

## What to do...

**Discussing topics like drugs, alcohol and depression can be difficult, even in the best of families.**

AEIC has produced a CD that allows you the opportunity to discuss these topics without direct confrontation. At the beginning of each song is a one-minute dialogue between teenagers and adults, discussing these important issues. Listening to this dialogue and original music, by teenagers in your area, provides you with an opportunity for valuable discussion.

Here are some suggestions to initiate this type of discussion:

- Listen to the CD separately.
- Let each other know your thoughts on the music and dialogue.
- If there was a song that you or your child liked, listen to the song together. Listening to music together is an experience that allows each participant to express his or her opinion without judgement. It can be the beginning to open dialogue. When your child feels safe with their opinions, he or she will more willingly discuss sensitive topics.



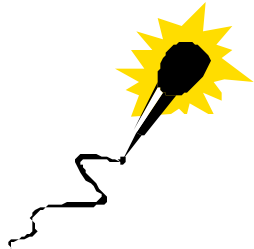
- Play them music you were listening to when you were a teenager. Let them know the fears and joys you were facing when you were young. How did you cope with drug and violence issues?
- To engage in any conversation about an issue, start with asking how they felt about the responses given on the CD. What are their thoughts? Do they agree or disagree? What questions should have been asked? What do they think the main issues teens are facing today? How is it similar or different than when you were a teen?
- A natural stumbling block might be, no matter what your child says, if he/she thinks that their answer will implicate them (say in drug use) they will be hesitant to answer or be honest. With this situation, the parent has to understand that if there is a problem, the main issue is to be able to talk about the problem and find a solution together.

- You should not impose consequences because you “found out.” This does not mean there will not be consequences in the future.
- The key is to keep communication open while solutions are being explored. To expect that everything is going to be fine after one dialogue is unrealistic. Especially if the problem (drugs, tobacco, lying, etc.) has been going on for a while. This is where the parent needs to be persistent and perhaps explore learning more creative and effective ways to communicate with their teens.
- If you run up against, “I don’t know” during discussion, suggest that your child write their thoughts down in a letter. You might want to start with a letter and let your child respond. In any case, do not keep asking and pounding away at your child if they say, “I don’t know.”



## What we do...

AEIC's school based programs are managed by the students with adult supervision to create an atmosphere of respect, self-expression and confidence to overcome adversity. Through self-expression in the arts during weekly open mic sessions, students gain awareness for self respect and respect for others. This respect results in positive choices, a dedication to remain drug free and non-violent.



"Part and parcel of keeping our children away from drugs and violence is providing them with positive, enjoyable alternatives. AEIC does just that. We need to do more to offer students creative, artistic outlets for their significant energy. Funding and promoting projects like AEIC is a necessary component of that effort. I'm a real fan of this program, and I know it will continue to reap benefits for thousands of students in Northern Virginia."  
(Northern Virginia Congressman Tom Davis)

## How to Contact AEIC

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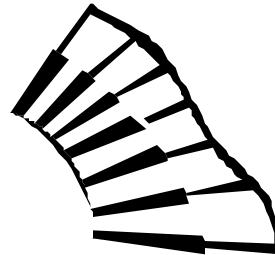
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**AEIC is a non-profit organization committed to the education and empowerment of youth in the fight against drug abuse and violence.**

**Communicating  
with  
Your Teenager**