



## **What About Teens? Community Meetings**

October 10, 2005

Rutland, Vermont

### ***What do you notice about teen and adult relations in your community?***

Interactions between adults & teens differ

- Banker & skate boarder
- Team effort
- Common background
- Close-knit community
- Going into schools has been unsuccessful
- Teens working in grocery / retail
- Absent from community
- Teens most important to one another
- Misunderstanding / disrespect
- Play & work well together
- When given chance to have respect on both sides, students really step up

There is fear between adults and teens

- Judgment based on looks
- Race associated with drugs
- Local law enforcement
- Popular culture
- Stereotypes

### **What do teens wish adults knew about their lives and culture and vice versa?**

Teens:

- Exposed to more / open
- Information (Internet)
- Tolerance / acceptance
- Issues intensified
- Cutting is a "social thing"
- Big issue is not peer pressure, it's depression, cutting
- Different rules for adults and teens, hypocrisy

Adults:

- See behavior as trivial (cutting, making out)
- Walking the line between tolerance and discipline
- Media pressure

### ***What can adults and teens do together to improve relations?***

Need to come together

- Common purpose
- Youth / adult collaboration
- Sense of belonging (connection)

Adults need to show leadership, responsibility

Teens feel overwhelmed and isolated

Mentoring, especially from the retired population

Trust first

Parents are the best hope

Need more SAPs (Student Assistance Professionals) at high schools

Celebrate “the good things”

Include teens in planning work, give them decision-making responsibility on boards

***What are the steps you can take to establish a positive connection with one teen or one adult that you don't already have a relationship with?***

Acknowledge our problems and strengths

Get teens (group of teens, not just one teen) on local boards

- Youth group
- Community center

Counter-media groups

- Apply for grants
- Variety of students (not only A students)
- Newspaper column

Conversation, say “Hello,” smile ☺

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

***What would you like the legislature to know about improving things for teens in your community?***

Need a common place for youth and adults

- How do we accomplish this?
- Educators need to get involved
- Educate adults and youth

Focus the message

- Counter advertising campaign
- Statewide message

More funding for SAPs (School Assistance Professionals)



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