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When Parents Don't Agree On How To Handle Their Teens Drinking Problem

By [Joe Herzanek](#)

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What should parents do when they don't agree on how to handle their teen's drinking and drug problem? Let's say you have a son who has been experimenting with alcohol, marijuana and probably other things as well for the past four years; he's eighteen and is in trouble at school and with the police on a regular basis. To add to the problem, your spouse has a drastically different idea on how to handle the situation.

This situation is VERY COMMON. Millions of parents all across America are facing the same dilemma.

My wife and I went through a similar experience. In my example, this young man hasn't yet committed the "crime of the century" and probably won't. Most teens will get through this and do fine in life. But in the *here and now*, living with these problems can be very stressful. I'm a firm believer in the tough love approach.

Don't rescue him. Many young men (and women) learn things the hard way. Parents need to read about substance use and abuse, talk with counselors, and also read about this stage of life called adolescence. This is a tough time for most young people to negotiate.

Concerning how parents should handle these things--**it is important to be in agreement.** My wife and I sought wise counsel because we too were struggling and didn't always agree (despite the fact that I am a counselor, myself).

Often, men are more in favor of the tough love approach and mothers tend to lean the other way. I think this is due to something in our DNA so there's not much hope for this to change anytime soon. I "moved" some and so did she. Make sure you discuss and resolve issues between yourselves before talking to your teen. Present a unified "front" and be prepared--your teen will try his or her best to drive a wedge between the two of you.

We found solutions that worked for us. I'll never forget what I heard at the end of one of those long seminars on "How to Raise Your Teen." Right at the close, the instructor said **sometimes it's simply a matter of getting them from here to there.**

The serenity prayer is good to remember at times like this.

Joe Herzanek, a man who battled his own demons of addiction over twenty-five years ago, says, "I know people can change. If I can do it, anyone can!"

A recovering person himself, Joe is the president and founder of Changing Lives Foundation and author of the new book "Why Don't They Just Quit?" As an addiction counselor in Colorado he has spent thirteen years working in the criminal justice system.

His passion for helping men and women struggling with addiction, as well as their family members and friends, inspire him to offer hope and solutions.

Joe offers words of encouragement: "Addiction is not a hopeless situation," he writes. "Addicts and alcoholics aren't crazy, and they can quit."

Joe and his wife Judy have three children, Jami, Jake, and Jessica, and enjoy the beautiful Colorado outdoors with their two Cairn Terriers, Lewis and Clark.

<http://www.whydonttheyjustquit.com>

<http://www.changinglivesfoundation.org>

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