

# Dinner Dialogue

ALLEN COUNTY DRUG AND ALCOHOL CONSORTIUM



## *In This Edition*

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## National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. Families, educators, health care providers, and community leaders are invited to promote responsible decision-making and encourage young people to live free of drugs and alcohol.

Impaired driving includes distracted driving, drugged driving, and drunk driving.

Families play an essential part in stopping impaired driving. By talking about the risks and setting clear expectations, parents and other caregivers can help their children stay safe, sober, and focused on the road.

# DINNER DISCUSSION IDEAS

## Initiating Conversations About Alcohol & Other Drugs

Talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs does not have to be uncomfortable or difficult.

The following opportunities can serve as teaching moments or more natural beginnings to these conversations:

- If you see an interesting news story, discuss it with your child. Did a driver who was impaired injure someone in an accident? Ask how your child feels about situations and the potential consequences.
- While watching a movie or TV show with your children, ask if they think it makes using drugs, including alcohol, look fun. Talk about what happens to those characters or what happens in reality.
- If you see a young person smoking, talk about the negative effects of tobacco.
- If you read, hear about, or know someone affected by substance use, remind your child that anyone can develop a substance use disorder. Discuss the importance of treatment and supporting people in recovery from their substance use disorder.

## Do's and Don't When Having These Conversations

### DO:

- Explain the dangers using language they understand.
- Explain why you do not want them to use substances.
  - Examples may include impaired concentration, memory, or motor skills and therefore poor grades.
- Be there when your child wants to talk, no matter the time of day or night or other demands on your time.
- Believe in your own power to help your child grow up without using drugs, including alcohol.
- Praise your children when they deserve it. This builds their self-esteem and makes them feel good without using drugs.

### DON'T:

- React in anger- even if your child makes statements that shock you.
- Expect all conversations with your children to be perfect. They won't be.
- Assume your children know how to handle temptation. Instead, educate them about risks and alternatives so they can make healthy decisions.
- Talk without listening.
- Make things up; if your child asks a question you can't answer, commit to finding the answer so you can learn together. Then, follow up.

# Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drugs Topic

## GRIEF AND GRIEVING

Nearly everyone experiences grief at some point in their lives; sometimes the holidays can be difficult for those who are grieving.

It can be difficult to predict how we might react to a loss as there are lots of different ways in which we might grieve.

How you grieve is personal to you, but below are some normal emotions to experience while grieving:

### **Sadness or Depression**

You may feel low, tearful, or isolated. You might spend time reflecting on the past or you might find it hard to think about the future. It might feel like things are hopeless. In some cases, this might include experiencing suicidal feelings. Don't hesitate to call or text 9-8-8 (the suicide and crisis lifeline) if you are thinking about suicide.

### **Numbness, Denial, or Disbelief**

You may find that you feel numb or in a state of shock. This is natural as it can help us to process what has happened at a pace that we can manage (not before we're ready).

It can be a problem if you *only* feel numb or if you don't experience any other feelings. This could mean you feel 'stuck' or 'frozen'.

### **Confusion**

You might feel confused about your identity or feel that a part of you is missing or has changed. You may also question why this has happened. You might feel lost or unsure about the direction of your life.

### **Anxiety and Panic**

You might feel anxious about your life or the world. Things may feel less safe or less in your control. You may worry about something else bad happening or losing someone else.

If you feel very anxious, you may also experience panic attacks. Panic attacks can be scary and focusing on your breathing and your surroundings may help.

### **Anger**

Losing somebody is painful and can feel unfair. You may feel angry or frustrated. You might want to find something or someone to blame for the loss to try to make sense of it.

You may feel angry at yourself, others, the world, or the person who has died.

### **Feeling Overwhelmed**

You may feel like you can't cope with your grief. You might worry that your feelings are so overwhelming that you don't know how you'll be able to live with them. You may feel overwhelmed or anxious about the future.

Lots of people feel this way after a loss and, over time, find ways to live with their grief. Try to take things one step at a time and be kind to yourself.

## GRIEF AND GRIEVING CONTINUED

### Relief

You may feel relieved when somebody dies. This might be because the person was unwell or in pain for a long time and had been suffering. You may have been caring for the person, which can be tough. You also might feel relief if your relationship with the person was difficult.

Relief is a normal response for many people in different situations. There is no right or wrong way to feel following a loss.

If you had a difficult relationship with the person who has died, you may think that you'll grieve less or cope better. Instead, you may still feel a mix of emotions like sadness, anger, guilt, and anything in between.

### Changes to Your Body and Behavior

While you're grieving you may also experience:

- Sleep problems
- Changes to your appetite
- Physical health problems
- Withdrawing from other people, or wanting to be with others all the time

### Local Resources for Grief Support

- The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center offers support groups, individual counseling, and memorial services.
  - Contact them at 260-435-3222.
- Erin's House for Grieving Children offers support groups, camps, and retreats.
  - Contact them at 260-423-2466.
- Mom of an Addict offers support groups and education.
  - Visit [www.themomofanaddict.org](http://www.themomofanaddict.org) for more information.

## Why Dinner Dialogues?

Consistent and open communication with your children will boost their self-esteem, improve their self-image, and empower them to make long term healthy decisions.

When they begin to feel heard and understood by the most important people in their life, they will be less likely adhere to the voice of other influences.

### *Youth who eat dinner with their family are less likely to:*

- Use tobacco/nicotine
- Use alcohol
- Use marijuana
- Have friends that use tobacco/nicotine, alcohol, or marijuana
- Plan to use drugs in the future
- Feel depressed
- Think about suicide
- Have sex early
- Engage in risky behaviors
- Make poor decisions

**Have an idea for a topic, issue, or something else you'd like to see in a future edition of Dinner Dialogue?**

Please submit your anonymous feedback by scanning this QR code with your phone's camera!  
Alternatively, visit [www.dacac.org](http://www.dacac.org) to find the survey.

