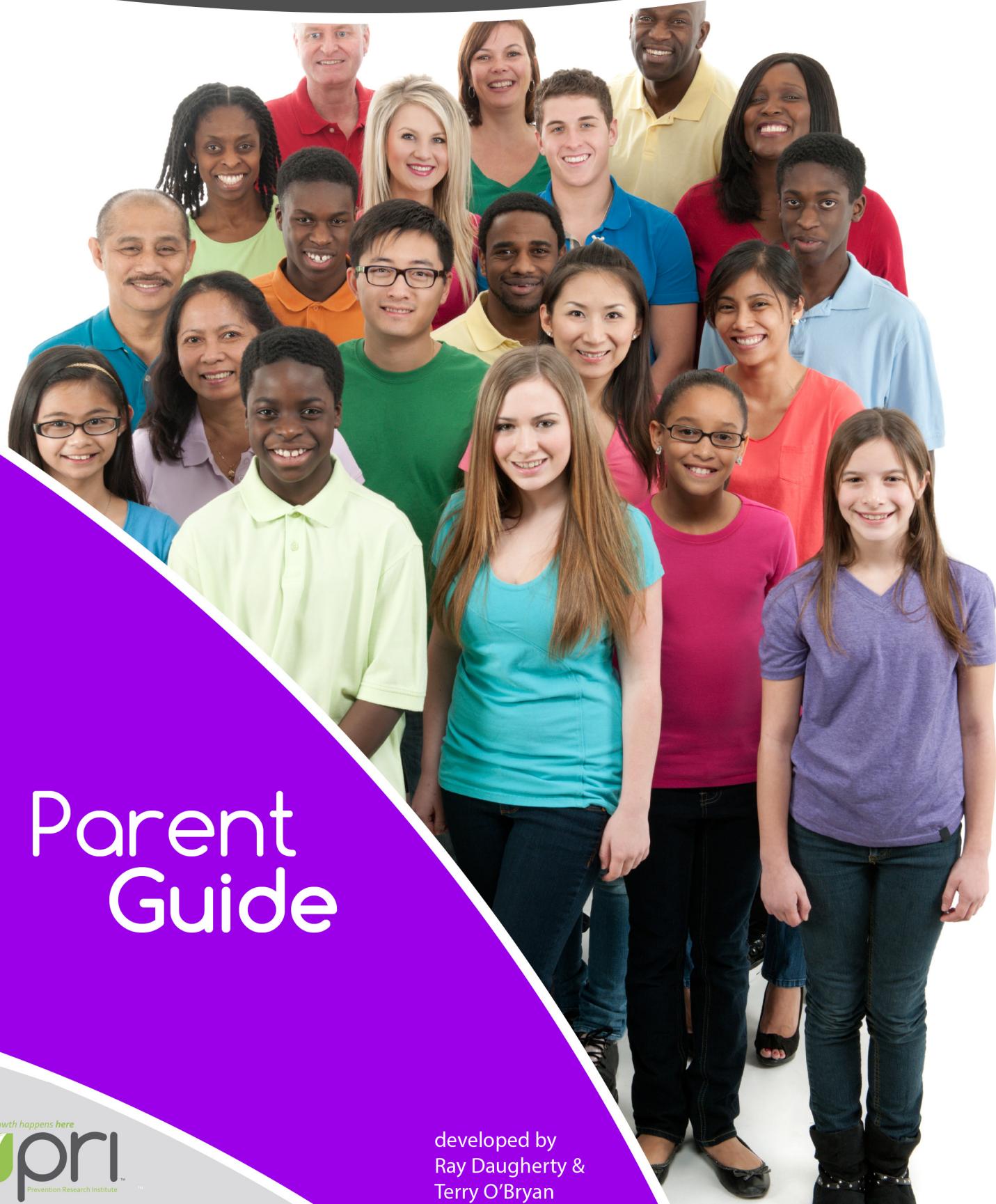


prime for life[®]

for parents



Parent Guide

developed by
Ray Daugherty &
Terry O'Bryan



Guide for Talking with Your Teen

A Risk Reduction Program

Developed by

Ray Daugherty and Terry O'Bryan

Our Personal Thanks

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Copies of this document may be made for the use of certified Prime For Life instructors for parents who have received Prime For Life and have purchased a Prime For Life (Exploring edition) Participant Workbook.

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Sharing Prime For Life with your Teen

This guide is designed to help you in your conversations with your teens to best influence their choices. We believe it's easiest to take some time to read over your materials and make a plan. As you share Prime For Life with your teen, keep these tips in mind:

- Don't rush, even if they are resistant. Give them a chance to understand the material, not just hear a lot of words.
- Keep the main goal of each section in mind. It will be easy to stray if you don't focus on the task at hand.
- Remember to use what you have learned about influencing our teens throughout the discussion. It is helpful to use a conversational (rather than lecturing) tone in these discussions.

You have a lot of new information in Prime For Life, and it might seem overwhelming to think of sharing this with your children. Most parents are not experts on the topics, and teens often shut down their willingness to communicate with their parents. However, studies indicate that young people list their parents as their primary deterrent to making high-risk choices with alcohol and drugs.

Young people list their parents as their primary deterrent to making high-risk choices.

Why Teach Alcohol Risk Reduction Information To Young People?

Parents want to help their children avoid problems throughout life, not just during adolescence. Because the low-risk guidelines include abstinence, they are adjustable for different points in life. The guidelines are not permission for adolescents to drink. It is the parents' right and responsibility to set rules about alcohol use.

Prime For Life is shown to increase abstinence and decrease high-risk use among youth.

Low-risk choices are based on research on health and impairment problems. The decision of which low-risk choices are acceptable is based on personal and social factors such as religious beliefs, laws, family practices, and for young people, parental expectations. At all ages, there are times when quantity and frequency choices that are low risk for health and impairment problems are not acceptable under the law, to employers or to families, for example, while driving or at work.

When it comes to alcohol, young people need both objective information on risk as well as clear expectations. Giving information without expectations can be harmful, but giving limits without information can be detrimental too. Young people need information for a lifetime and expectations appropriate for their age. They need these from the people who know them best: their parents.

The information parents give children is what they take with them into adulthood. Many parents expect their children to abstain from alcohol until age 21. In all states, abstinence is the only low-risk choice that is always consistent with the law for those under age 21. However, if our youth are only taught to abstain to age 21, what information will they use if they choose to drink at age 21? Today, many young adults believe when they turn 21, the sky is the limit. Also, in most states it is legal for teens to drink in certain situations such as with family. With no research-based guidelines, young people are left to define "moderate" or "responsible" drinking for themselves, and this can cause problems. To reduce risk for a lifetime, parents need to teach research-based information to influence their children's choices.

Be Prepared Before Talking With Your Teen

1. Review the Prime For Life (Exploring edition) Workbook.
2. Review the Workbook Supplement you received during your Prime For Life class, and complete the activities “Creating Expectations” on page 3 and “Building Support for Low-Risk Choices” on page 5, preferably with your child’s other parent or another interested adult.
3. Decide whether you are going to use “teachable moments,” a more “structured” discussion, or both to relay the information.
4. If using a structured discussion, select a time, place, and setting to talk with your teen. Consider your teen’s personality and the customary way of communicating about important issues in your home. It usually reduces resistance to involve your child in setting the time.

Tools for Sharing Prime For Life

Here are the tools available for you to share what you have learned:

- This guide provides a step-by-step format to cover all the relevant material.
- For those wishing a less-structured approach, the formula for lifestyle-related health problems can be used to organize your discussions with your teens and for sharing research you have learned.
- With the QR codes in your workbook and a free QR code app on a smart phone or tablet, you can play many of the videos and animations you experienced in Prime For Life and watch them with your teen. There are even some you have not seen you can think of as “bonus features.” There is no charge for watching these videos as many times as you wish. Be sure to watch them before showing to your teen.
- There is also an online independent version of Prime For Life available by contacting PRI at websupport@primeforlife.org. Some parents may choose to require their teen to do this before getting a driver’s license.
- Depending on where you attended Prime For Life, your instructor may be available to answer questions and guide you.
- Visit www.primeforlife.org for more information.

If your son or daughter has taken Prime For Life, you can simply review many of these discussions to insure that he or she understands and remembers all of the concepts. You may want to begin a discussion on each section by asking what he or she thought was interesting or important from that section.

The Reflection Questions and Something to Consider Questions throughout the Prime For Life Workbook may be useful for discussion as well.

Discussion Outline and Materials

The outlines on the following page with discussion topics and materials are needed to share Prime For Life with your teen. The total time in these discussions ranges from 3 to 6 hours. Discussion times are suggestions and can vary greatly from family to family and even between teens in the same family. Keep in mind the outline here suggests a formal discussion. Some parents will use it exactly as it is written, while others will use it only as a general outline. How you use it will depend on your own parenting style. If you find a formal discussion impractical or uncomfortable, you may choose to share small pieces of the information over time. You may be inclined to watch for teachable moments spread out over a longer period of time. For example, this may be the only way to talk with a rebellious child. A real challenge of having smaller informal discussions is making sure you cover all the critical points.

Discussions 1 and 2 are crucial for developing perception of risk and understanding how to effectively prevent alcohol and drug problems. For example, Discussion 1 directly addresses the belief “It can’t happen to me.” Until a person accepts the reality “It can happen to anyone, including me,” he or she will not likely take the low-risk guidelines seriously. Although Discussion 3 is optional, we suggest you at least hit the highlights and cover tolerance and brain changes such as state dependent restriction. Discussion 4 cements the concepts by developing a plan for success with support for low-risk choices.

Whether you use this guide formally or informally, the ultimate goal is to inspire your teen to make low-risk choices. Regardless of the structure of the discussions, remember what is important is the ultimate goal, not the amount of time spent on each discussion or whether the discussion is formal or informal.

The materials needed for these Discussions include:

1. **Prime For Life Workbook (Exploring edition) from class**
2. **Workbook Supplement provided in class**
3. **Guide For Talking With Your Teen (this document)**
4. **Teen Activity Guide**
5. **QR Code reader app on your smart phone or tablet**

Discussion 1 Perception of Risk (1-2 hours)	Workbook/Guide
Activity: What do I value? Looking to the Future	Teen Guide page 1
Making the Risk Real – Hailey video	QR code in this Parent Guide page 6
Health and Impairment Problems	Teen Guide page 2
Activity: What Most People Say	Teen Guide page 2
Activity: Kind of Person	Workbook pages 8-9, Teen Guide page 2
Activity: Risks We Can and Cannot Change	Workbook Page 10, Teen Guide page 2
Lifestyle-Related Health Problem – Heart Disease	Workbook pages 11-13
Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Body, Brain, Biology Adoption Studies Biological Responses Drugs Choices Psychological Influences Social Influences Activity: Putting It All Together	Workbook page 14 Workbook page 15 Workbook page 15 Workbook page 15 Workbook pages 16-17 Workbook page 18 Workbook pages 19-20 Workbook page 21 Workbook page 22
Impairment and High Tolerance	Workbook pages 23-24

Discussion 2 Preventing Health and Impairment Problems (1-2 hours)	Workbook/Guide
Choices	Workbook page 25
Defining Standards	Workbook page 26
Research Basis for Low-Risk Guidelines	Workbook pages 27-28
Activity: Building Low-Risk Alcohol Guidelines	Teen Guide page 3 Workbook pages 28-29
Low-Risk Guidelines for Teens (Option: Share Expectations or wait till Discussion 4)	Workbook Supplement page 3
Activity: My Teen's Formula Biological Risk Factors Activity: Family History Worksheet High Tolerance Unusual Reward or Pleasure Adjusting the Low-Risk Guidelines (Individual Differences) Psychological Influences Social Influences	Teen Guide page 4 (revisit) Workbook pages 15-17 Teen Guide page 5 Workbook page 31 (revisit) Workbook pages 19-20 (revisit) Workbook page 21

Optional Discussion 3 Phases of Use (30 min to 1 hour)	Workbook/Guide
Phases of Use Introduction	Workbook page 34
Green Phase: Low-Risk Choices	Workbook page 35-36
Transition to High-Risk Phases	Workbook pages 36-37
Yellow Phase: High-Risk Choices	Workbook pages 37-41
Orange Phase: Psychological Dependence	Workbook pages 42-47
Red Phase: Addiction	Workbook pages 49-53

Optional Discussion 4 Plan for Success (30 min to 1 hour)	Workbook/Guide
My Message	Workbook page 55
Activity: Feeding the Wolf	Teen Guide page 6
Activity: Sharing Your Expectations	Workbook Supplement page 3 Teen Guide page 6
Activity: Expectations and Rewards/Consequences	Workbook Supplement page 4 Teen Guide page 6
Activity: Building Support for Low-Risk Choices	Workbook Supplement pages 4-5 Teen Guide page 6

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Discussion 1: Perception of Risk (1 - 2 Hours)

Activity: What do I value? Looking to the Future

Teen Guide page 1

Begin with page 1 in the Teen Activity Guide where you will find things many people highly value and consider important things in their lives. Have your son or daughter personalize the items by writing names of close family members and friends and adding important items that are not listed in the blanks provided. There will likely be things like getting into college and extra-curricular activities such as music and sports. Ask your teen to put stars next to the four most important items at this point in time. Then ask him/her to imagine being a young adult and consider what will be important then. Have him/her circle the four most important items as a young adult. You may want to look at differences in values now and in the future and have a short conversation about how what we value can change over time. Next, have your teen write what it would feel like to know these values are alive and thriving in his/her life in the future. Note that high-risk choices jeopardize the most important things in our lives, and let your child know the reason for these discussions is to help him or her to protect the things he/she values, both now and in the future.

Making the Risk Real – Hailey video

You may wish to show the video (just under 8 minutes) of Hailey you watched in class to help your teen personalize the risk of high-risk choices. Many people, including Hailey and her parents, did not think this would happen to them. Make the point that we all have risk any time we make high-risk choices. You can review the story of Hailey just after the 6-minute Introduction in the full Treasures Lost video here.

https://www.primeforlife.org/reflecting/videos/treasures_lost



Health and Impairment Problems

Teen Guide page 2

Health problems occur from drinking or using drugs over a period of time. Examples include cirrhosis, many forms of cancer, and addiction. Impairment problems can happen on any occasion of drinking or using and include getting into fights, saying or doing something we regret, getting injured, and getting suspended from school.

Activity: What Most People Say

Teen Guide page 2

For persuasion communication to be effective, remember to start from your teen's position. To do this without raising defenses, ask the question "What would most people say is the kind of person who develops alcoholism or drug addiction?" and have him/her write responses on page 2 of the Teen Guide. (Notice the wording of the question. Ask what "most people" would say, not "what do you think is the kind of person." This is important to avoid provoking defenses. If a person gives his own view, he must defend it. To avoid conflict, we ask what most people would say to give space for honest answers.)

After your adolescent lists some perceptions of what people might think, identify how they are common ways of thinking and validate why people might have come to believe them to be true. For example, people with alcoholism or addiction may have lost jobs or promotions, so it looks like being unemployed or poor may have caused the problem. Maybe they have a lot of stress with financial, academic, legal, relationship, or job problems, so it appears stress caused it. However, these problems could be the result of drinking or using rather than the cause.

Remember!
Ask your child what most people would say is the kind of person who develops alcoholism or drug addiction.

Remember, your child may believe that alcoholism and addiction only happen to losers or weak people and could never happen to anyone in his or her family. On the other hand, your child could hold a fatalistic view such as some people will develop it no matter what, so watch for indications of a belief that "it is bound to happen no matter what I do." This is particularly important if your youngster has had trouble at school or with the law. Sometimes when young people have had such problems, they develop the view, "That's just the kind of person I am; I can't help it."

Activity: Kind of Person

Workbook pages 8-9/Teen Guide page 2

Compare your teen's responses for What Most People Say with those you wrote on page 9 during class. Have him/her add any missing key beliefs on his/her list. Note that research has been able to tell us whether these common beliefs are accurate. Have your teen draw a question mark over his/her list to indicate you are going to turn to research to see if these beliefs are accurate or not. Then review the summary of Kind of Person on page 8 of the Workbook and be sure to cover the Key Points as they are research conclusions. Have your teen write "ANYONE" in large letters across his/her "What Most People Say" list on page 2 of the Teen Guide. This is the research conclusion of who can develop alcoholism or drug addiction.

Remember!

It is the kind of choices we make not the kind of people we are that determines risk.

Activity: Risks We Can and Cannot Change

Teen Guide page 2

On the bottom of page 2 of the Teen Guide, ask your child to indicate which factors can and cannot be changed. Your answers for this activity are on page 10 in the Workbook you completed in class.

Lifestyle-Related Health Problem - Heart Disease

Workbook pages 11-13

Workbook pages 11-13 summarize heart disease and introduce the formula for lifestyle-related health problems. Have your adolescent read this information, and then discuss. Be sure to cover the Key Points on page 13.

Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Workbook pages 14-22

Review Workbook pages 14-22 with your teen. Page 14 explains alcoholism and addiction as lifestyle-related health problems.

- Body, Brain, Biology – summarizes different biological risks

Adoption Studies: Some things run in families due to genetics, others result from the environment. Workbook page 15 summarizes the adoption research regarding alcoholism risk and includes a QR code for the 2-minute adoption animation.

Biological Responses: Workbook pages 15-16 explain different responses to use. Be sure to emphasize if it feels good, people want to use more. This leads to increased risk as the brain adapts to more use; hence tolerance, the body's adaptation to the substance, increases.

Drugs: Review Workbook pages 16 and 17 with your teen. Note the marijuana study at top of page 17 was done with adolescents and shows risk for teens with various positive responses to develop serious problems such as dependence by age 21.

- **Choices:** Workbook page 18 has a QR code for research on quantity and frequency of use and risk for dependence. Be sure to cover the Key Points on this page.

- Psychological Influences: Workbook pages 19 and 20 summarize four personality traits (sensation seeking, gregarious, impulsive, and rebellious) more common among people who develop alcoholism and addiction. People with these traits are more likely to make high-risk choices. There is a QR code for stress and trauma on page 20. Share how attitudes, feelings and beliefs impact our choices. For example, “I might not use ‘hard’ drugs, but vaping doesn’t have any risk” is a belief that encourages vaping; “I am really stressed or angry, so deserve to take the edge off” encourages high-risk use.
- Social influences include friends, school, religious participation, sports, law, and a variety of media with examples on page 21 in the Workbook. Be sure to cover the Key Points on this page.
- Review Putting It All Together on page 22 with your teen.

Remember!
People who are sensation seeking, gregarious, impulsive, and rebellious are more likely to make high-risk choices.

Impairment and High Tolerance

Workbook pages 23-24

Review and discuss Workbook pages 23-24 summarizing impairment and tolerance. In this discussion, it is important for the teen to understand that high tolerance tricks us. It appears to protect us from problems, while in reality it increases our risk. It is also important they understand the difference in mental and physical tolerance levels and how the gap between the time of mental impairment and physical impairment can increase over time and make it less likely the person realizes they are impaired. You may wish to view the QR code for how tolerance tricks people. Be sure to cover the Key Points on page 24.

Groups that accept and encourage high-risk drinking and drug use have higher rates of alcoholism and addiction.

Remember!

High tolerance is always a sign of increased risk.

Discussion 2 : Preventing Health and Impairment Problems (1 - 2 Hours)

This is a section we recommend you take the lead on and do not just have your teen read.

Choices

Workbook page 25

Review Workbook page 25 and be sure to cover the Key Points.

Defining Standards

Workbook page 26

It is important to make sure your teen is clear on the amount of alcohol in one drink before the guidelines are discussed. The amount of pure alcohol can be calculated by multiplying the number of ounces by the percentage alcohol. For example, 5 ounces of 12% wine is 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. Workbook page 26 summarizes standards for alcohol and drugs.

Research Basis for Low-Risk Guidelines

Workbook pages 27-28

Carefully review pages 27 and 28 in the Workbook with your teen to summarize research on risks related to quantities and frequencies of alcohol and drugs. Be sure to also carefully review the text on page 27 about drugs used for non-medical purposes and cover the Key Points on page 28.

Activity: Building Low-Risk Alcohol Guidelines

Teen Guide page 3/Workbook pages 28-29

At this point you can help your teen “build” low-risk guidelines. Have your teen answer the questions on page 3 in the Teen Guide. These answers (below) can then be inserted in the formula on page 3.

1. What is the only low-risk choice for a person with alcoholism? 0

2. What is the largest amount in one hour that will not increase risk? 1

3. What is the largest amount daily that will not increase risk for health problems? 2

4. What is the most a person could drink in one day that would be low risk? 3

Conclude these from the low-risk guidelines: 0 1 2 3. Zero for drugs, and at times for alcohol. No more than 1 standard drink in an hour, no more than 2 standard drinks if drinking daily or almost daily, and no more than 3 standard drinks on any one day. This means no more than 14 standard drinks in a week.

Cover the Review of Low-Risk Guidelines at the bottom of page 29 in the Workbook to solidify the guidelines.

Low-Risk Guidelines for Teens

(optional) Workbook Supplement page 3

Remember that 0 is always a low-risk choice. For certain times and certain places, zero is the only low-risk choice that is consistent with the law or policies. For some people zero is the only low-risk choice due to medical illness, medication, values, parental expectations, or religious beliefs. There are extra issues to be aware of in teaching the guidelines to adolescents. We do not want to be condoning underage use. At the same time, it is important to give guidance for a lifetime and to give potentially life-saving information to young people who choose to drink in spite of the law or parental expectations.

Once your teen has determined low-risk guidelines based on research, it is helpful to reiterate what is low risk for teens regarding school policies and the law. Although teens “know” the only low-risk choice is abstinence, reviewing in an interactive manner implies an expectation of abstinence at this time in their life.

At this point, some parents choose to clearly state their expectations from page 3 of the Workbook Supplement from class. Others prefer to examine more material and cover in Discussion 4, while some communicate at both times for emphasis.

Whichever way you choose to share your expectations, there are several ways to highlight abstinence for teens and delay first use. One way is to review the guidelines in an interactive manner by asking a series of questions such as the following:

- 1. What are the alcohol guidelines to prevent health and impairment problems?**
- 2. Does this apply to everyone?**
- 3. What would be the only acceptable low-risk choice for you at this time in your life?**
- 4. Could this change later in your life?**
- 5. What is the only low-risk choice for non-prescribed and illegal drugs?**
- 6. What is the low-risk guideline for prescriptions if they are prescribed to you?**

This discussion should be nonjudgmental and loving. Remember if we try to control, they are less likely to listen. If we are nonjudgmental, while being clear, they are more likely to meet our expectations. Bring your son or daughter back to their values and discuss how making low-risk choices can protect the things they value, including an open and honest relationship with you.

Activity: My Teen’s Formula

Teen Guide page 4

Now that we’ve had an opportunity to think about the risk that exists for all of us and for all of our children, let’s examine specific risks that exist for our family members. Start by looking at the activity “My Formula” for your son/daughter on page 4 in the Teen Guide. It looks just like the one in your Workbook on the back cover.

Review the information below before covering with your son or daughter to see how all the pieces of the formula fit together for him/her. The key points to cover in this section are in text boxes for emphasis.

Biological Risk Factors

(revisit) Workbook pages 15-17 / Teen Guide page 5

First, we need to estimate your teen’s level of biological risk. Just as you completed “My Formula” for yourself, think about factors in your teen’s life.

Family History/Trigger Point

Earlier you covered how a lot of things run in families to help them understand what genetics mean in a variety of health areas. This may be a time that you share some health information about family members. This is not to place blame on family members but to help our children understand their levels of risk.

Activity: Go through the Family History Worksheet on page 5 of the Teen Guide with your teen to assess his/her biological risk. If your son or daughter has a biological parent, grandparent, brother, or sister with alcoholism or addiction, have him or her check the box next to family history on “My Formula” on page 4 in the Teen Guide.

High Tolerance

In this parent program, most of us are talking with our children before they ever use any substances. Therefore, we cannot know if they have a high tolerance. We can talk to them about our own high tolerance if we wish, but this does not mean we need to go into our substance use history. It is simply noting a fact and then continuing the conversation. This decision varies from parent to parent, and sometimes, varies as to what we share with individual children within a family. One way to think about this is providing children the information they need to understand their risk factors.

Unusual Reward or Pleasure

Revisit the information about biological responses to substances (Workbook pages 15-17) as needed with your teen. Remember, how our bodies respond to substances influences our future choices. For example, if I like the feeling of drinking or being high, I'm likely to continue using and to use more. On the other hand, if I don't like the feeling or I have an unpleasant reaction to the substance, I'm less likely to use again. Again, because we are teaching this information before many young people have started using, we won't know if there is pleasure or not. It is helpful for teens to know this risk factor in advance.

Remember!

Whatever your decision about sharing your personal experience, the point we want to make with our teens is high tolerance is an indicator of increased risk. It increases our risk for impairment problems, and it moves us closer to the trigger point. When we make high-risk choices, tolerance increases over time.

We want them to know having a more pleasurable reaction is an indicator of increased risk. One possible sign can be if my child has taken prescribed pain medication and liked the feeling.

Summary

The more biological risk factors present for your child, the more risk for developing both health and impairment problems. They might have a shorter distance to their trigger point than most people. Sharing this information about risk can help prevent future problems.

Have your teen put check marks on page 4 of the Teen Guide for the biological information that is known and question marks where they can't yet answer (tolerance and reward if they have not used).

Adjusting the Low-Risk Guidelines

Workbook page 31

In addition to the factors that can affect our child's risk for alcoholism and addiction, several individual differences and biological factors can increase risk for impairment. Even if our expectation is no drinking or drug use, these are important things for our children to learn for themselves and their friends.

Less Body Fluid

As we discussed in class, drink for drink, a person with less body fluid usually becomes more impaired than a person who has more body fluid. Body fluid is independent from tolerance and is influenced by body size, gender, and age.

Have your child check the box if less body fluid might be an individual difference for him/her.

Medications

Another area we discussed is how medications by themselves can cause impairment. In addition, drinking alcohol with sleeping pills, antihistamines, aspirin, and other medications such as antidepressants and ADHD medication can be dangerous, particularly for a teen.

Is your child on any medications that would increase risk for impairment? Have your child check the box if this applies to him/her. This individual difference can vary from time to time.

Illness/Tiredness

These factors include a person recovering from a recent illness or who is tired and might be especially important for young people to know because they are likely to experience greater impairment from alcohol or drugs than usual, increasing risk for impairment problems. This increased risk could also apply to people who get very little sleep for extended periods of time.

Illness and fatigue as individual differences can vary from time to time. Have your teen check the box if he or she has a chronic illness.

Empty Stomach

Remember a person who drinks on an empty stomach will experience more impairment. Although this factor is not listed in "My Formula", it is still an individual factor that varies constantly and is worth considering.

Remember!

Drinking on an empty stomach increases impairment and related risks.

Cancer Risk

Finally, we also discussed other risks that are important for our children to know about. We saw possible increased risk for women for breast cancer, as well as possible increased risk for men and women for colon cancer. People concerned about their risk for these cancers often adjust the guidelines downward, particularly when they have other risk factors for these cancers. Smoking in combination with alcohol creates increased risk for mouth and throat cancer. In all of these cases, a reduction in the low-risk guidelines makes sense.

The question to ask yourself and discuss with your teen is: "Does my son or daughter have a risk factor for colon or breast cancer, like a family history?" If the answer is yes, have your teen check the box for this risk.

Psychological Influences

(revisit) Workbook pages 19-20

Consider the psychological influences that might be important for your teen and whether these might support low-risk or high-risk choices. Review the definitions of the four psychological traits (sensation seeking, gregarious, impulsive, and rebellious) more common among people who develop alcoholism and addiction on page 19 in the Workbook.

Have your teen check the personality traits on “My Formula” on page 4 in the Teen Guide that apply.

Ask yourself, “Is my child impulsive or cautious, gregarious or introverted, rebellious or compliant, a high or low sensation seeker?” Compare your responses with your teen’s responses, and discuss any differences in perceptions. Explain the influence of these traits on choices.

Review the items below to determine and discuss relevance with your teen.

Attitudes Toward Alcohol and Drugs

Think about the low-risk attitudes we looked at in class. What are your child’s attitudes about drinking or using drugs? Your child may not want to answer these or may answer how he/she thinks you want him/her to answer. This is not a time to judge. This is a time to listen and observe. What is unspoken can speak volumes. Examples:

- What is their attitude about people using marijuana? (This gets to perception of risk.)
- What is their attitude about the school policy? Many schools have zero-tolerance policies with varying levels of consequences while others do not. Discuss the school policy. If a consequence includes suspension or expulsion, what do they think about that? If your child thinks this is too harsh, it might point to their attitude about using. You can use this as a discussion point that the school policy can support them in making low-risk choices in the face of peer pressure.

Have your son or daughter write in the psychological influences that apply to him/her. Circle the ones that support low-risk choices as a way to focus on those with your teen. He/she can also list motivations to make low-risk choices.

Social Influences

(revisit) Workbook page 21

Consider what social influences in your children's lives might encourage low-risk or high-risk choices. These are only a few of the ever-growing myriad of influences on our kids.

Does your teen hang out with peers who typically make high-risk choices or low-risk choices? Are your teen's friends sensation seeking, impulsive or rebellious? These can all influence your son or daughter in a group. Remember even "good" kids can push limits and take risks, and when several good kids are in a group, they can influence each other to try things they might not otherwise do alone or in pairs. Just because a friend is willing to try something like vaping or a pill, doesn't mean your son or daughter has to.

Review the items below to determine and discuss relevance with your teen.

Who are they listening to, and what are they doing with their free time?

There are many influences on our children for low-risk or high-risk behavior, beyond alcohol and drugs. We'll focus on alcohol and drug choices, but be aware that many of these apply to other areas like high-risk sexual behavior, violence or bullying, etc. Also, as our kids get older, it's normal for them to be more private about these influences. We offer these as examples of influences to be mindful of and prepared to talk with our children about.

- What music are they listening to? The lyrics in much of the popular music today is about sex, drugs, alcohol, getting arrested, bullying, and other high-risk behaviors. This can normalize the behavior, especially high-risk alcohol and drug choices.
- What social media sites do they visit and what apps do they have on their phones? Who are they talking to on social media? Teens may find ways to hide this information, and some schools offer technology classes for parents to help them understand and respond to this issue.
- What video games do they play? Do they normalize and support your values and low-risk behaviors? Do they promote substance use or aggression?
- What are their favorite movies or programs on TV? How are alcohol and drug choices portrayed? What behavior is normalized?
- What types of advertising are they seeing in magazines, on TV, and the Internet? Do they promote underage or high-risk alcohol or drug use?

What kind of influence do these people/groups play in their lives?

Talk to your child about each of these influences in their lives.

- Siblings
- Teachers
- Law enforcement
- Sports organizations and coaches
- Other extra-curricular activities
- Other important adults in their lives
- Their church and/or other religious activities
- Parents/Grandparents

Have your teen write in the social influences that apply to him/her, and circle the ones that support low-risk choices as a way to focus on those with your teen. This might be a good time to talk about what to do in different situations your son or daughter may encounter, or you can defer to Building Support for Low-Risk Choices in Discussion 4.

Discussion 3 : Phases of Use (30 minutes to 1 hour)

Phases of Use

This section is designed to gain an understanding of the progression through the phases. Review Workbook page 34 with your teen to introduce the four phases. As you go through the phases, you do not need to cover the self-reflections at the end of each phase. However, you may wish to share your self-reflection responses with your teen at some point if you choose to share your personal experiences.

Workbook page 34

Remember!

This discussion is designed to delay first use and prevent problems.

Green Phase: Low-Risk Choices

Review the Green Phase on Workbook pages 35-36 with your teen. The Green Phase is characterized by low-risk choices. It includes people who choose to abstain from alcohol and drugs as well as those who consistently follow their 0 1 2 3 guidelines for alcohol. Emphasize the majority of people are in the Green Phase and spend most of their lives there. It might be helpful to go over the Self-Reflection statements on page 36 to reinforce the behaviors typical in the Green Phase.

Workbook pages 35-36

Transition to High-Risk Phases

Go over the Transition to High-Risk Phases on Workbook pages 36-37 with your teen. Review the optional video for this transition with the QR code on page 36. It may be helpful in explaining why people may start making high-risk choices.

Workbook pages 36-37

Yellow Phase: High-Risk Choices

Review the Yellow Phase on Workbook pages 37-41 with your teen. Emphasize an increase in tolerance begins to change the brain and results in many of the problems described. These brain changes in turn encourage high-risk use, thus beginning a spiral of progression.

Workbook pages 37-41

Remember!

Once a person begins making high-risk choices, how much and how often he/she uses becomes the most powerful predictor of what happens to him/her.

State Dependent Restriction

As noted previously, we may be teaching younger children who have never tried substances. However, letting them know the risk of using while their brains are still developing is crucial. Be sure to cover State Dependent Restriction on pages 38-39. It is helpful to watch the video with people sharing their experiences with it via QR code on page 38, particularly for older teens.

Orange Phase: Psychological Dependence

The emergence of psychological dependence is what sets the Orange Phase apart from the Yellow Phase. Psychological dependence sounds abnormal, but in reality, psychological dependence is quite normal. It simply means we depend on something or someone to be comfortable. Everybody is psychologically dependent on something. Usually it is family, a spouse, partner, friends, pets, or a job. If any one of these were taken away from us, we would go through an emotional withdrawal and would not function normally for a time. There is usually nothing unhealthy or abnormal about this type of psychological dependence. However, when people are psychologically dependent on something harmful, it can become dangerous.

Workbook pages 42-47

Remember in the Yellow Phase, the most common reason for drinking or drug use is to have fun. To understand psychological dependence, extend that thinking. One of the first changes we see in people who are psychologically dependent is they rely on high-risk alcohol or drug use. It is no longer just the route to fun. It often is the fun. Increasingly the person's experience is that life, parties, and people are just not as much fun without alcohol or drugs.

Psychological dependence is a direct outcome of high-risk choices. However, once it is present, psychological dependence becomes a powerful influence on choices.

Summarize the information above and look over the Orange Phase on Workbook pages 42-47 with your teen. It is helpful to show the video (3:07) on stress and reward via QR code on page 44.

Red Phase: Addiction

Workbook pages 49-53

Because the intent of the parent program is prevention, you may wish to skip the Red Phase with your child at this point. Some parents simply define addiction as a loss of control in use resulting from brain changes caused by high-risk choices over time. Other parents find it helpful to cover the Red Phase, particularly if there is a family history or close friends with addiction in their lives. This discussion may also be delayed to a time when your teen is older.

Remember!

People who make low-risk choices will not reach their trigger point and will protect the things they value most in life.

Discussion 4: Plan for Success (30 minutes to 1 hour)

My Message

Workbook page 55

You may wish to revisit and perhaps revise the message you developed on page 55 of your Workbook at the end of your Prime For Life class. It is helpful to share this message with your son or daughter, particularly when it comes from a place of love and concern. This opens the door for further discussion about choices. The wolf story that follows is a good introduction to the conversation.

Activity: Feeding the Wolf

Teen Guide page 6

Have your teen read the story of the wolf in the Teen Guide on page 6. It is also in the text box below.

Variations of this story exist in a number of cultures. As the story goes, one evening an elderly man was talking with his grandson about the nature of life and how he could become the person he wants to be.

He said, "Grandson, it's like there is a battle inside of us between two wolves. One has the power to destroy us. The other has the power to protect us and all we love."

The grandson thought about it for a moment, and then asked, "Grandpa, which wolf wins?"

The grandfather replied simply, "It depends on the one you feed."

In your chat with your son or daughter about this story, note that feeding the wolf is about choices. Unless we personalize risk around alcohol and drugs, we can inadvertently feed the wolf that can harm us. We simply might not believe it applies to us. If we or our children then make high-risk choices, it's like feeding the wolf that can destroy us and all we value. Conversely, low-risk choices feed the wolf that can protect us.

Activity: Sharing Your Expectations

Workbook Supplement Page 3/ Teen Guide page 6

If you did not share your expectations after Building Low-Risk Alcohol Guidelines in Discussion 1, this is a good place to share the expectations you developed on page 3 of your Workbook Supplement from class with your son or daughter. Now that your teen has more information and can understand more about the risk for alcohol and drug problems, he or she is less likely to be resistant to the information. It is helpful to revisit some of the questions from Discussion 1.

- **What are the alcohol guidelines to prevent health and impairment problems?**
- **What would be the only acceptable low-risk choice for you at this time in your life?**
- **Could this change later in your life?**
- **What is the only low-risk choice for non-prescribed and illegal drugs?**
- **What is the low-risk guideline for prescriptions if they are prescribed to you?**

It may be helpful to revisit the wolf story as a reminder in the coming years when you are communicating expectations and enforcing consequences.

Activity: Expectations and Rewards/Consequences

Workbook Supplement Page 4/Teen Guide page 6

After you have communicated your expectations, have your son or daughter write your expectations on page 6 of the Teen Guide. You may expand on areas beyond alcohol and drugs such as time on devices, curfew, etc. Next, work with your teen to develop rewards and consequences for each of the expectations. You might ask your son or daughter to think about it for a day or two and get back to you. Sometimes they come up with good ideas! A reward could be as simple as a thank you for the behavior, or a consequence could be having to do a sibling's chores for a few days. Have your teen write the rewards and consequences in the spaces provided next to the expectations.

Remember!

Not every behavior needs a reward or consequence. Verbal rewards such as praise can be an effective tool.

Activity: Building Support for Low-Risk Choices

Workbook Supplement Pages 4-5/Teen Guide page 6

Review pages 4-5 in your Workbook Supplement before this activity. Discuss with your teen's other parent or other significant adults in your teen's life. It is helpful to review the communication strategies on pages 7-8 in the supplement to facilitate the dialog with your son or daughter.

Next, brainstorm with your teen ways you can provide support to help him or her follow through in making low-risk choices. For example: have a code word or phrase for your teen to text you to get out of a situation. Spend time to formulate other supports with your teen, for example, by revisiting your values, the values activity your son/daughter completed on page 1 of the Teen Guide, school policies, and key role models in your child's life. Have your son/daughter write these support tools on page 6 of the Teen Guide.

Remember!

Teens are often emotional and can have poor impulse control. Putting supports in place ahead of time can help your teen succeed.

Opportunities for Stop, Drop and Roll

Parents can feel blind-sided at times with statements from their teens. We suggest reviewing a few of these typical scenarios and having a few responses ready to go in advance. We have provided several sample responses to guide you. Use or adapt so responses are comfortable for you to say.

What's the big deal about my drinking occasionally? You drink all the time.

- *It's hard to see risk when it's only occasional.*
- *It's confusing to you why I would see those things differently.*
- *It feels like we should have the same choices available to us.*

My friends get drunk every weekend. What's wrong with my getting drunk occasionally?

- *It feels like because you get drunk only occasionally there really isn't any risk.*
- *When you look at your drinking, because it's less often than your friends, you really want it to be risk free.*
- *You look at your friends' drinking and see the risk.*

Why can't I smoke pot? You smoked when you were my age.

- *You want to be able to smoke pot and wish I would just go along with it.*
- *On the one hand it doesn't feel fair because I did it, and on the other hand you know it is high-risk, and I don't agree with it now.*
- *You're right. I did smoke, and it feels like my previous high-risk choices should make you immune from your high-risk choices. (Agreement with a twist)*

The drinking age law is stupid.

- *You feel old enough to know what is high risk and low risk for you.*
- *You want to be able to ignore it.*
- *You want to be treated in a manner that respects your ability to make choices.*

Everybody drinks on prom night. If I don't, people will make fun of me.

- *It almost feels inevitable—like you don't have a choice—and at the same time you know our belief that you do have a choice and our expectations around those choices.*
- *That's a concern – if you will be able to stand up to those people who are judging you. (Can't be sarcastic here or it will blow up.)*
- *That's your dilemma. You want to be your own person and make the choices that are right for you, and you also want to fit in to the group. It feels hard to do both.*

Remember!

Be persuasive in your responses.

Special Note:

These suggested responses are one way of answering. They may need to be modified to fit your individual circumstances. We find shorter is better so our teen does not feel we are lecturing.

Remember!

Our power as parents comes from our influence.

Remember!

As time goes on and your teen further matures, make sure you continue to check in and communicate with each other to see how things are going and develop new plans as needed for success.