



Helping Your Child Make a Healthy Transition to High School

Amanda Casey, LMSW

Somers Middle School Prevention Specialist

Communication is Key!

- Be a good listener
- Validate your teens feelings
- Ask questions to generate discussion
- Be consistent with your consequences
- Offer praise often!
- Create a safety plan with your teen you both feel comfortable with

Stay Involved:

- Set aside time to be with your teen
- Continue to show your love/ concern and provide guidance
- Capitalize on those times your child opens up a little bit by asking more open- ended questions (What was that like for you, tell me more)
- Encourage involvement in activities after school and on the weekends
- Most importantly, get to know your child's friends and their parents

Signs and Symptoms of a Problem

- Change in friends
- Excessively secretive
- Sudden mood swings
- Communication at home significantly decreases
- Frequent absences or lateness in school
- Sudden loss of interest in usual activities
- Major change in eating and sleeping patterns

Teach positive ways to deal with stress:

- Go for a walk
- Practice deep breathing
- Listening to music
- Eat right
- Get enough sleep
- Take breaks when feeling overwhelmed
- Identify supports around you

Support at Somers High School Counseling Support Team:

Counseling Staff:

Guidance Counselors:

Mr. Carino
Ms. Pappas
Mrs. Tracy
Ms. Cawley

School Social Worker:
Mrs. Rigaglia, LMSW

School Psychologists:
Mrs. Candido, M.S.
Mrs. Pirraglia

Student Assistance Counselor:
Ms. Pereira, LMSW





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Taking the leap from Middle School to High School is a huge transition for your child. It is so important to be there for them as much as you can be during this time. The summer of 8th grade is when teens are more likely to try things such as vaping, smoking, alcohol and other drugs. Keep a close eye on what they're up to and who they are surrounding themselves with.

Tips to keep your Teens Safe Preventing Alcohol and Drug Use:

- Don't underestimate your teens exposure
- Know your teen's attitude
- Don't be afraid to address the sudden shift in behavior
- Set clear expectations
- Be consistent
- Be a healthy role model
- Intervene at first sign of use
- Know where to turn for help

Adolescents: A Time of Change

Physical changes

- Puberty: body undergoes enormous transformation
- Interests and curiosity spikes

Emotional Changes:

- Emotional rollercoaster- mood swings
- Intensity of feelings and emotions
- Confusion and self doubt

Intellectual Changes:

- Thinking more abstractly
- Increased pressure to compete and succeed at school, sports, etc.

Social Changes

- Need to fit in
- Peers/ friends take on a greater importance
- Exposure to older kids and new behaviors
- Finding own identity

Have discussions with your child about decision making and refusal skills. A fun idea may be to come up with scenarios that a teenager might be placed in i.e; being offered a substance, vape, alcohol or marijuana, and practice with your child on how to shut down a request. Come up with excuses- some examples:

- "I'll be grounded"
- "I have work after school"
- "I'm not really interested in that"
- "My parents will kill me"
- "I have plans to pick up my sister after school"
- "No thanks!"
- Leave the situation

****Come up with a code word/phrase or emoji with your child they can use to text you to get out of a situation they aren't comfortable being in!***