

Young people - keeping them safe

A strategies check list

If you are trying to work out ways of helping a young person stay safe, whether your own son or daughter or someone else, then the following might be helpful to you. You can sit down and go through these questions on your own, or even better, do it together with the young person. The purpose is to find ways that fit for the young person to keep them from harm. The trick is finding ones you agree on. While 'not drinking alcohol' at a party may be an appealing strategy for a parent or adult, and actually work for some young people, for others it just isn't an option. And really, the difference between a 'good' strategy and a 'bad' one, is that a 'good' one works. This check list is about finding things that work.

So first up, find a good time when you can sit and have a quiet think or chat. And then ask yourself, and/or talk with the young person themselves, and identify the situation/s they are likely to be in. Then develop some ways of keeping them safe. Go through each of the strategies and get answers to the following questions. If, from the young person's perspective, each of these gets a ✓ then the strategy has a better chance of working.

The strategy:

- ◆ Seems like a good idea
- ◆ 'Fits' for who this person is
- ◆ Is easy to remember
- ◆ Is simple to do
- ◆ Is cheap or free
- ◆ Is quick or immediate
- ◆ Leaves their sense of self, their self-image intact or better
- ◆ Leaves their status or image in a group, intact or better
- ◆ Can be put into practice while intoxicated and/or excited
 - Which usually means: it needs prep & or practice.

I know this last one is tricky, because we don't always want to accept the idea of this young person being intoxicated. But for some this is the reality you have to deal with. And apart from being 'intoxicated', just being 'excited' can be just as distracting as anything else.

Best wishes

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