



**community
alliance
for youth**

CAFY PARENT SURVEY

DATA SUMMARY AND WRITTEN COMMENTS

April, 2009

CONSOLIDATED DATA

1. Which of the following challenges related to risky behaviors have you experienced with your teenager(s)? Please check those that you have experienced.

Note: The percentages represent the percentage of parents in each group who check each challenge. Many of these parents have children at more than one level. You can see the distribution by reviewing the PDF reports for the individual school levels.

Challenges that you have experienced with your teenagers. (20 parents skipped this question)	School Levels of Children				
	Total (102)	College (27)	High School (81)	Junior High (58)	Younger than JH (41)
Personal stress	59.8%	59.3%	69.1%	54.0%	61.3%
Lack of sleep	51.0%	44.4%	45.6%	56.0%	58.1%
Inappropriate use of the internet	27.5%	33.3%	23.5%	30.0%	19.4%
Use of alcohol	26.5%	70.4%	36.8.7%	12.0%	0%
Bullying	23.5%	22.2%	19.9%	30.0%	25.8%
Depression	22.5%	29.6%	25.0%	16.0%	22.6%
Use of marijuana	18.6%	55.6%	25.0%	8.0%	0%
Sexual activity	12.7%	37.0%	17.1%	8.0%	0%
Riding with other teens who are drinking and driving	8.8%	25.9%	11.87%	6.0%	0%
Smoking cigarettes	6.9%	22.2%	8.8%	4.0%	0%
Eating disorders	5.9%	3.7%	7.4%	2.0%	9.7%
Binge drinking	4.9%	18.5%	5.9%	4.0%	0%
Riding with older teens who are driving recklessly	4.9%	18.5%	7.4%	4.0%	0%
Cutting one self	3.9%	7.4%	1.5	4.0%	4.2%
Use of other illegal drugs	3.9%	7.4%	4.4%	4.0%	0%
Driving recklessly	3.9%	11.1%	4.4%	4.0%	0%
Abuse of over-the-counter drugs	2.9%	7.4%	4.4%	4.0%	0%
Drinking & driving	2.0%	7.4%	2.9%	4.0%	0%
Abuse of prescription drugs	2.0%	3.7%	2.9%	2.0%	.3%
Sexual harassment	2.0%	3.7%	2.9%	0%	3.2%
Gambling	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

School Level of Oldest Child			
College	High School	Junior High	Younger than Junior High
27	60	30	6

2. How serious a problem do you believe the following teen behaviors are in our community? Please rate each problem on a scale from 1 to 4, where 4 = serious problem.

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Rating Average	Response Count
Personal stress	4	12	32	65	3.40	113
Lack of sleep	9	12	42	49	3.17	112
Use of alcohol	3	20	45	44	3.16	112
Sexual activity	4	29	48	27	2.91	108
Use of marijuana	9	28	46	29	2.85	112
Inappropriate use of the internet	9	32	28	30	2.80	99
Binge drinking	10	35	35	26	2.73	106
Driving recklessly	8	38	41	23	2.72	110
Riding with other teens who are drinking and driving	10	36	37	25	2.71	108
Drinking & driving	8	38	40	22	2.70	108
Depression	8	37	43	18	2.67	106
Riding with older teens who are driving recklessly	10	40	29	25	2.66	104
Bullying	8	41	43	18	2.65	110
Use of other illegal drugs	14	39	40	13	2.49	106
Eating disorders	17	44	33	11	2.36	105
Sexual harassment	19	48	29	9	2.27	105
Abuse of over-the-counter drugs	19	50	27	8	2.23	104
Abuse of prescription drugs	20	53	22	10	2.21	105
Smoking cigarettes	24	47	26	11	2.22	108
Cutting one self	27	53	17	7	2.04	104
Gambling	38	44	13	4	1.83	99
<i>answered question</i>						117
<i>skipped question</i>						5

WRITTEN COMMENTS

3. After checking of the risky behaviors that they have experienced with their teenagers, parents were asked what 'other' challenges they have experienced.

Self deprecation, putting herself down for her looks

Anxiety

Minor risky behavior on the internet so far. Nothing else is a concern for us currently

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Parties at Acton homes where drugs and alcohol are served

Occasionally has been bullied, not the one who has done the bullying

The indicators for eating disorders start early - we are fortunate we identified it early!!!!

Driving and cell phone use!

4. After rating the significance of their concerns related to each of the risky behaviors that were listed, parents were asked what other behaviors they are concerned about.

Excessive video gaming

Too many tests on the same day. Lack of personal concern on the part of teachers

Bullying - hidden relationship aggression - not the physical type but the emotional type - i.e. girl to girl, boy to boy, girl to boy.

Digital addiction

Personal stress, because it can lead to the behaviors we are concerned about. The high school years get increasingly stressful; kids are spent by the time they finish h.s. Much of the stress seems unnecessary because from my son's experience and that of other kids, AB students are hyper-prepared for college and often find it easier than high school. This makes no sense to me!

My answers reflect the seriousness of the problem regardless of the frequency of its occurrence. If the question is about how often I think it occurs, I would answer differently. So my responses simply reflect that however frequently the behavior occurs, it is a serious problem.

Lack of fun

Internet includes cell phones, texting, etc.

Cheating on tests and other school work

5. Which of the above risky behaviors are you most concerned about and why?

Multiple Behaviors

I am concerned about all of the above risk behaviors for the youth in our community. I think I'm most concerned about the use of ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco, or Other Drugs) among youth, and the personal stress our children deal with in this community.

Sexual Activity, personal stress, lack of sleep and risk of self-medication to relieve symptoms of emotional pain, lack of sleep or stress. Why? Because teens are not emotionally equipped to handle the psychological effects and ramifications of sexual activity. I think that there is too much instant gratification training in their short lives; and they do not know how to handle things when something goes wrong in the relationship. I think that personal stress and lack of sleep can lead to a host of other risky activities that can cause further harm to our youth like self-medication and poor judgment calls. And...I know that some medications/drugs, taken in the teen years to provide relief, can actually exacerbate other genetic brain disorders prematurely.

Stress, driving recklessly, drinking/drug use, eating disorders

Drinking, Marijuana and other drugs, Lack of sleep

Prevalence of pot. Abuse of prescription drugs. Helping kids prioritize responsibilities so that they aren't staying up all night to complete an assignment

Use of alcohol, binge drinking, sexual activity, due to the consequences of these behaviors

Drinking, drinking and driving, sexual activity, and cutting because of the potential for harm.

Alcohol, Drugs, inappropriate sexual behavior hurt the child doing the risky behavior, but they are of most concern to me because they endanger the lives of other children.

Alcohol, drugs, internet use, lack of sleep, stress. School start time for 7 -12 should be later, maybe as late as 9:30 AM. Present start time goes against nature for kids this age

Use of alcohol and drugs

Drinking

Alcohol, because of its availability and addictive qualities. Also the example we set by drinking in front of our kids.

Alcohol - easy to find.

Drinking because it is easy to do and easy to get. Also, parents don't seem concerned enough about it. They get lax and make alcohol accessible.

Drinking; I think there is a perception among young people that at 16 or 17 it is ok to drink.

Drinking - possibility of hurting himself and others

Drinking and driving

Alcohol use

Drinking - binge drinking could kill them

Drinking at home without parents knowing about it

I do know a lot of teenagers drink and I hope they are fully aware of all of the implications. I am not happy about the drinking, especially since I am aware that my own children do drink - my college age child more than my high schooler. As far as I can tell, no one drinks in my home. I do not allow it. Actually, the kids do not hang out at my house as much as they used to. Older teenagers could learn that if they are going to drink, they can do so but do not need to get drunk. That is the message I try to get across to my own, especially my college age child. I tell them it is better to drink in sips rather than to "do shots" and drink fast. I stress they should drink "socially", and not embarrass themselves. The reality is that, once they are in college, you just have to hope they do the right thing. You do not have any control at that point. It is a tough situation.

The use of alcohol and marijuana is pretty common among a high percentage of our teens, especially as they move into their junior and senior year. Our oldest son's passage into college has also resulted in him becoming a rather frequent binge drinker. Clearly, all of these behaviors put them at serious risk.

Drugs and drinking and use at school without any student consequence; adults who should be noticing the behavior turning their head and enabling

I'm concerned about drinking and driving while drinking. I'm also concerned with stress as this area is highly competitive. Too much stress is placed on our kids sometimes.

Use of Marijuana and Other Drugs

Marijuana use... Kids are interpreting the new regulations as "pot is safe; and, even if it's not, I can't get into trouble" and using it more.

Marijuana use - it is seen by many as harmless, yet the drug is much stronger than it used to be and is causing short term memory, motivation, and other learning problems in our teens. It is easier to obtain and hide than alcohol. Its use leads to poor performance, which in an affluent community escalates poor parent-teen relationships and leads to secondary risky behaviors and psychological problems. Parents have no clue what is happening, whereas with alcohol, the signs are more apparent.

Question 2 has created a situation in which I believe that teens are being provided with a much easier pass, if they get caught with up to an ounce of marijuana. I think that many parents who voted in support of Q2 didn't realize that an 'ounce' is really quite a bit of marijuana.

Marijuana use - not by my kids but from what I hear from them that 'everyone' at school smokes

Use of drugs. I have seen firsthand what happens to teenagers and their family members who are trying to help. It can damage a relationship within the family and cause great pain.

The use of illicit drugs. It's harmful.

Drugs. Once it starts it's so hard to stop.

Cocaine use - where is it coming from?

Drug use is my top concern. The effects on an adolescent brain are too severe. A couple of months can ruin a life though bad decisions and bad brain chemistry. Also drugs lead to bad social situations where people can be hurt through violence and sexual assault. It is dangerous out there.

Illegal drug use, because of the potential for longer term health effects and the negative aspects of addiction.

Use of marijuana- I hear that kids are using it during the school day, and walking around AB high. Parents of these kids don't seem very concerned. Then MA voted to decriminalize marijuana and this sent the wrong message to kids.

All alcohol and drug related concerns -- obvious, safety is a huge issue. But the issue of the effects of these substances on a teen's ability to make good choices is huge.

Personal Stress

I am most concerned about "personal stress" because I think many teens, which are experiencing this stress, tend to manage it by engaging in risky behaviors. I want our community to work on ways to educate kids and families about stress, stress management techniques, and how the adults in our community feed the stresses of the kids.

Academic standards are high which is great, but the students are not supported for the stress, social and otherwise that it can impose; i.e. an AE student is seen as a likely State college candidate, and a CP seen as a vocational/community college candidate. Neither of those institutions is a poor resource for students, yet our academic and social community treats them as if any option other than the top 50 universities in this nation are beneath their dignity. Many Acton parents and students are in desperate need of a reality check!

Personal stress/anxiety/depression. This town is a pressure cooker for our children.

Personal Stress - it often is the contributor to almost all of the other activities and I believe this is a BIG issue for our community!

Academic pressure and athletic pressure

Personal stress (and lack of sleep) - the intensity of our junior/senior high schools. Our eldest child is in 6th Grade now and I'm scared for her entering the frenzied world of our secondary schools. She still likes to play, read, rest, and dream. Sounds like all of that ends next year, when she (and we) will become a slave to hours and hours of daily homework, combined with extracurricular activities, and later with community service, job, etc. etc. in order to have a good enough record to get into a college, which I hope we'll be able to afford! Our adult lives are way too frantic; I wish it didn't have to start at age 12 (or necessarily ever). Not healthy. And getting up in time to make the JHS bus is going to be a MAJOR problem for my night-person daughter. It just seems like there isn't room for different kinds of people: people who are primarily focused on academics and those for whom it's just part of the whole; morning people and not-so-morning people; dreamers and those who love to do the work. I suppose I'm kidding myself. But it's hard for me to get very enthusiastic about this system we're entering, and I wish I could be more positive for my kids (who don't have a choice about it).

Stress related to concerns about financial stability of family, and college admissions - particularly, how to pay for college in a recessed economy.

Personal stress is my biggest concern because it leads to all of the other risky behaviors!

Personal stress, because it can lead to the behaviors we are concerned about. The high school years get increasingly stressful; kids are spent by the time they finish h.s. Much of the stress seems unnecessary because from my son's experience and that of other kids, AB students are hyper-prepared for college and often find it easier than high school. This makes no sense to me!

I'm concerned about lack of sleep and personal stress because that is what we are experiencing with our freshman daughter. I have no idea how serious the other risky behaviors are, other than what I saw from the CAFY survey. That's why I didn't vote.

I'm actually most concerned about stress from academic and athletic expectations because I believe that ultimately leads to many of these other situations like substance abuse, depression, etc.

My children have had very little exposure to any of the risky behaviors except bullying and stress, so those are the most important to me personally.

Sleep Deprivation

Systemically, I'm most concerned about sleep deprivation because it not only affects all areas of kids' functioning, but establishes chronic sleep patterns/disorders and sets them up for bigger health issues as they age. It also contributes to the generally high stress levels in our kids.

I suspect that bullying is more widespread (i.e. through the elementary schools as well); but I think that lack of sleep and personal stress are significant problems that affect kids' social and educational functioning and

therefore may lead to other risky behaviors. I am regularly astounded by the minimal amounts of sleep that I hear my children's friends get nightly.

Lack of sleep and stress. I want my child to be able to balance achievement with enjoyment in junior high and high school. We can't eliminate the stress and sleep problem, but I wish they could all be reprogrammed to create a better balance between achievement and fun.

Drinking Driving/Reckless Driving

Drinking and driving - most damage to most # of people

DUI

I am most concerned about drinking and driving since the consequences can be so severe.

Drinking and driving/driving recklessly. These behaviors can ruin a future - DUI, loss of license suspension and death.

Drinking and driving, as it not only affects the ones in the cars, but innocent drivers as well. Also Sexual activity...These kids are way too young to know the impact.

I am most concerned about drinking and driving.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs - it endangers the most number of people at one time

I am most concerned about drinking/drugs and driving. It's frightening to me that they are using and then getting behind the wheel; and I think it is frequent behavior.

Drinking and driving and underage drinking

Drinking and driving

Drinking and driving - just because it's always been a problem - clear thinking is not apparent in that situation and bad decisions are made

Drinking and driving; such potential for serious injury to themselves and others

Reckless driving, with or without alcohol or other drugs.

Anything involving automobiles because the risk of damage is so great in so many ways.

Drinking, drugs, and driving

Driving with older teens

Sexual Activity

Sexual activity. We live in a highly sexualized culture which our youth are repeatedly exposed to. I have heard alarming anecdotes which entail teens engaging in sexual activity, such as oral sex, etc, in areas of the school building as well as outside of school. There is much less education on sexual activity outside the act of intercourse and its emotional/self esteem ramifications than on drugs and alcohol. (But yes, keep up all the drug & alcohol education!)

Personally, sexual activity is one of my biggest concerns, as schools and society tend to teach "safe sex" where my own beliefs are abstinence until marriage.

Drinking and sex. Alcohol probably affects the most teen. Sex is now a health risk, and, unlike drinking or drugs, the dangers are hidden - "when you have sex with someone, you have sex with everyone they've been with" - you cannot judge a person's status based on how well you know them.

Sex without relationships. The concern is the emotional damage, feeling isolated, damaged sense of self esteem and worth

Depression

Depression and personal stress: monetarily inequitable community, many "have mores" that lack a sense of discretion and tend to degrade the "have-lesses"

Depression, because one of my kids struggles in this area.

Personal stress and depression. Some students may not want to express their personal feelings with their parents or teachers

Depression/suicide due to academic/sports pressure

Depression - could lead to suicide

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders -- it's tough to be a girl these days. There is a lot of pressure on girls (and women) to be "perfect" or at least to look that way. The constant erosion of self esteem can be one by-product. I know that looking "right" is a very large concern for my very self-confident daughter, and I hope that she will be able to maintain her high self-esteem in the face of it.

Eating disorders - because of the emphasis on sports, physical activity and academic achievement in Acton it is a natural response to stress by an anxious teenager, particularly girls.

Inappropriate Use of the Internet

Internet...safety

Inappropriate use of the internet.

Bullying/Sexual Harassment

Bullying is a somewhat silent issue until it erupts. So many are really hurt by these behaviors. It can move the victim into the other risky behaviors such as drinking, drugs, and certainly depression and its associated problems.

Sexual harassment -- especially coercion into sexual activity (that is, while I'm concerned about adults harassing my daughter). I'm more concerned about harassment and bullying by her peers.

Bullying is prevalent

All of The Above

All have equal concern at various times depending on circumstances

I am concerned about all the behaviors. Kids that are going through any or most of these issues are in trouble and need help and support.

To the degree that any of these behaviors exist, they concern me. I have no way of knowing how many teens are involved in any of them, and at this point my own kids are minimally affected. I am sure that some teens are participating in all of these behaviors and to the degree that we as a community can decrease them, we should.

They all concern me. Sorry I can't pick one out.

Not sure, don't have much interaction with risky behaviors.

6. What could be done by CAFY, the schools, or other organizations/groups in our community in order to help address these problems?

It starts with strengthening parent-teen relationship at home.

Frank, honest discussions need to start in the home when kids are young and the dialogue needs to be ongoing throughout the teen years.

Mercy ruling...make it safe for kids to inform adults anonymously of parties and risky behavior.

More communication on what expectations are, and on what the consequences are of risky behavior

Teach by example. If you don't want your kids to drink, smoke, do drugs, swear, etc. then show them you can live without these things in your and their lives. Actions speak louder than words.

This is such a personal issue. It really starts at home and the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of the parents.

More parents could say "no" to allow drinking in their homes or not leave homes unattended on the weekend with a teenager at home alone.

More family time - dinner with family...homework and activities fill time leaving little opportunity for daily dialogue. We need to live more balanced less frantic lives.

Parent education

More education of PARENTS and teens about the use and abuse of alcohol. Forums including police educating the community about marijuana use and abuse - and the consequences of impaired driving under the influence of marijuana. Continue to support teen safe driving classes such as Skid School sponsored by CAFY, PIP and the Acton Police Association

Address the issue of the new marijuana law and law enforcement options for impaired driving under the influence of marijuana (i.e., not measurable like alcohol). I am concerned about confusion of the new marijuana law as it relates to possession and use and especially impaired driving under the influence of marijuana.

Parent education about the risks of hosting parties where there is underage drinking.

Remind parents of the consequences of allowing underage drinking on their property.

Since I would not participate in the parent / teen workshops or parent discussion groups, I have no idea how effective they might be. I am not sure how effective the SAFE HOMES program is, though I think it is effective in keeping the idea out there that drinking and other high risk activities for teens is considered inappropriate in many households.

It is helpful to me when I hear experiences of parents of older teens talk about ways in which kids are sneaky, such as - how they sneak alcohol in a party, lie about adult supervising, etc.

We need to keep educating the parents about the problems and the reasons these are dangerous. Would you let your two year old into the street? Why would you allow teenagers to drink at a home party? We need to

stress the fact that kids really need parents to be parents through out their teen's years and parents need to be present during these years.

Publish the longer term health effects of engaging in unhealthy activities (whether it's underage drinking or drug use, or unprotected sex).

More parent education programs (What topics?...Positive approach to parenting...Internet/cell phone use and safety

Parent teen workshops (What topics? ___STDs...relationships...alcohol use)

More parent discussion groups.

Increase support provided by the schools and other organizations

Encourage schools, other community organizations to engage in efforts.

I think the AB school system and community are doing a great job right now. With the DARE program, Project Wellness, Project Graduation and just day to day discussions in classes I think we are in a good place. My kids have definitely benefited from the work that the parents, school and community already has in place. Not sure that more needs to be done at the moment.

Thank you so much for the Project Wellness event! In spite of the fact that many students express an opinion of the day being "lame," I believe the messages they hear on that day have an impact. I believe it is priceless for many parents! By attending the event, parents can demonstrate the importance of these topics as well as giving them a chance to show their concern and love for their 7th grader by accompanying them to the PW event. My daughter and I continued the conversations in the car on the way home!

More teacher involvement

Box at schools for students to submit anonymous concerns...they are often embarrassed to approach a counselor or teacher

Make a parent-teen workshop available for high school credits. Then the student would be enthused about doing it, because of the credits.

Continue to work with the schools to educate parents about the stress they put in and on their children. Send a simple letter out to all the Safe Homes people just connecting with them. This program is one which will grow, if you feed it.

My youngest child is a 6th grader so I am not fully aware of these programs as they are mostly directed towards teens. However, I was very impressed with the DARE program and think that some type of programming at the 5th/6th grade level to address other issues in question 3 (e.g. stress management, bullying, peer pressure) would be useful.

Educational programs for kids of all ages that are more innovative than what I have seen to date -- peer training where the trainers have more in-depth experiential learning about programs/resources available and possible outcomes from high risk behaviors. The peer trainers need more than classroom training. The education for the kids needs more panel discussions of kids their own ages, who are able and willing to do it.

High school students should be educated regarding alcohol consumption to the same extent that they are taught about drug abuse.

Intramural sports in the high school would be a fantastic way to help make some of our "lost" students feel more part of our school community.

Would like to see ABRHS undertake a serious assessment of the way it creates pressure on kids, and address problems inherent in the school. Parents are at fault, AND so is the school. Perhaps there needs to be a joint parent-school-student study group on stress that makes recommendations that actually get followed. I want AB to change!

The high school could forbid students from leaving the campus and returning as they want.

Get the AB Schools to have a start time of 8:30 AM (or preferably later) for 7 - 12 grades. Sleep research indicates this would be consistent with the biological clocks of teenagers. A risky time for teen aberrant behavior is after school until evening meal. Later school start time would eliminate some of this "risky" time period.

Mandatory parent education class. Get the parent out of the bar and into the class for one informative session. The child will not go on to high school till parent comes in.

Encourage the school to establish a debit card for cafeteria use; and expand the use to local businesses (who see it as a way to increase business) so that teens don't have large sums of cash and their spending can be monitored. Small colleges use this system, businesses like it and it makes life easier. Start up costs would have to be underwritten by the community and on-going administration fees would have to be passed on to users.

It seems to me these kids are not given alternate choices. There should be more school sponsored activities

Make athletic teams available to more kids - have COACHES stress the importance of alcohol abuse/use. Somehow, get older kids to stop buying for the younger kids.

Make teachers and other school administrators accountable for the use of drugs and alcohol during the school day! Maybe they need to be educated on the signs of usage, so they don't ignore this behavior that directly affects non-using students at school who believe there is a free-for-all at school

Take notice of kids drinking or using marijuana at school.

In conjunction with the schools, more programs and messages in the schools and school publications during the school day about the dangers. The primary target audiences need to be the kids who indulge in risky behavior and the parents who allow it.

Is CAFY incorporated into the DARE program? Perhaps CAFY could have a representative at the DARE graduation at each elementary school to talk briefly to the parents and students and encourage them to join the SAFE homes program. Pledges could be distributed to parents as they enter. I think it is important for CAFY to have a presence in the elementary schools, certainly by 6th grade, as many of these risky behaviors will emerge in the following year.

Maybe churches could do some parent education?

Try to get more parents to participate in workshops or programs.

I don't know how to reach out to the parents who do not participate today. This is the biggest problem, IMHO (in my humble opinion).

It's hard. The people responding to this survey are probably the responsible parents. Reaching those who do not care is problematic, unless they are forced to confront their behavior legally.

It's quite a challenge, the people who participate in the discussions and workshops are not the people who typically need the information... preaching to the choir... We some how need to reach the 'unreachables'; but, unfortunately, I don't have a suggestion.

I believe the parents who need it most would not attend education or discussion groups. It's a hard problem. Perhaps mailings with "marketing" type inserts might actually be read by some additional parents - pictures and examples of bad things that have happened to kids – make them short and concise. Long letters get thrown in the trash before even being read.

Unfortunately, I think the parents who need to hear the information are not the ones who attend the workshops or programs.

This parent survey is a very good idea. Parents need to be aware of what they think is ok because they might not really think about it. Then they need to change their opinions and behavior to realize how dangerous any risky behavior is. Parents need to realize that they are modeling behavior to their kids every day. It's not ok to break the law EVER. If it's illegal, it's a no-brainer. It's not ok. Teens need supervision and they need to be busy with activities that they love, so that they are not bored or have too much unsupervised time.

Encourage the sponsorship of healthy activities for kids

Encourage healthy behaviors and activities (rather than just discouraging unhealthy ones). How about - sports for people who are not athletes? Art for people who are not artists? A healthy snack picnic?

Provide kids with alternatives so that drinking and marijuana aren't the only exciting things to do.

Increased community awareness and accountability

What are we doing in our community to reduce access to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs? Is this a priority? What are we doing to ensure enforcement of policies? Are the policies with an eye toward rehabilitation, restitution, or punishment? I apologize for not being more informed with regards to what CAFY and others are doing towards this end in our community. The more we can promote healthy behaviors and activities for all youth, the better!

Should we have curfews?

Offer parent-teen workshops

Kids and teens talking about drinking together? It is a little iffy, at best; but, if done in a really progressive, unique fashion, it might work.

I think you provide many parent education programs and discussion groups. I'm not sure my teens would go to a "parent teen workshop." How about just teen workshops through the schools on school time? Although I think we have a few of those (DARE).

Parent teen workshops, though maybe not with your own teen! anything to encourage talking at home. What to talk about, how to talk about it, when to talk?

Teach kids to drink responsibly

American obsession with drinking is greatly exacerbated by the prohibition of any alcohol for older teens. In other cultures, kids learn to drink responsibly with their parents, learn to appreciate good wine, beer, liquors. They are less likely to binge drink terrible quality alcohol like Bud, Miller, etc. They are learning to drink alcohol responsibly and to favor quality over quantity. We should know by now how teens are attracted to things that are 'prohibited' for them, yet OK for adults. I understand the community standards; and, although my child will be allowed to taste alcoholic drinks at home, I would not offer this to other people's children.

7. What topics should be covered by parent education programs, parent teen workshops, or community forums?

Healthy ways to manage stress.

Stress relief and community organizations for teen/high school aged children's activities. - e.g. – Spring fests for ABRS kids at Nara, or music and grilling till midnight, with a DJ or couple of local school bands, the possibility of starting a boys and girls club.

Strategies to help teens manage stress

Stress management; being true to oneself in a competitive society; attitude of gratitude vs. hoarding and "he who dies with the most toys, wins," mentality. Developmental Psychology factors at play in teen/parent conflict and how to deal with it. Support groups for parents of teens going through specific types of problems. COMMUNICATION!!

Depression, stress, inappropriate responses to stress

Giving youth and their parent's guidance about how to help their friends who are throwing out red flags.

Address personal stress earlier (9-12 year olds)

Giving youth and their parent's guidance about how to help their friends who are throwing off red flags.

Lack of sleep, personal stress, not getting a good breakfast (not necessarily "eating disorders")

Healthy ways to deal with stress and/or boredom that do not involve mood-altering substances.

Sleep deprivation stress reduction internet safety

Competition, academic and athletic! Some sort of outreach to the parents of our school athletes and the parents at the various ethnic community programs such as the Chinese school in Acton.

Alcohol and drug abuse

Abuse of drugs and alcohol and other destructive behaviors.

I think that everyone has their own set of values and thoughts regarding alcohol.... the message I think is important, regardless of our value system, is that, as adults, we are obliged to uphold and follow the law.

Harmful effects of underage drinking and marijuana use, and real stories of why they don't have the maturity to be doing these activities.

Drinking and other risky behavior. Give parents info: what to talk about, how to talk about it, when to talk about it. Techniques for listening.

I think that everyone has their own set of values and thoughts regarding alcohol.... the message I think is important, regardless of our value system, is that, as adults, we are obliged to uphold and follow the law.

Anything that can help keep the lines of communication open between teens and their parents is a great thing. It also seems that many parents don't understand or don't fully appreciate the legal, moral, and health consequences of condoning or overlooking underage drinking. I am shocked by the number of parents who believe "kids will be kids" or "they're going to experiment, they might as well experiment safely at home."

Alcohol consumption...drinking and driving

Alcohol and drugs. Realistic look at what kids are doing when they go out at night. What/where are the "hang-outs"

Prevalence of pot. Abuse of prescription drugs.

Dangers of drinking and drug use

Consequences of drinking.

Legal liability for sponsoring teen parties and providing/allowing the use of liquor

Alcohol education, social host law.

What could happen to parents (their homes etc.) if they host a party where drinking is allowed and something tragic happens

Direct consequences of actions. Talks by the parents of teens who have died as a result of drinking, or kids who survived but are permanently injured, for instance. A kid in a wheelchair for life will strike home with other kids much more than a discussion or a pamphlet.

All parents need to understand the risks of allowing teens to drink in their homes. I am not sure that education programs will reach the parents who are allowing the drinking. Somehow they have to get the message that they could suffer serious consequences for allowing such activity.

Underage drinking and parent responsibilities in the home environment

It concerns me that too many parents would serve the kids alcohol at a party at their house... This increases peer pressure.

Parent-Teen Relationships

Dialogue between parents and children.

Transitioning to college - setting limits for teens - keeping teen communication open - still maintaining a sense of humor. Parent education forum on the risks associated with teen driving - value of advanced driver training and talking to teens about risk - opportunity to take Skid School (would like to see a few sponsored (n/c) Skid School sessions to allow high risk teens to take the course). Offer a community program

Parent responsibilities vs. teen responsibilities

Alternative methods of dealing with peer pressure alternative methods of having fun when offered the chance to participate in risky behavior programs/resources available -- locally, regionally, through parents employers, internet, etc.

How and what can you do together (parents and teens). Alternate success stories (taken by people for whom school/college isn't the way) Facebook - what's reasonable in terms of time spent and content

Parent's expectations of children and children's right to be themselves. The problem of mental illness in youth. Bullying

The effects of parents' behavior on their children. I really don't think that some parents understand the example they set for their children.

Educate about the affects of alcohol in teens. Workshop with skits and guided activities to get parents and kids to talk to each other.

Parenting styles, drug and alcohol counseling resources, book groups/

Transitions from elementary schools to junior high and from junior high to high school

Ways to communicate and provide alternate choices for teens to engage in other activities that don't involve drinking and marijuana use

General adolescent behavior patterns, effectively ways to deal with issues, alternative activities to keep kids engaged

Educating teens about the risks of sexual behavior

Drinking, more sex ed classes (not just teaching abstinence) See March 30, 2009 TIME magazine article "How to End the War Over Sex Ed"

Dangers of sexual activity

Consequences of oral sex.

Relationship aggression - not the physical type but the emotional type - i.e. Girls-friends, bullying, boy-girl relationship, etc.

Internet Safety

Internet safety tips for parents

I think that many parents are unaware of the behavior that is being promulgated on Facebook and the material that younger adolescents are being exposed to on the internet. Whether Facebook isn't being monitored by parents and/or they are giving their children unlimited access to the internet, I'm not sure. Part of the problem is that the kids are viewing behavior in the form of pictures, videos and commentary that is risky, but because it is readily available to them, it has the affect of appearing "normal and appropriate" when it is not. I don't think we can underestimate the effect that this exposure has in terms of creating an environment of curiosity and acceptance of this behavior. I think it appears to them as an endorsement of the behavior which is not the message we want to be sending them.

Bullying

How to assist your child if he or she is the victim of bullying.

Bullying - a big, but subtle issue, especially at the junior high.

Effects of bullying on depression - and its varied manifestations drinking - medical, mental, social issues around this topic stress and the idea that every student is at the top and on the track to Harvard or Yale. This whole thing which is often re-enforced by students, parents and school is so damaging.

Other

Self-esteem, body image, eating disorders

8. What other suggestions, comments or concerns do you have related to our community's response to youth risky behavior?

Continue efforts to build a safer community

My main concern is that we have some fabulous discussions and share so much information, but don't seem to be doing anything to deter what we categorize as risky behaviors, aside from surveying them that is. It would be great if we could use some of the resources and money we spend on our kids completing elementary school to help keep our older kids occupied in a healthy way, during the long and dreary winters and while they are bouncing high with spring fever. We need to make Acton a place for people to live in, not just pass through for the purpose of the AB schooling. It is frustrating to see the transient mentality of a majority of wealthier folk, while others have to remain behind and deal with the turnover. Maybe if we make this a people and teen/child friendly TOWN, sidewalks, lower speed limits, pedestrian walkways and crossings that actually operate for the pedestrians, a supportive police department, less developments with 3 step town homes and more with entertainment centers for adults and people, in walking distance, on the actual pedestrian sidewalks, CAFY is a great concept, but how much can it do to change the basic mentality of the old Acton politicians?

It's adequate. I think we do a good job overall, at least the parents who are in tune with this area.

None -- I think it's every family's responsibility and beyond making safe activities available to kids. The more you talk about it the more you risk kids rebelling and doing the dangerous behaviors

I think that the parents in this community, for the most part, are doing their jobs well. Too much school interference is inappropriate (like the Boston School System not allowing kids to bring bottles of water to school). It gets to the point where you feel big brother is watching you a bit too closely and with too much control over your own personal decisions.

We need more safe places for high school kids to socialize?

Promote of drug/alcohol free parties, sponsored by the schools, CAFY or other non-profits.

Continue to find ways to provide teens in the area with safe, healthy, non-competitive (academically or otherwise) activities that provide them with an outlet or means to express themselves.

I don't see any sense of urgency in our community to do something to reduce underage drinking, and too many parents just think experimenting is a "right of passage". Discuss harmful effects of marijuana.

Continue what the schools, CAFY and others are doing

Keep up the good work. You can offer a lot; but at some point parents need to want to be informed.

I have frequently referred other communities to CAFY and the Acton and Boxborough schools for the good work our community is doing. I work with other communities seeking to address youth risk behaviors. I know we have our own challenges. It is also great to know we have a group of individuals who have a passion for the health of youth in our communities!

CAFY plays a valuable role, as an organization, in promoting healthy teen decisions. Thank you!! Continue to collaborate with other groups, the schools, locally and regionally including United Way, C4RJ, ABCHY, AB PIP and other groups sharing CAFY's mission to offer and share niche topics (i.e.. transitioning to college) across communities.

CAFY has done a lot of good for everyone. I would like that to continue. Advocate for more counselors, and more embracing of all kids. There are no bad kids, only bad decisions. Talk with college freshmen and sophomores about High School. They know all and will tell a lot. This is an awesome survey. Easy and just long enough that I have the energy to write stuff. Kudos to the designer and implementer.

I guess my present concerns may not fit into CAFY's mission.

Volunteer opportunities relevant to risky behavior have someone create some internet games that are educational - due a new game every year

I commend your efforts.

I think CAFY is doing a great job. I've participated in the Roller Coaster series; and it was of great help to me in navigating teen years.

I appreciate the surveys, as they really serve to open our eyes to what really goes on in our children's lives. I also appreciate the SAFE HOMES program, and have already told our son that, when he's older, he will only be allowed to attend SAFE HOMES parties, or parties where I have spoken with the parents and fully understand their attitudes about teen drinking and drug use.

Maybe a weekly CAFY blurb (very succinct message) in the paper and in the community bulletin boards. Vary the blurb but have it remind people how to keep teens from risky behavior. Maybe have a dozen and cycle them.

CAFY is a great organization; but it seems there is not enough participation.

I love CAFY. Keep up the good work.

Continue efforts to inform and educate parents

Get the issues out into the public. Confidentiality means that you only hear about the risks through the grapevine.

Publish incidents as they occur and talk about them openly.

Police reports to parents on drugs in use in the community

If there is an interest in eating disorders, I work at Boundaries Therapy Center in Acton as a licensed nutritionist.

My concern is that right now we are not experiencing most of these problems; but I know alcohol and drugs will be coming down the road. From the survey, can you tell when most of that starts? My daughter is very naive and believes that, since we live in Acton, there's not as much drug use as I tend to believe from the CAFY survey. Do the high schoolers see the results of the survey and have a chance to discuss it as a group?

I find many parents in this community don't know how to say no to their kids or set boundaries. Why do our children feel entitled to have big parties, unfettered internet access and 24 texting? I'm not sure how any group or the schools can combat that.

Not only do we need to have forums etc but we need to get this stuff in the local paper. Let's make some noise about all this. Work with the schools, the towns, the police, the Beacon and maybe the new town social worker.

More counseling for youths regarding the consequences of these behaviors

Improve monitoring and enforce state laws and school policies

My kids say it is common knowledge that certain places around Leary Field are where kids are smoking dope. They know about it...why don't the police?

The school administration needs to start acknowledging the drug and alcohol problems at the high school, so that everyone is part of the solution. Why don't we ever read about the many police-involved youth-related incidents that occur in our community?

Lack of consistency -- we still hear about certain kids getting leniency after breaking the law drinking, etc. this is destructive.

The policing of drugs in the schools needs to be addressed without the teachers warning students before a dog raid. "Drugs are rampant in the H.S." - a direct quote from my child.

I find it quite distressing to hear my three high school students comment to me on who is drunk or high at school; who goes out of the school buildings to drink or get high; and especially that this behavior goes totally unnoticed by the adults at the high school (or worse, that they ignore these behaviors). If in fact these behaviors are being noticed, the teachers and adults have the duty to inform everyone in the school community so that the awareness is raised and not hidden to protect anyone (including the reputation of the schools). Maybe something will get cleaned up this way.