

YOUTH HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE

Caring Communities Raise Caring Kids

Look inside for resources on...

- Youth Mental Health
- Technology and Social Media
- Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth
- Prevention Resources

and MUCH MORE!



TRI-TOWN COUNCIL

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Dear Tri-Town Community Member,

Welcome to Tri-Town Council's inaugural Youth Health and Safety Guide. Within this guide you will find resources to support healthy youth behaviors and habits, information about current youth trends and issues, youth substance use prevention information, tips for talking with teens about some of the "stuff" that matters, and why caring adults are a critical presence in the lives of young people.

Tri-Town Council has been serving Tri-Town youth and families for five decades and counting. We envision supporting a community where **ALL** youth have the relationships, supports and skills necessary to grow and develop into resilient, healthy, thriving adults. How? By intentionally strengthening the social and emotional well-being of Tri-Town youth, growing and fostering healthy behaviors, and preventing and reducing the "at risk" ones.

But this work takes **ALL** of us! Whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, neighbor, friend, twenty-something to one-hundred something, we **ALL** have a role to play in supporting our young people because **caring communities raise caring kids**. And in the words of author, motivational speaker and teen expert Josh Shipp...**"All kids are one caring adult away from being a success story."**

May this guide support YOU in supporting YOUTH!

Warm Regards,
Tri-Town Council

P.S. We are grateful to our local organizations and businesses for supporting the production of this Youth Health and Safety Guide. Please be sure to peruse the advertising section beginning on page 18. We are especially grateful to our three towns, corporate and community foundations, organizations, and community members who support our work every day of the year! Thank you!

Helpful Resources



Parental Stress Hotline
1-800-632-8188
www.parentshelpingparents.org

Masconomet Safe School Helpline
1-800-418-6423 Ext. 359
safeschoolhelpline.com

Lahey Health Behavioral Services
Locations: Haverhill, Salem, Beverly
Emergency Psychiatric Services:
• Haverhill: 1-800-281-3223 or 978-521-7777
• Salem: 1-866-523-1216 or 978-744-1585

Outpatient Clinics:
• Beverly: 978-921-1190
• Salem: 978-745-2440

GLBT National Help Center
National Hotline: 888-843-4564
E-mail: help@GLBThotline.org
glbtrnationalhelpcenter.org

For more resources, go to tritowncouncil.org

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Tri-Town Council offers a range of events focused on prevention, education and positive youth development!

Find our latest offerings at tritowncouncil.org/events

Crisis Text Line (Text only)
Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime, about any type of crisis. Telephone contact info: 741-741
www.crisistextline.org

NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association)
Helpline - 1-800-931-2237
24/7 crisis support text line: text NEDA to 74174

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline
1-800-327-5050
helplinema.org

The power of us!

Being a parent, caregiver, or guardian is a labor of love and requires a lot of patience, focus and hard work! Inherent in the role of caretaker are a multitude of joys that give our lives meaning and purpose along with moments that challenge us, shake our confidence, or leave us wondering if we’re “raising them right”. Young people don’t come with an instruction manual and we often find our way by relying on our own experiences and values and through a lot of trial and error. Focusing on building “Assets” can be an effective approach to raising healthy, competent young people.

So what are Assets? They’re essential building blocks and there are 40 of them – positive opportunities, relationships, skills and values – that form the scaffolding for healthy development. Assets provide the foundation kids need to make healthy choices and grow into responsible, caring young people. The more Assets kids have, the stronger this foundation will be. Assets, fostered by strong families, connected neighborhoods, engaging schools and a caring community help kids grow!

Asset building isn’t about creating a “perfect” world for children. It’s about nurturing the opportunities, skills, relationships, values and self perceptions that ALL young people need and deserve. That foundation of strengths will help young people navigate and thrive in an imperfect world.

As adults, **choosing** to engage in Asset building is like exercising our right to vote. It’s important, it’s powerful, it can be done after a lot of deliberation, or on the spot, and it’s in **our power**. And it has greater impact when **MORE** of us do it!

Here are six simple principles to keep in mind when being an Asset Builder!

- **EVERYONE can build Assets!** It’s not just about great families or schools or neighborhoods. It’s about each person playing a role in the raising of “our” children.
- **ALL young people need Assets!** While it is crucial to pay special attention to youth who struggle – economically, emotionally or otherwise—nearly all young people need more Assets than they currently have.
- **Relationships are KEY.** Strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to Asset building.
- **Asset building is ongoing.** It starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond!
- **Consistent messages are important.** It’s critical for families, schools, communities, the media, and others to all give young people consistent messages about what is important and what is expected of them.
- **Repetition is important.** Young people need to experience the positive messages and

opportunities of Asset building in all areas of their lives. Ideally, Asset building happens in families, is reflected in the community, and in other relationships children may have with a teacher, neighbor, or coach.


And finally...

Assets are intentional! Assets are about the everyday, often simple ways we adults can positively impact a young person’s life by giving them a smile, kind word, and letting them know we care. Be confident the time you spend building Assets will make a positive difference in all aspects of young people’s lives.

We know there are lots of Asset-building things you already do for your own children and children in the community – even if you don’t call them by that name. Please see sidebar for some ideas on how to be intentional about Asset building.

NOTE: Based in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research, the Developmental Assets framework has proven to be effective and has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. The framework has been adapted to be developmentally relevant from early childhood through adolescence.

www.search-institute.org



Asset building ideas that take 30 seconds or less

- ✓ When you pass young people on the sidewalk, smile and wear an expression that suggests you are glad they are on the planet!
- ✓ Ask a teen to recommend a book, movie or video game.
- ✓ When you see a young person working hard at something, tell them how impressed you are.
- ✓ Buy a glass of lemonade at every stand—even if you’re not thirsty.
- ✓ Kneel, squat or sit so you are at eye level with young children.
- ✓ Ask teens for their opinions and advice.
- ✓ Support organizations that serve youth.
- ✓ Stop what you are doing when kids walk through the door and give them your full attention.
- ✓ If you are a parent, thank any adult who matters to your kids.
- ✓ Treat children and youth with respect.

Developmental Relationships: Making A Difference in the Lives of Youth

Supportive relationships with parents, teachers, coaches, and other caring adults are critical for healthy development.

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, build Assets, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to their communities. Relationships that encompass these 5 elements make a powerful difference in the lives of young people.

- **Express care** – Show me I matter to you.
- **Challenge growth** – Push me to keep getting better.
- **Provide support** – Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.
- **Share power** – Treat me with respect and give me a say.
- **Expand possibilities** – Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.

Tips: Ways to effectively connect with teens

So...how can you let them know how you feel without them shutting you out?

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your teens is essential to healthy development and helping them avoid alcohol or substance use. If your teens feel comfortable talking openly with you, you’ll have a greater chance of guiding them toward healthy decision making.

- **Build youth Assets!** Promote healthy activities (sports, clubs, a part-time job), Spend time together, support them, notice them.
- **Listen, connect and communicate!** Be available! Teens do listen! And they care about what you think— AND listen to what they have to say.
- **Observe.** Pay attention to what is in your home, connect with their friends, keep track of their activities.
- **Be a good role model.** Set a positive example, they are observing you, too.
- **Encourage.** A sense of purpose and responsibility in your teen. RESPECT their views and input.
- **Be firm and consistent.** Establish clear family rules about drugs and alcohol. Enforce the rules you set – your clear rules can allow your child to be the “reason” for not engaging in risky behavior.



FACT: The most common reason young people give for not using alcohol and drugs is not wanting to harm their relationship with adults in their lives.

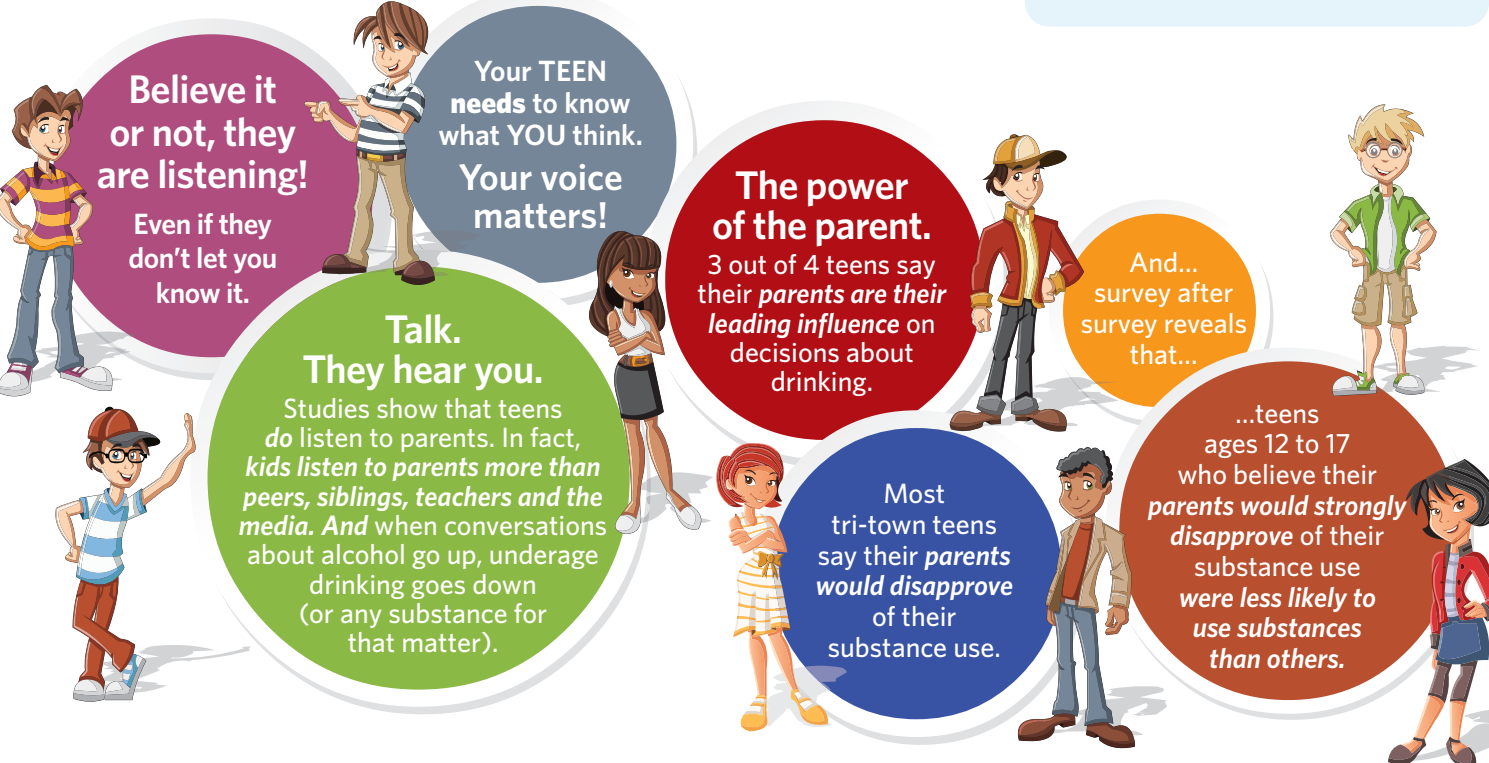
- **Encourage conversation.** Encourage your kids to talk about whatever interests them. Listen without interruption and give them a chance to teach you something new. Your active listening to your child’s interests paves the way for conversations about topics that concern you.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Encourage your teens to tell you how they think and feel about the issue you’re discussing. Avoid questions that have a simple “yes” or “no” answer.

- **Control your emotions.** If you hear something you don’t like, try not to respond with anger. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings in a constructive way.
- **Make every conversation a “win-win” experience.** Don’t lecture or try to “score points” on your teens by showing how they are wrong. If you show respect for your teens’ viewpoint, they will be more likely to listen to and respect yours.

Caring Adults = Protective Factors

Developmental relationships are a protective factor for youth! When youth are engaged in developmental relationships with caring adults in their families, neighborhoods, schools and communities they are more likely to grow into healthy, caring, responsible adults. How do you show the young people in your life you care?

Did you know?



If we change our perceptions, we change our reality.

How Science of the Positive and Positive Community Norms Can Impact Our Communities

The big question: How to stay positive?

Given the 24-hour news cycle, the relentless nature of our social media feeds, and access to information whenever, wherever, and however we want it, it can often feel like we live in a frightening world, where dangers and problems seem pervasive and overwhelming. This comes into particularly sharp focus when we consider the issues and risks that our youth are faced with on a daily basis.

Enter the Science of the Positive.

That sounds good, but what does that actually mean? It means that you can change the lens through which you view the world, and, while acknowledging and addressing the concerns, grow the positive, by first recognizing where it exists and then, with intention, growing it. How? By shining a light on all the good, positive behaviors that exist in any community. This then allows us to strengthen “protective factors” for our youth by growing the positive that already exists.

Sounds like social-work jargon - How does it relate to keeping kids safe?

The term “protective factors” may sound like something out of a “Law & Order” re-run, but it’s much more concrete. Protective factors include many things that may already exist for our youth, such as caring adults, strong families, mentoring teachers, clear boundaries, safe, healthy communities, a sense of belonging, and community connections.

Half empty, or half full?

It’s easy to make sweeping assumptions about youth and spread the negative; simply listen at the lacrosse field when a concerned parent may proclaim, “Every kid in the 8th grade is vaping!” Yet the truth is that the vast majority of our youth are NOT vaping and MOST are making healthy choices.

Are we concerned that vaping rates are on the rise? **Yes.**

Are we concerned that youth are at risk if they engage in this behavior? **Absolutely.**

Do we need to educate ourselves and kids about the health risks of vaping? **Absolutely.**

As parents, caring adults and communities that care deeply about the health and well-being of youth, we **absolutely are concerned** about youth vaping. Is everyone doing it? **NO.**

Do we need to promote the healthy norm that most kids do not vape among ourselves, our kids and our community? **Absolutely.**

Positive Community Norms: Empowering our youth to be part of the majority

So, what difference does educating kids about the norm make? By highlighting the positive norm, we are encouraging, and in turn, promoting, the healthy behavior. It may sound simplistic, a sort of childish “turn that frown upside down” mindset, but research unequivocally shows that highlighting the positive works! Why? (Continued next page.)

Did you know?

Tri-Town Council has a youth substance use prevention coalition – a community wide partnership whose focus is to prevent/reduce youth substance use **and PROMOTE and GROW** healthy youth norms?

Learn more at tritowncouncil.org/coalition

THE COALITION
Connect. Communicate. Prevent.

People tend to behave in ways they think is most typical of and accepted by their peers.



“Positive Community Norms is all about balancing concern (the very real dangers and harm that our communities face) with hope (the equally real sources of strength and positive change that exist in our communities, too).”

— JEFF LINKENBACH, FOUNDER, THE MONTANA INSTITUTE

What’s in a Norm?



Dr. Jeff Linkenbach defines SOCIAL NORMS:

Behaviors or attitudes held by the majority of people in a community or group.

For example, if most people in a community do not smoke cigarettes, then NOT smoking is the norm. If most people do not approve of others smoking, this, too, is a norm. Not smoking is normal and perhaps even expected in this population, and thus would be considered a social norm in that community.

Not surprisingly, youth tend to conform to the perceived norms of their peers, or feel social pressure to do so—which can be a problem when they are considering risky behavior.

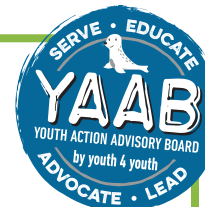
Here’s why: if youth misperceive that more of their peers are drinking, smoking and engaging in risk behaviors than actually are, they are more likely to do the same. These misperceptions reinforce the belief that “everyone else is doing it” which can be a powerful influencer.

Studies show that when communities are repeatedly exposed to consistent, positive, data-based messages promoting the actual, prevalent, and positive behaviors of youth (i.e. norms), perceptions begin to shift from “everyone is doing it” to the more accurate perception that “NOT everyone does it”.

If we change perceptions, we change behavior. Healthy kids equal a healthy community.

Simple. Profound. Positive.

Have you heard about YAAB?



YAAB is the youth voice of Tri-Town Council’s Coalition.

Learn more at tritowncouncil.org/youth-action-advisory-board-yaab



Healthy Youth = Healthy Community!

Supporting Tri-Town Council will help fulfill our vision of a community where all youth have the relationships, supports and skills necessary to grow and develop into resilient, healthy, thriving adults.

Please consider your gift to Tri-Town Council an investment in our youth, our communities and our future.

Please make your secure donation online at tritowncouncil.org via Paypal today!

Thank you for your support!

Want to learn more about Tri-Town youth perceptions and health/safety behaviors?

THE COALITION

Connect. Communicate. Prevent.
A TRI-TOWN COUNCIL PROGRAM

Take a look at the YRBS & APS data at tritowncouncil.org/coalition



Above are samples from a Tri-Town Council Positive Community Norms campaign promoting the healthy norms of Masco High School youth.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Sometimes first aid isn't a bandage, CPR or calling 911. Sometimes it's YOU.

by Windi Bowditch, LMHC, Director of Clinical Training & Consultation at Northshore Education Consortium

The mental health needs of our youth are rising. One in five youth between 13 and 18 is experiencing a mental health disorder. (National Alliance on Mental Illness) And, suicide is now the second leading cause of death for individuals between 15 and 24. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) The stress of life in the world of social media, meeting high academic achievement goals, a world that anticipates catastrophe and the high levels of anxiety is taking a toll on our teenagers.

But, we can help!

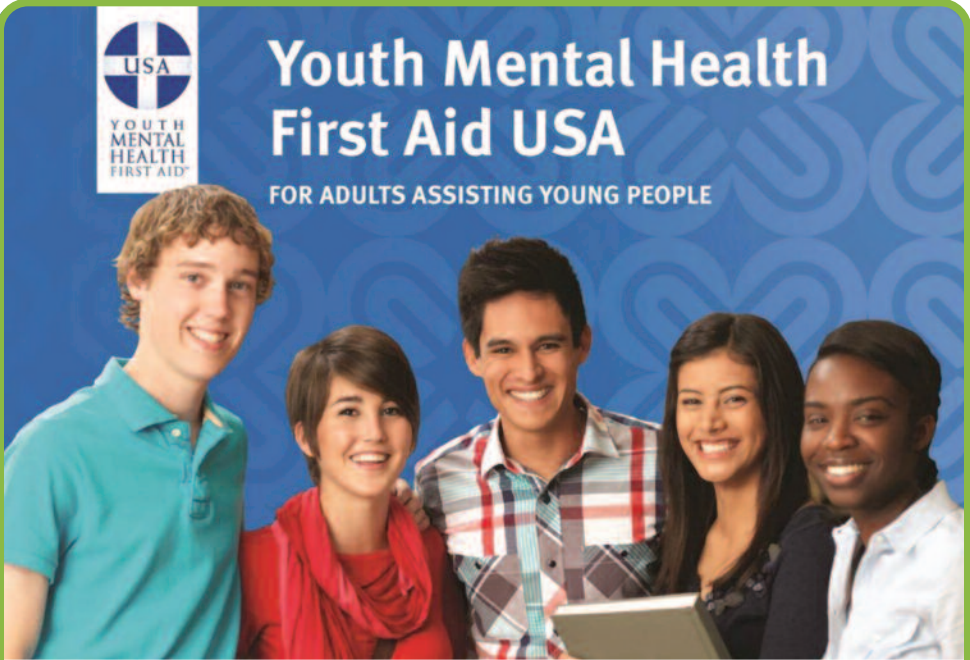
As adults, the more information we have enables us to help reduce stigma surrounding mental health as well as be more effective in supporting our teenagers to build resilience as they navigate the complicated world of adolescence. The Youth Mental Health First Aid training is one way to learn how to do that. Developed by the National Council on Behavioral Health, the training is a comprehensive 8 hour curriculum that helps participants learn about the challenges of adolescent development, common mental health challenges experienced in adolescence, and the signs and symptoms of someone who may be experiencing a mental health/substance abuse challenge or crisis.

The training provides a 5 step action plan that helps define and highlight those skills and tools that are important when working with teenagers between the ages of 12 and 18 years old. This includes resources and types of support services that are available in our community, as well as discussing suicide and other crisis situations. While the subject matter is critically important and serious, the training is interactive, informative and fun. Anyone can attend – especially those who regularly interact with youth. The more adults in our communities who have this knowledge and information, the better we can help youth, whether it is where we live or where we work. This training provides tools that allow us to support youth in any role; on the job, at home, with family members, the next door neighbors' children or the kids on the team.

Please come join us!



**PROJECT
Safety Net**
when times are tough
call or text 24/7 for help **978.771.4619**
it's anonymous



Youth Mental Health First Aid Course

Take a course. Save a life. Strengthen your community. Get certified.

What is the course about?

Over two sessions participants will learn:

- Risk factors/warning signs of common adolescent mental health challenges
- Importance of early intervention
- How to support youth developing signs/symptoms of mental health illness or emotional crisis by applying a 5 step core action plan:
 - Assess for suicide or harm
 - Listen non-judgmentally
 - Give reassurance and information
 - Encourage appropriate professional help
 - Encourage self help and other support strategies

Who should participate?

- Anyone who regularly interacts with young people ages 12 - 18 like:
 - Teachers, school staff and coaches
 - Parents
 - Youth workers, faith leaders and caring citizens

Visit tritowncouncil.org for upcoming training dates

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING IS GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY THE



PETER & ELIZABETH TOWER FOUNDATION

The 5 A's of promoting body confidence in your child

ASSERTIVENESS

- Reflect on your own beliefs regarding what it means to be a male and female. Challenge gender stereotypes, such as purchasing trucks for boys and dolls for girls. Or, blue items for boys and pink items for girls. Buy toys and books based on what your child likes instead of what society promotes.
- Encourage and support activities that teach assertiveness so that your child feels that they have a voice and will be heard.



AWARENESS

- Help them **build awareness** by teaching them about the effect that the **media and advertising** have on their body confidence.
- Teach your child to look critically at advertisements, media images and messages.
- Let your child know that they have **the power to choose** what media they look at and what products they buy. Remind them to take a break if Instagram or SnapChat causes them to feel bad about themselves.

ACCEPTANCE

- **Promote size diversity** in your family. Everyone grows at a different rate! The more accepting you are of your own body, the more accepting your child will be of theirs.
- Set **strict rules about body banter**. It's never ok to joke around concerning someone else's appearance. Fat/skinny/short jokes are not funny and can be damaging to a growing child's sense of self.

ACTION

- Encourage your child to **take action** by **becoming more connected with others**. Healthy connections are not based on appearance.
- Encourage your child to identify and appropriately **express their emotions**. Model this strategy with your own emotions.
- **Develop a list of skills** that you and your child can use when emotions get strong, such a deep breathing exercises, yoga poses, squeezing a squishy ball, taking a walk, listening to music, or snuggling with a pet.

ACTIVITY

- Create many opportunities where your child can **move their body**. Emphasize the importance of activity, moving for pleasure, and how moving helps our bodies feel better. Do not equate exercise with weight loss.
- Teach your child about the **mind body connection**. Practice mindful eating at mealtimes. Make time for family meals.

Reprinted with permission from MEDA - Multi-service Eating Disorders Association. www.medainc.org

10 WAYS FAMILIES CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S MENTAL HEALTH

Tips and Advice



1

Regularly check in with each other by asking simple questions (e.g. how are you feeling today?)



2

Don't be afraid to talk openly about your mental health



3

Support and listen genuinely to each other. Care for each other's feelings and emotions



4

Be a positive role model. Practice self care among your family members



5

Schedule in some family time to relax and take care of your mental health



6

Stay in touch with each other. A text or email can go a long way



7

Show your family member that you are there for them



8

Take time to understand what it is your family member is going through



9

Be patient. Don't criticize and be aware of how you talk to your family member. Encourage and support



10

Tell them that you are proud of them for talking about their mental health

Reprinted with permission from believeperform.com



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The new look of nicotine addiction: Vaping

E-cigarettes contain nicotine. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance.

According to the Surgeon General, because the brain isn’t fully developed until the mid 20s, youth and young adults are uniquely at risk for long-term, long-lasting effects of exposing their developing brains to nicotine.

These risks include nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and permanent lowering of impulse control. Nicotine also changes the way synapses are formed, which can harm the parts of the brain that control attention and learning.

VAPING CESSATION RESOURCES

My Life, My Quit™

My Life, My Quit™ – a program of the National Jewish Health, the vendor for the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline, is a specially designed program to help young people quit vaping or other tobacco products.

My Life, My Quit™ provides five free and confidential coaching sessions by phone, live texting, or chat with a youth coach specialist. Text “Start My Quit” to 855-891-9989 or call toll-free 1-855-891-9989 for real-time coaching.

You can also visit *mylifemyquit.com* to sign up online, chat with a live coach, get information about vaping and tobacco, and activities to help them quit.



MA Youth and Young Adult E-Cigarette Quit Program

Text “VapeFreeMass” to 88709

Adults looking to help youth quit
Text “QUIT” to 202-899-7550

Frequently Asked Questions About Vaping

What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol (often called vapor) produced by an e-cigarette or similar battery-powered device.

What is an e-cigarette?

E-cigarettes are battery-powered vaporizers that simulate the action and sensation of smoking.

What are other names for e-cigarettes?

They are also known as e-cigs, vape pens, e-hookahs, e-pipes, tanks, mods, vapes, electronic nicotine delivery systems, or ENDS, and more. Some people refer to vaping devices by their brand name such as JUUL, BO, Blu, and others.

What kinds/types of e-cigarettes are there?

E-cigarettes come in many different sizes, types, and colors.

Some e-cigarettes are made to look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some resemble pens, small electronic devices such as USB sticks, and other everyday items. The products that are designed to resemble small electronic devices are often compact and allow for discreet carrying and use—at home, in school hallways and bathrooms, and even in classrooms.

What is in e-cigarettes? My child says it’s simply flavored water, what’s so bad about it?

E-cigarettes contain pre-filled pods or e-liquids/e-juices the user adds to the device. E-liquids generally consist of propylene glycol, glycerin, water, nicotine, and flavorings. Many of these pods and e-liquids come in fruit and candy flavors that appeal to youth.

E-cigarettes produce an aerosol, commonly called vapor, which users inhale from the device and exhale. The aerosol can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances, including:

- Nicotine
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
- Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
- Volatile organic compounds
- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead

Are e-cigarettes regulated?

The Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Center for Tobacco Products has the authority to regulate the manufacture, import, packaging, labeling, advertising, promotion, sale, and distribution of electronic nicotine delivery systems. The FDA does not have authority to regulate vaping accessories.

Many of the FDA’s current enforcement activities are focused on the sale of e-cigarettes to minors both in stores and online, and holding manufacturers accountable for making products so appealing to youth. The FDA has delayed using its regulatory authority over other areas of e-cigarettes, including the manufacture of e-liquids. Without manufacturing regulations, people can’t be sure what is in these products.

Are e-cigarettes safe?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *e-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.*

E-cigarettes have not been approved by the FDA as a smoking cessation device. However, if used as a complete substitute for regular cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products, e-cigarettes have the potential to benefit adult smokers who are not pregnant. Additional research is needed to help understand long-term health effects of e-cigarette use.

Is being around secondhand vape safe?

No. According to the Surgeon General, the aerosol from e-cigarettes is not harmless.



E-cigarettes and other vaping devices can be used to vape other substances, such as marijuana.

It can contain harmful and potentially harmful chemicals, including nicotine; ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs; flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease; volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead.

Scientists are still working to understand more fully the health effects and harmful doses of e-cigarette contents when they are heated and turned into an aerosol, both for users who inhale from a device and for those who are exposed to the aerosol secondhand.

Can e-cigarettes be used to vape other substances?

Yes. E-cigarettes and other vaping devices can be used to vape other substances, such as marijuana. Open systems require the user to add the e-juice, which can be a substance other than nicotine. Closed systems (those that use pre-filled pods) can also be altered to vape substances other than nicotine.

What can I do to prevent my child from vaping?

Simply talking with your child about these products can help protect them. Let them know that you care about them and think vaping is not safe.

How can I tell if my child is vaping?

Many types of e-cigarettes are made to resemble everyday items and can easily fit in a pocket or the palm of a hand. In addition, they come in fruit and candy flavors. For these reasons, it may be hard to tell if your child is vaping—you may not recognize a vaping device or an e-liquid scent.

Here are subtle signs your child might be vaping:

- **Unexplained sweet scent** – If you notice a sweet scent that is unexplainable, it might be a flavored e-juice for a vaping device.
- **Unfamiliar products** – If you come across unusual looking items such as unusual pens or USB drives or an unfamiliar battery or battery charging device, they could be associated with vaping.

Tips for Talking with Your Kids About Vaping

Know the facts. Learn about e-cigarettes and young people before you start the conversation with your child.

- E-cigarettes are known by many different names. They are sometimes called e-cigs, e-hookahs, mods, vape pens, vapes, tank systems, and electronic nicotine delivery systems.
- Most vaping devices contain and deliver nicotine. Nicotine can harm a teenager’s developing brain and lead to addiction.
- Simply talking with your teen about these products can help protect them.

Be patient and ready to listen. Your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture. So avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.

There is no “perfect time” to talk. Driving in the car together or waiting at an appointment is often the best time. You can start by mentioning a news story, a TV show, or something that you heard about vaping. Or ask your child what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together such as seeing someone use an e-cigarette, passing a vape shop when you are out, or seeing an e-cigarette advertisement.

There is no “perfect talk.” Consider your talks with your child about vaping as a learning opportunity for both of you, and perhaps just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. You may have some facts about vaping at hand, but concede that you don’t know all the answers. It will go a long way to keep your kids from going on the defensive.

Ask what your child thinks. Show some genuine curiosity. Ask your child, “What’s your take on vaping?” or “Do you know kids who use e-cigarettes?”

Be open and honest. Be truthful about what you know about the dangers of vaping, and what you don’t. You can honestly say, though, “Vaping isn’t harmless. I hope you can steer clear of it.”

Excerpted from Talk with Your Teen About E-cigarettes: A Tip Sheet for Parents from E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General and other content taken from How to Talk to Your Kids about Vaping, New York Times, February 2, 2018.

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [makesmokinghistory.org](https://www.makesmokinghistory.org) for information and support.
For information and tips, visit [GetOutraged.org](https://www.getoutraged.org)

The best way to know is to educate yourself about the products and to talk with your kids.

What if my child is vaping—how can I help him/her quit?

Talk with your child’s health care provider about specific resources for teens that address tobacco/nicotine addiction.

See vaping cessation resources specifically designed for youth on page 10.

What if I use(d) tobacco?

Be honest and talk with your child about your choices and how hard it is/was to quit.

If you need help quitting tobacco, it’s never too late to keep trying.

Information is taken from E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2016, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (website on Electronic Cigarettes https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm Accessed 5/22/18)
Other sources include:
• McRobbie, Hayden; Bullen, Chris; Hartmann-Boyce, Jamie; Hajek, Peter (2014). “Electronic cigarettes for smoking cessation and reduction”.
• The Cochrane Library. 12: CD010216. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD010216.pub2. PMID 25515689.
• Is My Child Vaping? (2018, February 19). Retrieved from <https://raisingteens.today.com/is-my-child-vaping-heres-9-signs-to-watch-for/>. Accessed 5/18/18



You can’t always control everything your children do when they’re not with you.

Talking with your kids about vaping will let them know that you’re concerned about their health.

Marijuana - the key to prevention: Talk talk, talk!

BEFORE the talk

Know the facts—get credible info. Go to tritowncouncil.org or Partnership for Drug-Free Kids at drugfree.org

Be patient and ready to listen—avoid criticism. Remember your goal is to have a conversation, not deliver a lecture.

Set a positive example. Model good behavior.

Be clear about your message. Talk early and often about drug (and alcohol) use.

Seek support: Ask your health care provider to talk to your teen. Suggest your teen talk with other trusted adults (coaches, relatives, etc.)

BE PREPARED to answer their questions

Why don't you want me to use marijuana?
What's the big deal about THC?
It's legal so it must be safe...
Did you ever use marijuana?

THEN...start the conversation

Find the right moment. Driving by a billboard promoting CBD or marijuana, after hearing or reading a story on the news, or passing by a retailer, ask your teens what they think about marijuana use. BTW, the car is often the perfect place to start these conversations!

The #1 reason teens choose NOT to use drugs or alcohol is parents!
With youth's perceptions of risk and harm of marijuana use at an all time low, what's the best way to keep our kids informed, safe, and empowered to make healthy choices?

TALK, TALK, TALK —
EARLY and OFTEN!

The Dangers of
Marijuana
Edibles

- Edibles present a danger with regard to "normalization" and ease of use
- Slower to take effect (so may ingest too much)
- Portion Size: a portion can be as small as one bite of a candy bar or 1 oz of a full soda
- Unclear how edibles react with prescription medications
- Misleading packaging can be dangerous for children and difficult to detect



Appeal to their intellects. What does the science tell us about marijuana use? Help your teen contrast marijuana use with other health choices — even though 21 year olds can legally purchase and smoke cigarettes in Massachusetts, does that mean they should?

Make your message clear. Don't treat pot lightly. State your expectations for your teen clearly and concisely.

Discuss ways to avoid uncomfortable situations. Practice comfortable refusal skills through role play.

And FINALLY...Don't underestimate your power! Your voice matters! Believe it or not, your teen IS listening!

For more resources go to tritowncouncil.org/substance-use

Alcohol myths vs. facts

MYTH: "If we change the minimum drinking age back to 18 instead of 21, it would reduce problems with underage drinking."

FACT: Researchers consider the change to 21 to be one of the most successful public safety and public health policies in history. Since it was changed to 21 in 1984, deaths from drinking and driving accidents have decreased by thousands, saving at least 20,000 lives.

MYTH: "In Europe, youth drink more responsibly than in the US."

FACT: According to data collected from 15-16 year-olds in 35 European countries, European teens actually drink more often, more heavily, and get drunk more often than American teens.

MYTH: "Alcohol is safer than other drugs."

FACT: The teen brain is especially vulnerable to addiction due to the rapid growth and development that takes place during adolescence. 40% of teens who begin drinking at age 15 will become addicted versus 7% who begin at age 21. Alcohol kills 6.5 times more youth than all other illegal drugs combined.

MYTH: "Kids are going to drink anyway; it's a right of passage."

FACT: Contrary to popular belief, most kids don't drink. The Tri-Town YRBS surveys consistently show that MOST Tri-Town teens don't drink. Misperceptions of "everybody is doing it" actually make young people more likely to drink alcohol. But, when these misperceptions are corrected, and youth realize that "NOT everybody is doing it", they are less likely to drink alcohol.

MYTH: "It's better for kids to start drinking young so they can learn how to handle it."

FACT: Alcohol impacts a teen differently than an adult because the adolescent brain is still developing—especially the part of the brain that deals with decision-making. Drinking before the age of 21 places kids at higher risk for academic failure, depression, suicide, and sexual assault. It also increases their risk for alcohol dependence.

Adapted from materials credited by Wakefield Unified Prevention Coalition

Action Plan for Parents

- Talk with your children about alcohol. Tell them what will happen if they break your rules about alcohol or other drugs.
- Have an ongoing discussion about the risks involved.
- Be involved. Know who, what, where and when.
- Don't assume that other parents have the same rules you have.
- Create a plan with your children about what to do in a risky situation. Texting, calling, or going to a safe location are all good ideas.

Developed by: Essex District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett — mass.gov/essexda. MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education — doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety. MA Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Addiction Services — mass.gov/dph/bsas. MA Executive Office of Public Safety and Security — mass.gov/eopss. Richard L. Campbell, Esq.

Do you know about the
Social Host Law? Learn more at
tritowncouncil.org

The facts about Rx drug abuse

Learn more, find support. Contact TTC
at 978-887-6512 or tritowncouncil.org.

What are the risks?

Some Rx drugs such as opioids/opiates, depressants and stimulants may lead to adverse health effects including addiction. These drugs, when prescribed and monitored by a medical professional and used responsibly, are relatively safe and effective. **But risk of dependence and addiction exists; the US is in the midst of a prescription opioid overdose epidemic.**

The risks increase significantly if medications are abused—meaning they are taken for reasons and in doses not approved by a doctor, or taken by persons other than the prescribed. Rx drug abuse can lead to other illicit drug use.

Who is at risk?

- Young adults (age 18-25):** Have highest rates of Rx drug misuse
- Older adults (age 50+):** Because more than 80% of older adults use at least one Rx medication daily, with more than 50% taking more than 5 medication/supplements daily. This can potentially lead to accidental or intentional misuse.

What can we do to prevent Rx drug abuse?

There are specific strategies to decrease the likelihood of Rx drug abuse:



Talk, Talk, Talk! Children and teens whose parents/caregivers talk with them early and often about the dangers of drugs and alcohol use are less likely to use them—by as much as 50%! *Keep talking — they ARE listening!*



Set clear rules. Make sure your teens know that they should always take medications as prescribed and NEVER share with others. It's unsafe *and* illegal!



Monitor and secure. Take charge of your own prescriptions and ask family members/ friends to do the same.



Understand. If you/a loved one is prescribed an Rx opioid, talk with the doctor to understand: what the Rx is for; when, how, and for how long it should be taken; risks/side effects; and monitor the dispensing. Rx drug abuse can start with the use of legitimately prescribed drugs.



Safe Disposal. Dispose of unused/ unwanted drugs and over the counter (OTC) medications in drug disposal boxes at the Tri-town police stations.

Drug Definitions and Common Brand Names

OPIATES and OPIOIDS

Opioids and opiates are often used interchangeably.

Definitions:

- Opiates:** Drugs derived from opium poppy plants
- Opioids:** Synthetic drugs created to simulate effects of opium but chemically different

Purpose: To relieve pain

Common Opioids/Opiates: Vicodin, Percocet, Fentanyl, Oxycontin, Morphine, Demerol, Codeine

DEPRESSANTS

Definition: Drugs that slow down activity in brain and spinal cord

Purpose: To relieve stress, anxiety and treat sleep disorders

Common Depressants: Valium, Xanax, Nembutal, Ambien, Klonopin

STIMULANTS (AMPHETAMINES)

Definition: Drugs that increase activity in the brain/body boosting energy, alertness and attention; raise heart and breathing rate and blood pressure

Purpose: To treat ADHD, narcolepsy, and some forms of depression

Common Stimulants: Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta



Rx drug abuse can lead to
other illicit drug use.

4 out of 5 heroin users started
out by abusing opioids.

Did you know?

Boxford, Topsfield and Middleton offer safe disposal of prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications *at any time of the year?* Drug disposal boxes are located at the police stations in all three towns.

Safely dispose of needles at the Topsfield Fire Station and Middleton transfer station in the available sharp collection receptacles. Boxford Board of Health is in the process of obtaining a sharps disposal kiosk. In the meantime, sharps can be dropped off in the Boxford Board of Health office Monday through Thursday from 8AM - 2PM.

Parents are the most
important influence in
their children's lives.

- As a parent, the things you say and do have tremendous influence on the decisions your child makes — especially when it comes to using alcohol and other drugs.
- Teens whose parents set rules about alcohol are less likely to drink.
- By talking with your children about not using alcohol and other drugs, you can help them make better choices and live safer, healthier lives.

The top 5 social media apps parents should know about

by Charise Rohm Nulsen – Topsfield resident, writer, social media influencer, activist, school committee chair and perpetual volunteer.

Pop quiz: What is Voxel? If you're scratching your head, it's time to read up on the trendy new social media apps kids are using. Friending your child on Facebook is now just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to online safety. Read on to see some of the sites and apps tweens and teens are flocking to, and get useful tips for protecting your child from cyberbullying and other online safety hazards.

TikTok



Purpose: For creating and sharing short videos. Users can create short music videos of 3 to 15 seconds and short looping videos of 3 to 60 seconds. It encourages users to express themselves creatively through video. Special effects can be added to the videos.

Why Parents Should Worry: Thirteen is the minimum age, but there isn't a real way to validate age so anyone can download the app. Also, parents express concern that there is a lot of inappropriate language in the videos so it's not appropriate for young children. Lastly, by default, all accounts are set to public so strangers can contact your children.

Houseparty



Purpose: A video chatting app that's pretty open. Friends can communicate with each other through live video and texts in chat groups.

Why Parents Should Worry: There's no screening and the video is live, so there's nothing to keep kids from inappropriate content. Users can send links via chat and even take screenshots. There's also nothing keeping friends of friends joining groups where they may only know one person.

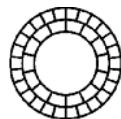
Snapchat



Purpose: Allows users to send photos and videos that disappear after they're received. It's rated ages 12+. The filters and special effects allow users to alter pictures.

Why Parents Should Worry: Some kids are using the app to send racy pics because they believe the images can't be saved and circulated. But it turns out that *Snapchat pics don't completely disappear from a device*, and users can take a screenshot before an image vanishes in the app. And while recent studies revealed that "sexting" (sending sexual messages and images, usually via text message) is not as popular as parents had feared, "disappearing photo" apps like Snapchat might embolden kids to send more explicit photos and texts than they would have before through traditional texting.

VSCO



Purpose: A photo creation app that gives users the tools to shoot, edit and post images to a profile, kind of like Instagram.

Why Parents Should Worry: You should know that you have to manually turn on privacy settings and limit location sharing. There are also in-app purchases for more serious photo editing tools that could cost you some serious money if your kid decides to download them.

Kik Messenger



Purpose: A mobile app people can use to text with friends at high speed and with more of a "face-to-face feel" than regular texting (users' profile pictures appear in a little bubble next to their text, and they can quickly text photos, sketches, or even pre-designed greeting cards to individuals or groups).

Why Parents Should Worry: App is rated ages 17+, but there is no age verification so anyone can download it. Like some other instant messenger apps, Kik allows your teen to connect with others using just a username (rather than texting from a phone number). But it begs the question: Should teens be texting with people beyond their phone contacts? Reviews on App Store and Google Play store reveal that many people use Kik to meet strangers for sexting. The app has been connected with cyberbullying. It's no surprise Kik has landed on some parents' "worst apps" lists. Check out bewebmart.com's advice on Kik.

For more information, read Charise's complete article at familyeducation.com

Talking to the kids you care about...

The average age a child is given a smartphone is 10. Having conversations about safety, personal responsibility, boundaries, respect and resisting peer pressure have to happen early and often!

Next Steps for Parents

Sit down with your child and find out which apps she's using, how they work, and whether she has experienced any issues on them, such as cyberbullying or contact from strangers. Look into apps that help you monitor your child online. And keep these tips in mind:

- Set up age limits on your child's device.
- Rather than hovering or completely barring your child from downloading every social media app, sit down and go over some general rules, such as: "If you wouldn't share it with your family, don't share it online."
- Tell your child to let you know if someone is hurting her or making her feel uncomfortable online, even if the person is acting anonymously.
- When your child wants to join a new social media platform, go through the security settings together to choose the ones you're most comfortable with. Advise your child not to share passwords with anyone, including best friends, boyfriends, or girlfriends.

Teach your child never to forward a sext and to let an adult know right away if one is received.

Did you know...

Snapchat photos do not disappear as claimed – the app saves the photos to the phone and they can be extracted.

Per the CDC, sexual activity among high school youth has decreased in the past decade but digital sexual activity is becoming more common.

Combating Hate Speech

What is hate speech? Hate speech is more than just harsh words. It can be any form of expression intended to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or class of people. It can occur offline or online or both. It can be communicated using words, symbols, images, memes, emojis, and video. In general, online hate speech targets a person or group because of characteristics tied closely to their identity, like race, color, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or sexual identity.

What is the difference between hate speech and critical speech?

Not all negative speech is hate speech. You could, for example, disagree with a religious doctrine or policy without being hateful. You could be opposed to a government whose citizens widely practice a particular religion or are from a dominant ethnic group without being hateful to that group. You could criticize customs practiced by different groups without necessarily demeaning individuals in those groups or threatening their well-being. You can certainly disagree or criticize a public official or any other person without it being hate speech. But it can become hate speech if those criticisms are framed in a way designed to imply that the criticism is based, at least in part, on their identity rather than what they say or how they act.

Is hate speech a form of bullying?

Hate speech and bullying often overlap. Bullying, whether in-person or online, is defined as repeated, unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can morph into hate speech when it involves demeaning a person or group based on characteristics such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or body image.

Legal issues in the U.S. and other countries.

For the most part, hate speech is legal in the United States, though it is not legal in many countries. European countries, for example, passed anti-hate speech laws in the wake of World War II, to curb incitement to racial, ethnic, and religious hatred after the Holocaust. But, in the U.S., even under the First Amendment, hate speech is unprotected and not permitted when it directly incites imminent criminal activity or includes specific threats of violence targeted against a person or group.

Found on mainstream platforms and fringe sites.

The majority of public critique about hate speech falls on mainstream popular platforms, but many young people are moving to newer online spaces, especially gaming-related, live streaming, and image sharing platforms. Hate speech can also be found in chat rooms or message board-style forums, including ones

known for so-called "controversial speech" and more mainstream sites where it can slip in during live gaming sessions or chats or forums that are not constantly moderated. Hate speech can be found in videos, cartoons, drawing, even photos. Image and video-based platforms can also contain hateful content. And there are "fringe" sites, often designed to appeal to extremists, which fester and tolerate hate speech.



Tech companies have the right to "censor" hate speech.

The First Amendment applies to government, not to private companies. Social media and other privately owned sites and apps have the right to determine the type of speech they allow on their platform. Just as nudity is legal, it's generally not allowed on many mainstream platforms. Companies have the right to enforce terms of service or community guidelines that dictate what may or may not be posted on their platforms.

A few things parents and educators can do to combat hate speech.

- Parents and educators can start by taking preventative action, by dealing with situations before they reach the hate speech level.

ConnectSafely

For a more in-depth look at hate speech, visit ConnectSafely.org/hatespeech.

Encourage empathy in children and remind them that, when engaging with others online, there is another person on the other side of the screen. Encourage children to have an open attitude and honest curiosity about other people because some instances of hate speech are based on ignorance or false information or designed to recruit young people to a hate group or radical ideology.

- Look for terms that might creep into a child's vocabulary. Sometimes kids (and adults) use derogatory terms without realizing their impact. They may not mean to be hateful but the words they use can still be hurtful and they may be getting into bad habits. Don't overreact to these situations. Lots of kids use derogatory terms without realizing it. They're not being hateful but they might need to be reminded that their words impact others.
- Schools can foster a climate of tolerance and inclusion to both prevent and isolate hate speech incidents and create a social norm around acceptance of all students, regardless of who they are.
- Teachers can help students by posing realistic scenarios that they are likely to experience online and encouraging them to work together to come up with the words and actions they can use to stand up for people who are targeted by hate speech and bullies and to prevent the spread of false information and hate speech.
- Schools can implement digital citizenship programs to encourage students to be upstanders not bystanders.
- Educators and parents can teach by example, being sure their own words don't contribute to the problem.
- Schools may be able to take action if online hate speech impacts the school or any students or staff even if the hate speech did not take place on campus or during school hours.

This Quick-Guide is based on the free booklet "The Parent & Educator Guide to Combatting Hate Speech" by Brittan Heller, J.D., and Larry Magid, Ed.D. at ConnectSafely.org/hatespeech. Creative Commons License – attribution required.

How can parents and caring adults support LGBTQ+ Youth?

by Masconomet High School's GSA

We are Masconomet's Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA)—members of and allies to the LGBTQ+ community—and we want you to know how important your support of LGBTQ+ youth is, even in more progressive areas like Massachusetts. As a result of increased publicity, while there is much more accessible support, there has been a corresponding backlash of negative comments about the various genders and sexualities. If our Tri-Town community is silent about LGBTQ+ people, young people may worry that those close to them do not support these identities. This can lead to fearful secrecy that can be harmful both for them and for those close to them. On the other hand, those of us who have found acceptance in our relatives, teachers, and neighbors have been able to thrive as people; we cherish these relationships. Here are some general recommendations drawn from our personal experiences:

These recommendations will help you create a broad culture of support for LGBTQ+ youth:

- **Educate yourself.** Learn about terms and definitions, common misconceptions, real-world experiences of LGBTQ+ people, and any other questions you may have. Know what the acronym stands for, and know which words are accepted and which are considered disrespectful.
- **Always seek primary sources.** If someone in the LGBTQ+ community is open to questions, ask them. GLSEN (glsen.org) is an organization that is experienced with LGBTQ+ youth matters. Family Equality Council and PFLAG (gbpflag.org) are reputable general resources. PFLAG offers resources and support groups for parents of LGBTQ+ children.
- **Choose unbiased news sources and seek multiple reports to see a more honest portrayal of events**—particularly if the media you typically consume tends not to view LGBTQ+ individuals favorably.
- **Be mindful of how you speak about LGBTQ+ people.** Youth model their attitudes of respected adults in their lives, so try to be inclusive when you talk. The more outwardly supportive you are, the safer other LGBTQ+ people will feel in your presence.
- **Avoid using gender stereotypes.** Avoid suggesting that a specific gender identity or sexuality is invalid, or projecting a gender or sexuality onto someone when you don't know theirs—including your children or young people you care about. Even when you may think there are no LGBTQ+ people to hear you speak, it is possible that there are, and saying something they might perceive as inconsiderate may alienate them.
- **No matter what your thoughts are when you find out, be supportive.** A gut-reaction rejection, regardless of reason, will isolate them from you. If they came out to you directly, they may avoid coming out to other people, and they may feel less able to confide in you—a dangerous situation if they are suffering from anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues caused in part by hiding their sexuality or gender identity. Instead, remind them that your love is unconditional. If they have come out as trans or non-binary, use their preferred name and pronouns; if they don't mention them, ask.
- **If you have conflicted thoughts, assess your values.** For instance, if your religion states that LGBTQ+ people are lesser individuals, ask yourself if honoring that sentiment is worth treating this child as inferior. If you have qualms, talk to them. Never refrain from discussion. To pretend that they did not come out or to refuse to use requested pronouns can be seen as its own form of rejection.



Additional Resources for parents and caring adults

Family Acceptance Project
familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications

Studies the role of families in the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth. FAP aims to support families in accepting LGBTQ youth while respecting the cultural and religious values that might impact such acceptance.

Gender Spectrum
www.genderspectrum.org/resources

A major clearinghouse of information and resources that help educators, health professionals, religious leaders, parents/guardians, and gender nonconforming people themselves understand gender identity and nonconformity. For those hoping to understand the needs and perspectives of a variety of stakeholders, this is a great place to start.

discussion. To pretend that they did not come out or to refuse to use requested pronouns can be seen as its own form of rejection.


- **Understand the plurality of coming out.** That is, be aware of where the child in question has come out and where they have not. For children who use a different name and/or set of pronouns in different spaces, ask which to use in those spaces where they haven't come out. Being "outed" is stressful and sometimes dangerous, so recognize that people may have various reasons for choosing when, where, and to whom they come out.

We know that having a young person come out to you can be stressful; parents especially might feel like they are being asked to readjust their hopes and dreams for their children. If you need to process those feelings or vent, PFLAG can connect you with parents who have already gone through the adjustment process. You might ask the child that came out to you to be patient, but try not to create a situation in which they are supporting you through their coming out instead of you supporting them.

Set them up for success!

Healthy Sleep Habits: Tips for Teens

Biological sleep patterns shift for both sleeping and waking during adolescence. It's natural for teens to not be able to fall asleep before 11pm. There are things that teens can do to help fall asleep earlier but they require effort and consistency!

- **Make sleep a priority.**  What do you need to change to get enough sleep to stay healthy, happy, and smart?
- **Make your room a sleep haven.** Keep it cool, quiet and dark. How about eyeshades or blackout curtains? Let in bright light in the morning to signal your body to wake up.
- **Avoid caffeine after 12:00pm.** The half life of caffeine in your body is 6-9 hours. That the energy drink you had at 3pm with 80mg of caffeine in it. There's still 40mg of caffeine in your body at 9pm. That will keep you awake!
- **Stick to a bed and wake-time.** A consistent sleep schedule will help you feel less tired, it allows your body to get in sync with its natural patterns. You'll find it's easier to fall asleep at bedtime with this type of routine.
- **Don't eat, drink, or exercise within a few hours of bedtime.** Quiet, calm activities, and will help you fall asleep much more easily!
- **Don't leave your homework for the last minute.** Try to get it done at least an hour before bedtime, so your mind can calm down.
- **Avoid ALL screens in the hour before bed.** The screen's blue color keeps us awake – it's the same light that our bodies see at high noon, and makes us feel more awake.
- **Leave devices outside your bedroom.** It's too tempting to check your phone in the night, or send some texts. Wait until morning – sleep is more important!
- **Do the same things every night before you go to sleep** and you'll teach your body the signals that it's time for bed. Try taking a bath or shower (this will leave you extra time in the morning), or reading a book.
- **Try keeping a diary or to-do lists by your bed.** If you jot notes down before you go to sleep, you'll be less likely to stay awake worrying or stressing.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

Help Your Child Tackle Long-Term School Projects

Avoid Over-Involvement. Build the Capacity of Youth to Engage Executive Function

by Stephanie Meegan, Founder, Impact on Youth Educational Services and Tri-Town resident

Getting Started

Multi-faceted school projects can be stressful for families, particularly if youth find it difficult to plan and organize work tasks and manage time and resources independently. Some may avoid getting started, and find it hard to sustain focus and overcome obstacles. As deadlines loom and tasks are unfinished, young people can feel overwhelmed.

It's tempting to jump in and help complete the project, but that doesn't address the underlying issues. For many, the core reason for project-related struggles is the uneven development of youth's Executive Function.

Fortunately Executive Function skills can improve over time when strategic coaching is provided by teachers, parents or tutors. Here are some strategic coaching tips to strengthen your child's project-related Executive Function skills.

What is Executive Function?

A set of complex brain activities that work together to help us to...

- Manage daily routines
- Control emotions
- Achieve goals

1. **Consider which skill areas need strengthening.** Executive Function involves a variety of thinking and behavior regulation skills. If diagnostic testing has been done, clear indications of strengths and weaknesses have been determined. In the absence of formal evaluations, parents can complete the informal Parent Questionnaire found at tritowncouncil.org/parenting to get a sense of the project-related skills that need attention.

2. **Get a "heads up" from teachers when a project is assigned.** To have time for coaching and avoid over-involvement as due dates approach, it's important to know when a project is assigned. With your child, establish a weekly habit of checking the teacher's website where assignments are often posted. For elementary youth, ask teachers how project information will be shared when assigned.

3. **Clarify the target.** In the adult world of work, tools like specifications and quality assurance criteria are used to set expectations for product/project development. In education, teachers use rubrics to make it clear how projects will be evaluated. Rubrics are often in chart form where performance indicators or quality criteria are described on a scale of 1-4. Check for the rubric. This tool helps children understand how their work will be evaluated and it can guide them as they check, correct and augment their work before turning it in.

If the assignment is a group project, request guidelines that describe how individual contributions will be assessed. Often teachers provide accountability tools like a rubric or survey that describe expectations for group members. When the project is done, these tools also enable youth to document individual contributions and collaborative efforts.

4. **Provide the right capacity-building support at the right time.**

Ask teachers for suggestions to help your child practice the Executive Function skills that are particularly challenging for him/her.

Additionally, some youth may benefit from tutoring or coaching in Executive Function skills application as they work through a project.

STEPS TO GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

1. I know *what* to do
2. I know *how* to do it
3. I begin
4. I work through each step

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

- Metacognition, planning, time management, organization and working memory
- Response inhibition, emotion regulation, task initiation, time management, working memory and metacognition
- Meta cognition, emotion regulation, flexibility and goal-directed persistence

✓ GOAL ACHIEVED!

This chart shows when the different thinking and behavior skills are used to achieve the goal of long-term project completion.

DONALD B. NELSON, D.M.D.

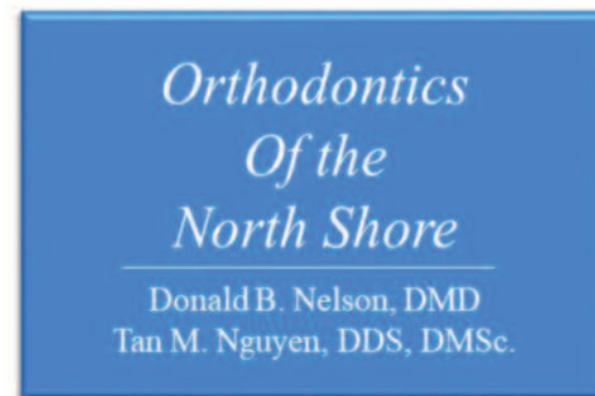
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AlcoholEducation.org
AlcoholEducationFdn@gmail.com

An advertisement for Sol Bean Juice Bar & Kitchen. It features a list of menu items on the right and a photo of the interior on the left. The list includes: FROM SCRATCH KITCHEN, HEALTHY GRAIN BOWLS, WRAPS, PANINIS, FULL JUICE BAR - SMOOTHIES, SMOOTHIE BOWLS, FRESH SOUPS DAILY, HIGH ENERGY SNACKS, HEALTHY KIDS MENU AND KIDS PLAY AREA, ONLINE ORDERING AND CALL AHEAD PICK-UP FRIDGE, and FEATURING COCOWHIP - A vegan, sugar free, gluten free Soft Serve loaded with nutritional benefits. It also mentions that Sol Bean moved to its new location in December 2018 and has been operating in Middleton for over 14 years. The website www.SolBeanMiddleton.com and phone number 978 777 5900 are provided. Hours are listed as Monday-Friday 9:30-8 and Saturday-Sunday 10-8. A note at the bottom states "Sol Bean is proud to support the Tri-Town Council".

Sol Bean
JUICE BAR & KITCHEN

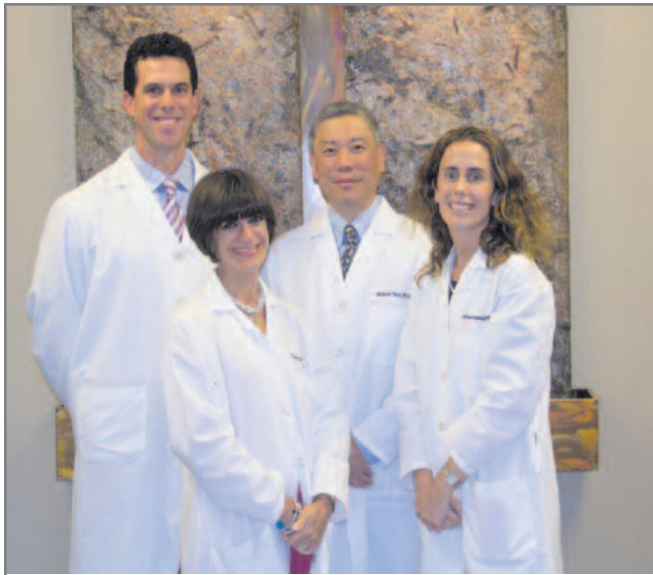
- FROM SCRATCH KITCHEN
- HEALTHY GRAIN BOWLS, WRAPS, PANINIS
- FULL JUICE BAR - SMOOTHIES, SMOOTHIE BOWLS
- FRESH SOUPS DAILY
- HIGH ENERGY SNACKS
- HEALTHY KIDS MENU AND KIDS PLAY AREA
- ONLINE ORDERING AND CALL AHEAD PICK-UP FRIDGE
- FEATURING COCOWHIP - A vegan, sugar free, gluten free Soft Serve loaded with nutritional benefits.

Sol Bean Moved to our new location in December 2018. We've been operating as a community focused business here in Middleton for over 14 years.

www.SolBeanMiddleton.com
978 777 5900

HOURS:
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Saturday-Sunday 10-8

Sol Bean is proud to support the Tri-Town Council



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