

SAFE-T Newsletter:

Support Systems

SUPPORTING YOUR ADOLESCENT

One of the most important aspects of supporting adolescents is listening. Oftentimes adults make assumptions about adolescents and are unable to listen to what they are really saying or asking. These assumptions make it difficult for adolescents to feel heard and result in less open communication.

When talking together, start by asking open ended questions and then listen to what your adolescent is saying. Stay open and refrain from judgment until you have all of the information and then determine whether or not it is necessary to put forth your thoughts. Listening helps by making sure that adolescents know that they are heard, increasing the likelihood that they will seek support when needed.

ADULTS' ROLE AS BYSTANDERS

As adults we are often put in the position of bystander. While children and adolescents may not feel comfortable or able to respond to situations, as adults it is our responsibility that boundaries are maintained and no one is harmed. If you see an adult or a child doing something that is harmful or that crosses a boundary, it is important to consider your options and take action accordingly.

Options for responding:

- Get involved in the moment
- Talk with the involved parties after the fact
- Consult with other adults

In situations in which you suspect that a child or adolescent may be, or is at risk of being, hurt, call your local Department for Children and Families.

Year 1 Progression

1. Program Introduction
2. Support & Resources
3. Coping
4. Empathy
5. Respecting Boundaries
6. Flirting, Joking, and Sexual Harassment
7. Taking Responsibility for Actions
8. Bystanders
9. Healthy Relationships Project I
10. Healthy Relationships Project II

Year 2 Progression

1. Program Introduction
2. Sexuality
3. Gender Stereotypes
4. Consent
5. What is Sexual Abuse?
6. Showing Support
7. Risk Factors & Asking for Help
8. Creating Caring Communities
9. Final Project I
10. Final Project II



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Teen Adult Dialogues

Bystanders: Have you ever needed to decide what to do as a bystander? What did you decide to do, and how did it feel to make that decision?

Bystanders: How can we show bystanders that we support them?

Healthy relationships: What do you think is important for healthy relationships? What can you do to build healthy relationships?

Congratulations on completing the Teen-Adult Dialogues!

We hope that you and your child had a chance to talk about things you may not have ordinarily discussed. It can be challenging to have conversations about relationships with adolescents, but the benefits to openly and honestly discussing each person's perspective go a long way in creating healthy relationships with adolescents. We hope you will continue conversations about healthy relationships with your children in the future!

Questions?

If at any point you have any questions or concerns about the SAFE-T Program, please contact the SAFE-T Team at:

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Vermont**

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A note on support

Isolation is a risk factor for abuse. Teaching adolescents that it is okay to ask for help and by helping them to identify who they can ask can help works to reduce isolation. However, it is important to remember that it is detrimental to children to be told that they “must” or “should” ask for help if they are abused. Some children are threatened with harm if they disclose abuse. Other children believe they can-not disclose because they love the person who has caused them harm. Our language could cause them to think they have done something wrong by not disclosing, thereby causing them more harm. Our goal is to help children see that they are in a supportive environment where asking for help is a viable option.