communication

Second, improving [communication](#) is imperative to regaining trust. As your child shares his/her life with you in a more active way, you begin to see that the secrets are gone. Being “friends” on social media, having meals together, and getting to know their friends all help this process.

Teens can be reluctant to share their lives. Remember that this is a process that has long-term benefits for everyone. As you share information with your child, she will begin to see that sharing information has benefits (like regaining lost privileges). Over time, your teen will come around and begin to talk to you more frequently.

Teens continue to rebuild trust with their parents as they honestly share more about what is going on in their lives.

Commitment to Change

Third, seeing your child committed to [making changes](#) will help encourage trust. As the old saying goes, “the proof is in the pudding.” In recovery they say it a little differently, “You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?” In other words, is your child going to support groups? Have they changed friendships? Has their attitude towards not using or drinking changed? Are they not only more motivated at school or work, but also doing the actions needed for transformation? Are you also doing your part and attending meetings for family members and abstaining from using drugs and drinking to excess?

The length of time it takes to rebuild a trusting relationship will vary with each family. Recovery happens one day at a time. Those in recovery, and their families, are grateful for each healthy day. As you rebuild trust with your child, remember to focus on the small successes. Each small act of trust will ultimately build into a greater victory. A teen’s long-term commitment to change will help you regain trust in them.