

Dinner Dialogue

ALLEN COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL CONSORTIUM



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Social Skills

Social skills are the skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language, and our personal appearance.



Having a solid set of social skills allows you to communicate, relate to, and connect with other people. This is essential for establishing friendships and navigating your way through life with a better degree of satisfaction.

DINNER DISCUSSION TOPICS

Building Social Skills and Relationships



- Talk about each family member's best friend- and what makes that person a best friend.
- What traits do you look for in friends?
- What do your children like best about their siblings?
- Who gets teased at school? Why do they get teased? Does anyone ever stand up for the kids being teased?
- Did you have a chance to be kind to anyone today?
- What are some feelings you felt today? Which one was the most pleasant and which was the most unpleasant?
- How do you usually get yourself from being angry to being calm? (Caring adults- consider offering ideas of what you do first!)
- Different people have different comfort levels of physical proximity. Role play standing too close when talking, and standing too far away. What feels right to you? What is an appropriate way to communicate with someone when they feel comfortable closer than you do?
- List things that make you each different from one another. How do these differences benefit your family? Is someone really tall and they help your family reach things? Is someone really organized and that helps your family be on time?



Offer young people some exercises to make them feel more at ease and comfortable in social situations:

- If your child is going to a party or dance:
 - have them set a goal of meeting two or three new people- no more than that. Goals should be kept within reach.
- Teach your child how to break the ice with people:
 - by saying, "I've heard that you just came back from a trip to... Like alternative music... etc." Encourage them to say what they think or feel about these topics.
- Have your child go to a new place with a friend.
 - Have them try to meet one other person together and find out what makes the new person they meet interesting. (By the way, almost everyone is interesting in their own way. It's fun to see if we can find out about the most interesting part of each person we meet!)
- If the child you care for happens to be very shy (or extremely aggressive) and you are having difficulty teaching social skills, you may want to seek help.
 - Social skills are very important for navigating through the stormy adolescent years.

The Reasons Young People Give for Using Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) Series

Month 2 of 5

First, some facts:

- Today, some teens engage in "extreme binge drinking," with 1 in 10 teens consuming 10 or more drinks, and 1 in 20 teens consuming 15 or more drinks.
- Youth aged 12-17 represent 2/3 of the new marijuana users in the US.
- 1 in every 15 high school seniors smoke marijuana daily.



Reason 2 Young People Use ATOD: To Fit in and Belong

Children want others to like them. Sometimes the group they want to join is- or the child thinks the group is- drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or using other drugs. Sometimes kids turn to alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs to feel like they fit in- to overcome anxiety, change their personality, or give themselves courage to talk to other people.

Remember, wanting to fit in and belong is one of the most natural parts of growing up. It is important. In fact, if we really listen, we may find that for some it is THE most important part of growing up.

So how do we help our children deal with and avoid negative peer pressure?

*Even though young people often report that they learn more from friends when they reach adolescence, studies have found that these same adolescents would **prefer** to learn about a variety of important topics from their parents or other caring adults. Peer influence does increase during the teen years, but the influence of caring adults can remain strong if you've established a strong relationship during the earlier years.*

Caregivers and mentors can play a strong role in helping young people face pressures to use ATOD. In fact, not wanting to harm the relationship between themselves and the caring adults in their lives is the most common reason that young people give for not using alcohol and other drugs.

Therefore, establishing a clear wish that you, a caring adult, do not want them to use ATOD provides the strongest motivation for them to refuse offers to try these substances.

September is National Recovery Month!

National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is a national observance held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible.

Find more information about National Recovery Month at www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month

Why Dinner Dialogues?

Consistent and open communication with your children will boost their self-esteem, improve their self-image, and empower them to make long term healthy decisions.

When they begin to feel heard and understood by the most important people in their life, they will be less likely adhere to the voice of other influences.

Youth who eat dinner with their family are less likely to:

- Use tobacco/nicotine
- Use alcohol
- Use marijuana
- Have friends that use tobacco/nicotine, alcohol, or marijuana
- Plan to use drugs in the future
- Feel depressed
- Think about suicide
- Have sex early
- Engage in risky behaviors
- Make poor decisions

Find current events, local resources for various needs, resources for students, ways to help with DAC's mission, and hotlines for drug/alcohol use on our website, www.dacac.org.

Our Vision

Our vision is an empowered society of loved, connected, and supported individuals, diverse in being and thriving as one community.



Allen County Drug & Alcohol Consortium, Inc.

Our Mission

Our purpose is to provide an effective network to collaboratively prevent substance abuse, primarily by youth, and to reduce the negative impact of alcohol and other drugs in the Allen County community.