

Prom and Graduation Season Substance Abuse Prevention Strategies and Activities

Name and brief description of strategy or activity: “I Look Up to You: Safe Prom Letter” Elementary school students complete a letter warning high school students about the dangers of underage alcohol and drug use/abuse and encouraging them to make healthy choices and stay safe during prom and graduation season. These letters are given to high school students before their prom/graduation to remind them they are role models for younger children, and to be mindful that their choices and actions can have dangerous consequences.

How to get started: Reach out to Elementary Schools to ask if they want their 4th and 5th grade students to participate in a project for the Junior/Senior Prom-goers in their school district. Was there was a health curriculum for the students during their school year and did it cover alcohol/substance use.

If YES, explain that this project is a fantastic opportunity for the students to recap what they learned during their health curriculum regarding alcohol and drug use throughout this past school year.

If NO, you may want to offer to deliver a quick mini-lesson about the risks of underage alcohol/substance use.

Resources needed: The letter template - Give to teachers whose classes are participating in the project

Crayons, colored pencils, markers, etc. to decorate the page upon completion of the template

People to get on board: Faculty within each school building and district. Whether the point person in each school is the principal, a social worker or health educator, or the individual classroom teachers, it is essential to have their cooperation and create the opportunity for open conversation about the significance of this project.

Parent/family organizations and groups within the school buildings and districts district (PTO, Booster Club, etc.) are great resources for support and promotion of this activity.

With the school’s permission, reach out to local media and news outlets would be a great method of publicizing the collaboration between your organization and the local school district on this project, and will aid in the further reaching effects of this strategy by engaging more community members, raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol and drug use (especially during prom and graduation season), and showcasing the efforts your organization is making to ensure safer experiences for everyone involved.

Steps to Success: Be enthusiastic about getting young students involved in this project!

Consider creating a short handout of talking points for the teacher to explain the project to their students.

If there is an event happening through the school before prom (Ex: A safe-prom assembly with parents and students), linking to that event is a great way to gain visibility of the high school students and their families.

Post on your social media accounts throughout the process (Ex: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Email/Constant Contact) to spread the word about this collaborative effort to increase safety of local teens during prom/graduation season!

Share (on your social media) any online articles, written by local news/media sources, which cover your efforts to engage community members in this important conversation about underage alcohol and drug use.

Elementary students should sign the letter ONLY with their first name.

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