



ABOVE THE INFLUENCE

TOOLKIT

**YOU CAN USE THIS FREE SPACE FOR NOTES,
JOURNALING OR JOTTING DOWN NEW IDEAS.**

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WELCOME

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN ABOVE THE INFLUENCE (ATI)!

ATI raises teens' awareness about the influences that surround them, and offers relevant resources that can help teens, *with the support of adults who value them*, have the confidence to make better decisions for their future and the motivation to become active participants in their communities.

Above the Influence aims to empower teens (12-17) with the necessary **intellectual, social** and **emotional** skills to avoid negative influences by:

- Building a positive identity and stronger sense of self
- Providing credible information to help teens make more informed and healthier decisions for themselves
- Connecting teens with their peers on a national level and encouraging them to take action in their own communities to affect positive change

The activities in the *Above the Influence* toolkit aim to:

1. Help teens manage and deal stress by identifying the pressures around them,
2. Equip teens with skills to avoid

3. negative influences and make healthier choices for themselves, and
4. Help teens connect with and help each other by offering tips for effective communication and listening.

The activities in the toolkit build on each other, and can also be done as standalone exercises, depending on the time you have with your group. Facilitation tips are provided within the guide, but you can customize the sessions according to the needs and interests of the teens and community you are working with.

YOU KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE BEST.

Know any teen facilitators? This toolkit can also be used by teens with other teens. If you work with peer leaders or have an existing program where teens facilitate workshops and events for other teens or younger kids, this resource can be a great addition to your inventory of materials!

Teens have a unique perspective and can relate to their peers in a powerful and impactful way. Guide and support teens through the facilitation process, but let them decide how the toolkit gets delivered in your specific setting.

WE'VE HEARD THAT TEENS WANT TO BE SEEN AS RESPECTED ADVOCATES FOR THEIR PEERS - BY ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY AND BY OTHER TEENS. JUST ASKING THEM TO SERVE AS A PEER LEADER DEMONSTRATES YOUR TRUST AND RESPECT, AND GIVES THEM A BOOST, TOO!

The *Above the Influence* toolkit includes a facilitator guide (blue header) and accompanying activity sheets for teens (red header).

FACILITATOR GUIDE

- Activity: *Group Agreement*
Activity: *What's Stressing You Out?*
- Activity: *What are Prescription Drugs?*
- Activity: *Not Prescribed*
- Activity: *How to Help a Friend*
- Activity: *Pass It!*

TEEN ACTIVITY SHEETS

- *What's Stressing You Out?*
- *Not Prescribed*
- *How to Listen to a Friend*
- *How to Have a Conversation with a Friend*
- *Pass It!*

How's it going?

We would love to know more about your program and how you are using this toolkit! Please share any photos and feedback with us at: assistance@abovetheinfluence.com so that we can showcase your commitment to help teens stay **#abovetheinfluence**.

If you're looking to get as many teens as possible to your event, we encourage you to use Facebook, Twitter and other social networks to promote your workshop/event.

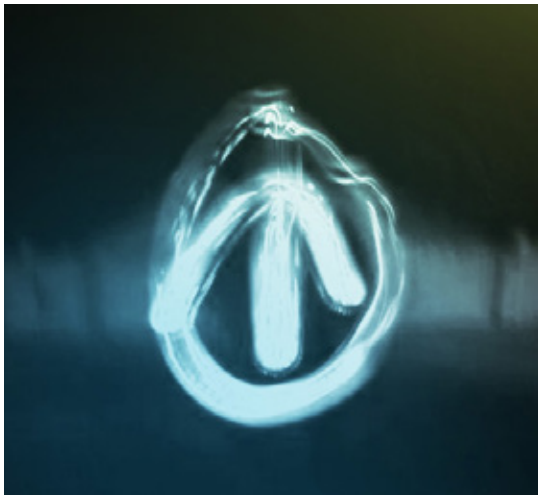
Email assistance@abovetheinfluence.com for some more recruitment and marketing tips for teens.



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INTRODUCTION

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE (ATI) IS A NATIONAL PROGRAM LED BY THE PARTNERSHIP FOR DRUG-FREE KIDS THAT CHALLENGES YOUTH, AGES 12-17, TO THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE INFLUENCES SURROUNDING THEM IN THEIR SOCIAL AND MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS.



Above the Influence (ATI) connects teens with their peers, encourages them to understand how their actions can impact others, and helps them aspire to be their true selves, while dealing with the positive and negative influences that surround them.

This toolkit has easy-to-use resources that can help teens identify and deal with pressure in healthy ways. Also included, is information about the real dangers of medicine abuse (both prescription drugs and over-the-counter cough medicine). More teens are abusing prescription medicine than ever. And unfortunately, kids who abuse medicine are starting early. In fact, one in five kids has done so before the age of 14 ¹.

Prescription drug abuse is a growing epidemic and can be one of the many challenging situations teens, families and communities face. Medicine abuse can too often, be a risky way that teens choose to deal with and/or escape from stress.

The [Medicine Abuse Project](#) is a five-year action campaign that aims to prevent half a million teens from abusing medicine by the year 2017. The campaign provides comprehensive resources for parents and caregivers, law enforcement officials, health care providers, educators and others so that everyone can take a stand and help end medicine abuse – a problem which the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention has classified as an epidemic.

Please visit The [Medicine Abuse Project](#) for more information and resources to help **#endmedicineabuse**

¹ [2013 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study \(PDF\)](#). Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. N.p., 22 July 2014. Web. 30 Sept. 2014.

ACTIVITY

GROUP AGREEMENT



MATERIALS

- Flip Chart/Easel
- Markers

OVERVIEW

If you are working with a new group or even an existing group who is going to see dealing with issues of stress and pressure as a new topic, it is important for the participants to set some ground rules, or create a *Group Agreement*. Working on this collectively, can help teens feel more comfortable sharing personal stories and can build camaraderie within and ownership of the experience, because boundaries are set and respected.

DIRECTIONS

1. Have teens come up with a group agreement.
2. Explain that these are suggested guidelines to take throughout the session(s) so that everyone feels like they can participate honestly and authentically in the conversation. Some examples could be: one person talking at a time, respecting each other's different opinions, turning electronics off, what's said in the group stays in the group. Let the teens choose the ground rules that are important to them!
3. Ask for a volunteer from the group to write these guidelines down where everyone can see - either on a flip chart, chalkboard etc.
- Teens can also jot down the group agreement in their notebooks or journals so that they can refer back to it.
4. Once a group agreement is reached – leave it in a visible area of the room so that it can be referred to throughout the sessions. You know a *Group Agreement* is working well, when teens are reminding their peers about sticking to the guidelines they agreed upon together.

EVEN WITH A GROUP AGREEMENT THOUGH, SOMETIMES, IT'S EASIER FOR TEENS TO SHARE FEEDBACK AS A LARGE GROUP, OR "ABOUT A FRIEND" AND WORK THEIR WAY TO SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR OWN FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES. THROUGHOUT YOUR USE OF THIS ATI TOOLKIT, DO YOUR BEST TO SEE HOW GROUP MEMBERS ARE FEELING ABOUT (AND HOW MUCH THEY ARE) SHARING. FEEL FREE TO ALTER THE FEEDBACK METHODS SUGGESTED HERE, SO THAT THE GROUP IS MOST COMFORTABLE.

**FACILITATOR TIP:
IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON DELIVERING THE TOOLKIT IN MORE THAN ONE SESSION, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE GROUP AGREEMENT AVAILABLE FOR EACH ONE.**

The *Above the Influence* Team asked NYC high school students what a couple of their favorite icebreakers are. Try some of these in your groups to get teens comfortable and having fun and tackling different topics!

ZIP ZAP ZOP

1. Stand in a circle.
2. Ask someone to begin by pointing to another person in the circle and saying "ZIP!" That person then should point to another person and say "ZAP!" That person points to another person and says "ZOP!"
3. This continues, but the words must be said in order: ZIP, ZAP, ZOP. If someone makes a mistake and says a word out of order, that person is out of the game.

HURRICANE

Similar to musical chairs, this icebreaker gets the group up and out of their seats!

1. Place chairs in circle. Everyone should have a seat – except for the person standing in the middle.
2. The person in the middle points to someone and asks them for their seat (answer will most likely be no!)
3. Let the group know that everyone at some point must change their seat - people can signal to each other (even without words!) and switch – also giving the person in the middle a chance to steal a seat.
4. A person can also call "hurricane" which means everyone must move at the same time. Because there are not enough chairs for everyone – someone will always be left standing.



ACTIVITY

WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT?



MATERIALS

- *What's Stressing You Out?* Teen Activity Sheet
- Flip chart/easel
- Markers

OVERVIEW

Teens are faced with challenging situations on a daily basis, in *addition* to academic stress, peer pressure, and family problems. These situations can lead some teens to engage in unhealthy and downright risky behaviors, including turning to prescription drugs, to help manage their feelings. It is important for teens to identify what some of these pressures are for them, and to build their confidence and skills necessary to handle stressful situations in healthy ways.

DIRECTIONS

1. Write (or ask one of the teens) the two sentences below on separate pieces of flip chart paper –or somewhere visible in the room.
2. Teens can either raise their hands, or call out answers – depending on your group size.
3. Ask them to fill in the blanks:

It would be much easier, if I didn't

Real teen examples:

- have so many expectations to fulfill.
- have friends who pressured me to conform.
- have so many extracurricular activities.

It would be much easier, if my friends

Real teen examples:

- were better influences.
- accepted my sexual orientation.
- supported my choices.

When teens start filling in these blanks and sharing them – a conversation (that might be hard to contain!) will start. If the group seems up for more discussion, help them take it a bit further by asking the teens to think about:

- What do you typically do when your friends are stressing you out?
- Family? School pressures?

Acknowledge that when we get stressed out, sometimes we turn to positive ways to deal (e.g., exercise, journaling, talking directly with someone, asking for help) and sometimes we relieve stress in unhealthy ways (e.g., abuse alcohol or drugs, take our aggression out on others, overeat)



4. Hand out the *What's Stressing You Out?* Teen Activity Sheet.
5. Ask teens to go through the steps on the activity sheet and to share their thoughts with the group, if they are comfortable.
6. Refer back to the *Group Agreement* that was created and remind teens that this is a safe space for them to contribute any ideas or concerns.
7. Another option for a group less comfortable with sharing is to have teens anonymously submit their answers and ask for volunteers to either read them out loud or write them on the board/flip chart for the group to see and reflect on together – you will likely notice other teens nodding in agreement when they see a pressure that they know all too well. This can make all in the group feel more comfortable.

If prescription drugs and/or medicine abuse came up during the *What's Stressing You Out?* activity – the next exercises and video discussion are great ways to educate teens about not only the dangers of medicine abuse, but also to reflect on the choices they are making to cope with day-to-day pressures. Perhaps, they need to feel supported by their peer group, and learning how to have a conversation and listen to a friend can be helpful. It is also important for teens to know where to turn if they need support making healthier decisions as well.

If prescription drugs were **not** an influence brought up by teens and you don't wish to address it, you might choose to move on to the *How to Help a Friend and Pass It!* Activities.

TEEN ACTIVITY

WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT?



YOU'RE OVERWHELMED.

You're faced with challenging situations on a daily basis. It's important for you to identify what some of these pressures are and to build the skills needed to handle those and similar situations.



IDENTIFY YOUR STRESSORS

Coming up with a plan and some clear action steps can help you organize your thoughts and manage challenges more effectively.

1. List out your stressors. What do you feel weighed down by?
2. Are there things that make you anxious on an almost daily basis?
3. Identify one stressor you want to better manage in your life (e.g., too much homework, arguing too often at home, teammates who are pressuring you to drink).
4. If you had to think about this like a puzzle and make connections, when does this happen most frequently? What's the first sign that it's happening? When do you start feeling stressed? What does that feel like?
5. What is something you could do to address the situation better?

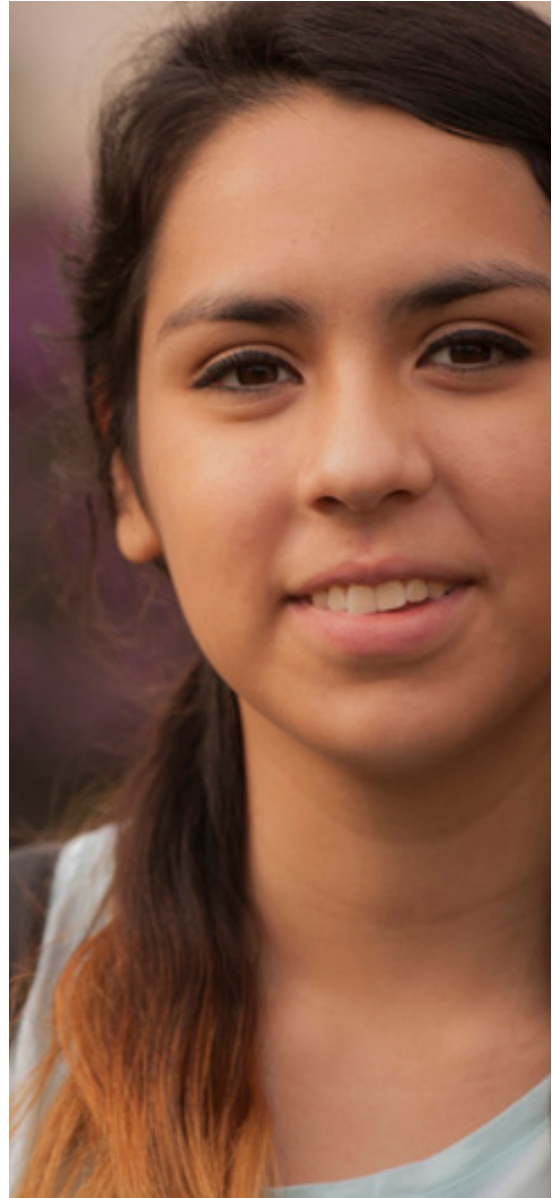
GIVING YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME TO GET THINGS DONE CAN REDUCE STRESS AND HELP YOU FEEL MORE PREPARED (FOR ANY SITUATION!)

6. Create a step-by-step guide for yourself outlining what you need to do – in a way that makes sense and is manageable, for you.

SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO SOMEONE ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS INSTEAD OF TRYING TO AVOID THEM OR PLAY ALONG CAN ALSO CLEAR THE AIR AND REDUCE STRESS.

7. Include a timeline – when do these steps need to be taken and finished?
8. What are some healthy ways you tackle stress? (e.g., sports, community work, taking care of siblings etc.)
9. How will you communicate your plans to others?

WHETHER IT'S YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS, LETTING PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS STRESSING YOU OUT CAN ACTUALLY HELP! THEY MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO HELP YOU ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS.



ACTIVITY

WHAT ARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?



MATERIALS

- Flip Chart/Easel
- Markers

OVERVIEW

Teen medicine abuse is a growing epidemic. This quick ice-breaker style activity can get the conversation started and can help you gauge the group's level of understanding about medicine abuse.

DIRECTIONS

1. Write the sentence below somewhere visible to the entire room.

"Prescription drugs are _____ than the illegal drugs."

2. Ask teens to call out different words to fill in the blank and write their responses down on flip chart paper, if available.
3. This can be done in a quick "popcorn" style where teens don't have to raise their hands to share. Encourage them to shout out words that first come to their minds. If you are working with a large group and/or in a big room, you can ask for teens to raise their hands before sharing so that the answers can be heard and documented. Remind teens that this is a safe space to share and learn about this issue.
4. Ask teens to share what they know about medicine abuse, if anything. Remember that answers might vary depending on the ages.

THE MEDICINE ABUSE PROJECT ALSO HAS MORE FREE RESOURCES FOR YOU THAT CAN HELP SUPPORT THIS DISCUSSION.

**YOU CAN USE THIS FREE SPACE FOR NOTES,
JOURNALING OR JOTTING DOWN NEW IDEAS.**

ACTIVITY

NOT PRESCRIBED



MATERIALS

- [Not Prescribed Video](#)
- *Not Prescribed* Teen Activity Sheet
- Computer Screen/Internet Connection

OVERVIEW

The [Medicine Abuse Project](#) is a five-year action campaign that aims to prevent half a million teens from abusing medicine by the year 2017. The campaign provides comprehensive resources for parents and caregivers, law enforcement officials, health care providers, educators and others so that everyone can take a stand and help end medicine abuse.

The [Medicine Abuse Project](#) website includes information about the prevention of prescription drug abuse, painkiller addiction, and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine abuse. It provides information about how to dispose of medicine and how to safeguard the medicine in your home, as well as lists medicine abuse facts and includes comprehensive information about the [most abused prescription drugs](#).



DIRECTIONS

1. Recap some of the discussion points from *What's Stressing You Out?*
2. Introduce the *Not Prescribed* video.
3. Make sure teens have the *Not Prescribed* activity sheet and encourage them to jot down any comments as they watch the video.
4. After the video ends, take a moment – and check back in with the group. Then ask them to share their thoughts. Try not to share the descriptions of each person before the video.

FACILITATOR NOTE:
YOU CAN ASK FOR A VOLUNTEER TO DO A QUICK RECAP OF *WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT*.

 NOT PRESCRIBED - VIDEO AND FACILITATED DISCUSSION

The *Not Prescribed* video is the story of four real people - Ronnie, Chelsea, Nacho and Aaron, and the impact prescription medicine abuse has had not only on their lives, but the lives of their families.

RONNIE

Attending college on a full football scholarship and on the road to play pro, Ronnie became addicted to prescription medicine and overdosed before he and his family could see his dreams become a reality.



NACHO

After a sports injury, Nacho started abusing prescription drugs – his behavior and friends changed, and he started to steal from his parents. One of Nacho’s friends helped him by telling his parents what was going on, giving them the opportunity to seek the appropriate actions for their son.



CHELSEA

Chelsea became addicted to prescription medicine, which led her to living in a car and stealing jewelry for money to support her addiction. Today, Chelsea is grateful that her mother’s love helped turn her life around.



AARON

Aaron’s prescription medicine addiction left him in a coma. He woke up - paralyzed, unable to speak, and entirely reliant on his parents’ care for even the simplest tasks.



FACILITATOR NOTE:

WHILE MEDICINE ABUSE IS THE FOCUS, THE DISCUSSION MAY BE GUIDED TO INCLUDE OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR RISK-BEHAVIOR TOPICS AS DESIRED. MAKE SURE TO CHECK IN WITH YOUR GROUP.



FOLLOWING ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU START THE CONVERSATION AFTER THE VIDEO

1. What are your immediate responses to the stories in the video?
2. In a few words, what do you think or feel about what you just saw?
3. Did the people in the video give specific reasons about how or why they started to abuse or misuse prescription drugs?
4. What were some similarities and differences between the stories (for example, family support and involvement, the outcome, etc.)?
5. What was the most surprising thing that you learned about teen medicine abuse from the video?
6. Who (if anyone) did you relate to the most in the video? Why?

FACILITATION TIPS

- **ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION BY AVOIDING CRITICISM. NOTHING SHUTS DOWN OPEN-DIALOGUE LIKE EMBARRASSMENT OR FEAR OF SAYING THE WRONG THING.**
- **LET THEM KNOW THIS ISN'T A TEST – THERE REALLY AREN'T “RIGHT ANSWERS,” JUST THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE STORIES AND WHAT THEY IN THE AUDIENCE CAN TAKE AWAY AND LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES.**
- **IF IT MAKES SENSE TO BREAK OUT INTO SMALLER GROUPS, AND HAVE TEENS FACILITATE THE CONVERSATION WITH THEIR PEERS – LET THEM TAKE THE LEAD AND VISIT EACH GROUP AS THEY ARE HAVING THEIR DISCUSSIONS SO THAT YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF THEMES THAT ARE COMING UP ACROSS GROUPS. AS ALWAYS, MAKE SURE THEY HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE TO THE GROUP AGREEMENT THEY CREATED TOGETHER.**

The next session is about *Helping a Friend*. Nacho's life was saved, because his friend told his parents what was going on. Teens care – and they might need some guidance in how to be a good friend – whether it's listening or communication skills, knowing how to be patient, or when to involve a trusted adult, it's important for them to know what to do in difficult situations.

FACT SHEET – PREVENTING TEEN MEDICINE ABUSE

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TEEN ACTIVITY

NOT PRESCRIBED



You're faced with situations on a daily basis that can feel incredibly stressful - academic responsibilities, peer pressure, family issues, etc.



It's interesting (and sometimes surprising!) that some situations that are stressful for you, aren't always for other people. And, things that might be causing a lot of anxiety for a friend, might not be something you see as stressful. It might be the way we perceive the things that stress us out OR it might be the way we handle them. Each of us handles stress differently and we can make healthy and unhealthy choices around stress management.

It's important to identify what *some* of these pressures are, so that you can continue to build the confidence and skills necessary to handle any stressful situation in a healthy way.

OVERVIEW

The *Not Prescribed* video is the story of four real people and their families. Each story about medicine abuse is different, but the impact on the individual and the people who care about them can have a lasting effect.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who in the video seemed most like someone you might know?
2. Did you connect with any of the stories? What are some similarities? Differences?
3. What was the most surprising to you about each story?
4. What did you learn about prescription drugs that you didn't know before?

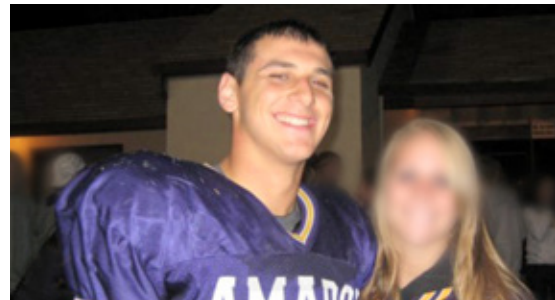
NOT PRESCRIBED

The *Not Prescribed* video is the story of four real people - Ronnie, Chelsea, Nacho and Aaron, and the impact prescription medicine abuse has had not only on their lives, but the lives of their families.

RONNIE



NACHO



CHELSEA



AARON



ACTIVITY

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND



MATERIALS

- *How To Listen to a Friend* Teen Activity Sheet
- *How to Have Conversation with a Friend* Teen Activity Sheet

OVERVIEW

Learning how to communicate and listen effectively is important to developing and maintaining healthy relationships and can give teens the critical skills to help themselves and others.

The authenticity of the *Above the Influence* message rests in its peer to peer model. The desire to help a friend that might be in trouble (or to help a friend in a way that is most supportive) can guide teens to develop the confidence needed to seek advice and support for themselves, too.

DIRECTIONS

1. Explain the importance of role playing activities and how they allow teens to connect with their peers and tell their stories, in an experiential way.
2. Hand out the *How to Listen to a Friend* and *How to Have a Conversation with a Friend* teen activity sheets as tips to consider in preparation for the role play activities.

3. Discuss why communication and connecting with peers can be helpful and potentially life-saving depending on the situation.

"FISHBOWL" ROLE-PLAY INSTRUCTIONS

The advantage of “Fishbowl” is that it allows the entire group to participate in a conversation.

1. All the members of the team are seated in a circle facing the center.
2. A small group arranges themselves in a circle in the center of a room. This small group will conduct a discussion together in the center of the circle while the rest of the teens watch, take notes, pose questions and give comments about what they observed.
3. To begin, select teens for the “fishbowl” – a mixed group. If you’re having trouble finding volunteers - try it with two teens who are seen as leaders among the group to get started.

ROLE PLAYING IS A GREAT WAY FOR TEENS TO PRACTICE LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A GROUP SETTING. THE “FISHBOWL” ALSO HELPS WITH OBSERVATION, LISTENING, AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING SKILLS.

4. Once the group is established, set some ground rules. These guidelines ensure that group members practice particular discussion skills, such as taking turns, building upon a previous person's comments, and asking questions to extend thinking. Ground rules might include: No one may interrupt a speaker or No one may speak a second time until everyone has had a chance.
5. Invite those "in" the fishbowl to pick a sample scenario or ask students in the circle to offer one.

EVERY NOW AND THEN, "FREEZE" THE ROLE-PLAY AND ASK TEENS IN THE CIRCLE WHAT THEY SAY OR DO NEXT. IF THEY HAVE A GOOD ANSWER, INVITE THEM TO COME UP AND TAKE ON THAT ROLE/SWITCH SEATS WITH THE PERSON ACTING OUT THE SCENARIO. GIVE YOUR GROUP OF TEENS THE OPTION TO CREATE SCENARIOS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THEIR LIVES.

"FISHBOWL" ROLE-PLAY PROMPTS TO KICK THE GROUP OFF

- How to *talk* to a friend when you are concerned their partner is being controlling

- How to *tell* a friend you are feeling overwhelmed/stressed/depressed because your parents are putting so much pressure on you about grades
- How to *talk* to a friend you are worried is abusing prescription medication

Knowing how to listen and how to speak comfortably and directly to others can help teens:

1. Boost their confidence in themselves and others,
2. Develop more meaningful and trusting relationships,
3. Gain skills and experiences they can use on teams and in groups now and in their futures, and
4. Develop peer-leadership skills that will help them change the culture of their schools and communities for the better

What does it mean to trust a friend?
 Make sure teens know that it is important they feel safe and supported in their relationships. You might ask them what this means? Developing communication and listening skills only helps relationships get stronger. You can open these ideas to a discussion if your group seems willing to share on this topic.


TEEN ACTIVITY

HOW TO LISTEN TO A FRIEND



THE BEST WAY TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR FRIEND IS TO WELL, LISTEN.

Knowing how to listen well can be tricky sometimes – you might want to immediately give advice if a friend is coming to you with a problem, or, you might have your own strong opinions because you've been through the same thing, and maybe that's why they're turning to you for support. It's also okay to not have the answers, because your friend might just need to vent and feel understood.

 HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP YOU BE A BETTER LISTENER

1. **SYMPATHIZE.** It's natural to want to comment or respond right away; especially if you disagree with what your friend is saying, or think you have information that might be helpful. Your opinion matters and is genuine because you care about your friend. Sometimes it's helpful to know though, if your friend actually wants an answer or an opinion from you. They may just appreciate your nodding, suggesting you understand their feelings. What's most important

for them to know is that they can talk to you, because they trust that you won't judge them. If you do have an opinion and think it might be helpful to your friend, after you've sympathized, you could try saying, "I have an idea. . ." or "You know what I think?" Then pause to see if the friend truly wants to hear it.

2. **PUT THE PHONE AWAY.** Don't answer your phone, look at incoming texts or allow for other interruptions while you and your friend are talking. It's important for your friend to know you're paying attention to what they're sharing with you.
3. **BE AWARE OF YOUR BODY LANGUAGE.** Non-verbal support is just as important as your words. A nod here and there, leaning in, or any sign that you understand and acknowledge what your friend is sharing, will help them feel more comfortable with you.



Depending on the situation and your relationship with the friend, you might tell him/her that you want to go to someone else about the problem they have shared with you.

Trust your instincts. Part of being a good friend is knowing when the support your friend needs is more than you can give.

TALK TO A TRUSTED TEACHER, COUNSELOR, MENTOR OR ANOTHER PERSON IN YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY THAT CAN UNDERSTAND AND HELP DETERMINE APPROPRIATE NEXT STEPS . . .

**LISTENING TIP:
TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THE OTHER PERSON IS COMING FROM – WHAT’S THEIR POINT OF VIEW? HEAR THEM OUT – AND THEN OFFER THEM YOUR OWN POINT OF VIEW ABOUT THE SITUATION.**




TEEN ACTIVITY

HOW TO HAVE A CONVO WITH A FRIEND



Whether it's in person or on social media – you're having conversations with your friends at any given moment throughout the day. **Sometimes, the conversation might not be an easy one, and an important issue can come up – anxiety and stress about school or a relationship, trouble at home, or the pressure to do things they're not sure of.** Your friend is turning to you because they value your time and thoughts – this responsibility could even stress you out!

 HERE ARE A FEW TIPS THAT CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR WORDS


1. **SHOW YOUR LOVE!** Let your friend know that you're there for them and that you're glad they feel like they can not only talk to you, but turn to you when they need someone. This doesn't mean that you don't have boundaries – make sure you're comfortable with what's going on in your relationship and that you know what to do if you're not.
2. **BE DIRECT.** If you're concerned about your friend or worried that they might get into trouble – tell them. It's okay to let them know how you feel, as long as you're respectful, and have listened to their side of the story.
3. **TRY NOT TO BE DEFENSIVE.**

A conversation takes at least two people – and just as you have your own view on things, your friend will also have their own opinions. Your similar and different interests are what make your relationship exciting, even though it can be hard to always remember that when you're talking to each other.

LISTEN AND VALIDATE A FRIEND'S OPINION AND TRY TO SEE THE SITUATION FROM THEIR SIDE AND THEN RESPECTFULLY OFFER YOUR OWN. IF YOU DON'T AGREE, MAYBE START WITH "I HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING BUT I THINK I SEE IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY. . ." THEN ASK, IF THEY MIGHT LIKE TO HEAR AN ALTERNATIVE OPINION. DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, THEY MAY BE OPEN TO YOUR OPINION, OR THEY MAY NOT BE.

4. **RELATE WHAT YOU HEAR TO YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES.** Sometimes you'll have no experience with something a friend brings up. But if you do, use the listening skills you already have and try to give specific examples about things that you might be worried about because of the conversation or things your friend may have brought up before. This will help your friend know that you're paying attention to what's going on, "you've been there," and perhaps you have a helpful tip.

DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED, TOO? IF YOUR FRIENDSHIP FEELS ONE-SIDED, AND LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS GIVING AND NOT GETTING MUCH IN RETURN FROM YOUR FRIEND (LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS LISTENING BUT NEVER GETTING TO VENT, TOO), IT MIGHT BE TIME TO HAVE A DIRECT AND REAL CONVERSATION WITH THEM. IT SOUNDS CHEESY, BUT THE BEST FRIENDSHIPS GO BOTH WAYS.

 **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND THAT MIGHT NEED HELP?**

Some changes to look for that might concern you:

- Are they shutting people out?
- Have you heard them say they don't care and would rather sleep or numb their feelings?
- Are they not enjoying things they used to enjoy?

These can be signs of depression. Talk to your friend, but talk to a guidance counselor at school or in your community group, too, to share your perceptions.

SHARE WITH US ON [ABOVETHEINFLUENCE.COM](https://www.abovetheinfluence.com) AND LET US KNOW HOW YOU GOT YOUR FRIENDSHIP BACK ON TRACK OR IF YOU NEED HELP DOING SO.

During the role play activities – watch out for body language (eye rolling, crossed arms, leaning in, a smile) or any words that either make you more comfortable or prevent you from helping a friend, or asking for help. *Write some of those down:*

After role playing different scenarios, using the listening and communication skills you have, reflect back on some of the real situations you or a friend might be facing and jot down what you can do immediately that could be more helpful in making a healthy decision.

WHAT MAKES FOR A TRUSTING FRIEND?



Someone that...motivates me, wants the best for me, is supportive.

ACTIVITY

PASS IT!



COMMUNITY PARTNERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE EMBRACED THE ATI CAMPAIGN AND HAVE USED THE ACTIVITIES FROM THE ATI ACTIVITIES TOOLKIT AS A NEW WAY TO ENGAGE YOUTH IN A DIALOGUE ABOUT THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE USE AND OTHER RISKY BEHAVIORS.

Pass It! is a new “mad libs” style storytelling activity where teens can express themselves in a creative way and learn as they go.

MATERIALS

- *Pass It!* box
- Markers
- Scrap/decorative materials (old newspapers/magazines, fabric cloth, buttons, etc.)
- Glue/tape
- Index Cards/Post-its
- Pens or Pencils
- Notebooks
- Flip chart/easel (if available)

OVERVIEW

The *Pass It!* activity can be anchored into existing programming you might have around healthy relationships and can help teens realize that they are not alone, because their peers are also experiencing similar issues. Teens have the opportunity to reflect on their values and experiences, which can help them rise above obstacles and different pressures in their environment the next time they are confronted with them. The accompanying teen activity sheet for *Pass It!* can be handed out as a “take home” piece. Teens can do the same activity on their own or with their friends.



DIRECTIONS

1. Ask teens create a *Pass It!* Box. This can be anything from an empty tissue box to a large bowl – use what is easy and available to you. Invite the group to “decorate” the *Pass It!* box if you have time and the teens seem interested. The box can be used again and again for other activities.

FACILITATOR NOTE:
MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE AN IDEA OR DESIGN ELEMENT TO THE *PASS IT!* BOX. IF YOU ARE WORKING WITH A BIG GROUP, YOU CAN BREAK THEM UP INTO SMALLER GROUPS AND CREATE MORE THAN ONE *PASS IT!* BOX.

2. Write down the starter sentences on a board, large flip-chart or a surface where everyone can see

_____ is important to me.

_____ prevent(s) me from doing what is important to me.

_____ can help me achieve what is important to me.

3. Ask teens to fill in each of the blanks with a word that makes the sentence true for them

FACILITATOR NOTE:
IF YOUR GROUP PREFERS TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AS A GROUP – LET THEM! THIS COULD BE A GREAT WAY TO START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIFFERENT PRESSURES IN THEIR LIVES AND WHAT THEY VALUE. DO YOUR BEST TO BE FLEXIBLE AND ALLOW FOR SLIGHT VARIATIONS IN THE ACTIVITY.

_____ is important to me
(Examples: Spending time with family, Being healthy and fit, Having friends, Getting good grades, Earning money etc.)

_____ prevent(s) me from doing what is important to me (Too much homework, My job, Being misunderstood, Drinking, etc.)

_____ can help me achieve what is important to me (Getting a job, Going out/partying less, Knowing who to talk to, etc.)

4. Pass out 3 pieces of paper (index cards, post its) to each teen



5. Have teens write down their 3 words/phrases on the 3 pieces of paper
6. Ask each teen to contribute their word or phrases to the *Pass It!* box

FACILITATOR NOTE:
THE *PASS IT!* BOX CAN EITHER BE PLACED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM AND EVERYONE CAN GET UP – EITHER ONE AT A TIME OR IN CLUSTERS, OR PASSED AROUND FROM TEEN TO TEEN, IF THE GROUP NUMBER AND TIME ALLOWS FOR IT.

7. Once everyone has contributed, tell teens that the *Pass It!* box is being filled with different influences—positive and negative – that affect their peers, the people in the room that are participating in the same activity.

8. Now ask teens to pass the box around the room and pull out three new words and fill in the blanks again:

_____ is important to me.

_____ prevent(s) me from doing what is important to me.

_____ can help me achieve what is important to me.

9. Ask teens to reflect and consider if their statements are the same, or if they have changed, after using the responses submitted by their peers.

FACILITATOR NOTE:
THIS ACTIVITY HELPS THE GROUP UNDERSTAND THAT DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES, THEY MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY THE SAME THINGS.

10. Encourage teens to share what some of the words/phrases are and if there are any common themes or influences in the group's lives.

ASK TEENS TO SHARE THEIR STORIES AND PHOTOS ON THE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE INSPIRATION WALL. TAKE PHOTOS OF THE PASS IT! BOX OR ASK TEENS TO CREATE AN ART PIECE USING THEIR WORDS OR PHRASES. UPLOAD A PHOTO TO THE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE FACEBOOK PAGE OR ON INSTAGRAM #ABOVETHEINFLUENCE

**YOU CAN USE THIS FREE SPACE FOR NOTES,
JOURNALING OR JOTTING DOWN NEW IDEAS.**

TEEN ACTIVITY

PASS IT!



WHAT DOES ABOVE THE INFLUENCE MEAN TO YOU?

Think about everything and everyone around you – family, friends, school, media – do they help you stay true to yourself, or is it sometimes difficult, when you’re hearing different messages from all angles. Being *Above the Influence*, could mean, having the tools you need to be original, and to remember what keeps you real.

Once you know what stresses you out and what you can do to make things easier, hearing what your peers are worried about can also help you understand that you’re not alone, how to be a better friend, and how others can support you as you deal with different issues.



FILL IN THE BLANKS

_____ **is important to me.**

_____ **stops me from doing what is important to me.**

_____ **can help me achieve what**

is important to me.

Now consider how a close friend or a brother or sister might have filled in these blanks – what would their words be? Use these words to fill in the blanks again.

_____ **is important to me.**

_____ **stops me from doing what is important to me.**

_____ **can help me achieve what is important to me.**

Has your story changed or is it the same?

TRY THIS ACTIVITY WITH FRIENDS! CREATE A PASS IT! BOX – USE ANYTHING HANDY AND BE CREATIVE. TAKE THESE 3 WORDS, AND WRITE THEM DOWN ON 3 SEPARATE PIECES OF PAPER. PUT YOUR 3 WORDS IN THE PASS IT! BOX AND ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO DO THE SAME. PICK 3 NEW WORDS OUT AFTER EVERYONE HAS PUT THEIR WORDS IN, AND FILL IN THE BLANK!

Share your stories and photos with us and teens across the country on www.AbovethetheInfluence.com. If you are interested in becoming a teen advocate – let us know and email us at: assistance@abovetheinfluence.com

**YOU CAN USE THIS FREE SPACE FOR NOTES,
JOURNALING OR JOTTING DOWN NEW IDEAS.**

ATI TOOLKIT EVALUATION MEASURES



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

In order for us to continually improve the activities and resources in the toolkit, we need input from you and the teens who have participated in some or all of the activities.

Our evaluation has 2 simple but important parts.

WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL:

- Ask each of the teens you worked with to take a few minutes to complete the youth surveys included for this toolkit. The information that we gather from teens will provide us with helpful information as we design other relevant activities for them.
- Please complete the facilitator survey for this toolkit -- we value YOUR opinion as the leader of this activity series.

After all of the surveys are completed, please return them to the address provided below. Or, feel free to email a scanned copy of your surveys to:

assistance@abovetheinfluence.com

Above the Influence
352 Park Avenue South
9th Floor
New York, NY 10010

If you have any questions about completing the surveys, please contact:

assistance@abovetheinfluence.com



**THANK YOU FOR
PARTICIPATING IN OUR
FIRST ROUND OF FEEDBACK
FOR THE NEW ATI TOOLKIT.**

**YOU CAN USE THIS FREE SPACE FOR NOTES,
JOURNALING OR JOTTING DOWN NEW IDEAS.**

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE YOUTH PARTICIPANT SURVEY



THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN ABOVE THE INFLUENCE!

We'd like to hear what you thought about it. Please complete the questions below and feel free to answer honestly. Your answers are anonymous and will help us create new programs and activities for teens, just like you.

1. Please circle your current grade in school: 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th
2. Where did you participate in this program/activity?
 - AT SCHOOL
 - COMMUNITY CENTER PROGRAM
 - FAITH COMMUNITY GROUP (CHURCH, SYNAGOGUE, MOSQUE, RELIGIOUS YOUTH GROUP, ETC.)
 - OTHER: _____
3. Who led this program/activity?
 - TEACHER
 - GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
 - PRIEST OR RELIGIOUS LEADER
 - SOCIAL WORKER IN OUR COMMUNITY
 - ANOTHER TEEN AT MY SCHOOL/FROM MY COMMUNITY
 - OTHER: _____
4. Before this program/activity, how familiar were you with *Above the Influence (ATI)*?
(Check the answer that **best** describes you.)
 - NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR: "I HAD NEVER SEEN/HEARD OF ATI BEFORE."
 - A LITTLE FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI, BUT DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT."
 - SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI AND BASICALLY KNOW WHAT IT'S ABOUT."
 - VERY FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI AND BEEN AFFECTED BY ITS MESSAGE."

5. Which of the group activities listed below did you participate in this program/ activity? (Check **all** of the activities that apply. Check the bottom box if you did **not** participate in any of these activities.)

- GROUP AGREEMENT
- WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT?
 - Identify what pressures you have around you and what you can do about them
- WHAT ARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?
- NOT PRESCRIBED (WITH VIDEO)
 - Four real stories of people and their experience with medicine abuse
- HOW TO HELP A FRIEND
 - Role playing activities
 - How to Listen to a Friend
 - How to Have a Conversation
- PASS IT!
 - Mad-libs style storytelling
- I HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES



6. Based on your experiences, **for only the activities you participated in**, please circle the **one** response that best describes how much you agree or disagree.

“I ENJOYED PARTICIPATING IN ...”

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Group Agreement</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>What's Stressing You Out?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>What are Prescription Drugs?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Not Prescribed</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>How to Help a Friend</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Pass It!</i>	1	2	3	4	5

7. Which of the activities that you participated in (if any) would you recommend to a friend as helpful? Why? Please describe:

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER: YES OR NO:

8. These activities gave me tips I can use to communicate better with my friends.

YES NO

9. These activities helped me see that other kids are also stressed about some of the same things I am.

YES NO



10. These activities helped me learn specifically about the risks of medicine abuse.

YES NO

11. Finally, what other areas do you think teens your age need help with? Is there a new activity you would recommend?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELPFUL FEEDBACK!

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE FACILITATOR SURVEY



WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK REGARDING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE TOOLKIT.

Your answers are anonymous. Please do not sign or print your name on this form.

I facilitated ATI Toolkit activities for _____ (number) youth participants in
_____ (name of your city).

1. Are you a teen facilitator? (*circle one*): YES NO
2. If you ARE A TEEN FACILITATOR, please indicate if you had an adult guide you in facilitating this program/activity series (*circle one*): YES NO N/A
3. If you ARE NOT A TEEN FACILITATOR, please choose one of the following options that best describes your role:
 - TEACHER
 - GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
 - PRIEST OR RELIGIOUS LEADER
 - SOCIAL WORKER
 - OTHER: _____
4. Where did you facilitate this program/activity series?
 - AT SCHOOL
 - COMMUNITY CENTER PROGRAM
 - FAITH COMMUNITY GROUP (CHURCH, SYNAGOGUE, MOSQUE, RELIGIOUS YOUTH GROUP, ETC.)
 - OTHER: _____

5. Before this program/series, how familiar were you with *Above the Influence (ATI)*?
(Check the answer that **best** describes you.)

- NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR: "I HAD NEVER SEEN/HEARD OF ATI BEFORE."
- A LITTLE FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI, BUT DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT."
- SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI AND BASICALLY KNOW WHAT IT'S ABOUT."
- VERY FAMILIAR: "I HAD SEEN/HEARD OF ATI AND BEEN AFFECTED BY ITS MESSAGE."

6. Which of the group activities listed below did you facilitate in this program/series?
(Check **all** of the activities that apply. Check the bottom box if you did **not** participate in any of these activities.)

- GROUP AGREEMENT
- WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT?
 - Identify what pressures you have around you and what you can do about them
- WHAT ARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS?
- NOT PRESCRIBED (WITH VIDEO)
 - Four real stories of people and their experience with medicine abuse
- HOW TO HELP A FRIEND
 - Role playing exercises
 - How to Listen to a Friend
 - How to Have a Conversation with a Friend
- PASS IT!
 - Mad-libs style storytelling
- I HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES

7. Please select one answer for each item.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
ATI toolkit activities are relevant to the teens I work with.	1	2	3	4	5
I know more about how to speak to / engage teens about medicine abuse.	1	2	3	4	5
I know more about how to talk to teens about things that stress them out.	1	2	3	4	5
I know more about how to help teens gain important communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
I know more about how to help teens become better listeners of their peers.	1	2	3	4	5
I plan to go to the <i>Above the Influence</i> website to learn more about the campaign.	1	2	3	4	5
I plan to share the ATI toolkit with others I know who work with teens.	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do more <i>Above the Influence</i> toolkit activities in the future.	1	2	3	4	5

8. Which activity in the toolkit would you improve and why? Please describe:

Please tell us what else the *Above the Influence* campaign can do to support you in your work with teens.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELPFUL FEEDBACK!



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