

Benefits of Time Together as a Family

Parents are the strongest single influence in their child's life and a Young Person's fear of disappointing a parent, when there is a close relationship, is the biggest deterrent to risk taking behaviour! To encourage strong, open relationships it is good to have family time together and this can come in the form of holding regular family meetings. This will allow a dedicated time where all family members can talk openly about anything that is important to that individual.

Tips for effective family meetings:

- Have them regularly-not just a time of crisis.
- No interruptions
- Everyone gets their say. When someone is talking, others listen. At the end, ask questions to make sure you understand what they are saying.
- Be practical
- Choose a place where there are few interruptions and be sure the T.V will not be on.
- Plan- time that does not conflict with other important things.
- Parents are in charge
- Keep the meeting positive. If a topic is getting out of hand, or emotional, consider having a break to allow people to cool down.
- Open up communication through learning moments
- Address positive attitudes to things like alcohol
- Family rules about things like alcohol
- Being able to "stop, think and choose"
- "I Statements" help express concern
- Listening is at the heart of good communication
- Family meetings help communication
- **Bonding is at the heart of prevention**

Young people with fewer risk factors and stronger protective factors are less likely to develop problems with a wide range of risky behaviour.