

BE A CURIOUS CO-PILOT



Askable Adult Campaign

Be someone they can talk to.

You've been asked: NOW WHAT? Youth don't expect adults to know everything—but they do appreciate honest responses and helpful information. Your willingness to be honest, ask good questions, think out of the box, share your own experiences, and collaborate to find information will make you more askable to the children and youth in your life.

TIPS FOR BECOMING A USEFUL RESOURCE:

Be honest and direct. Although it might be a challenge, answer questions as honestly and directly as you can.

It's ok if you don't know the answer to something or know just what to say. Be willing to explore! You might be "askable" but you don't know everything! If you don't know the answer to a question, collaborate with children and youth to find helpful information. Be comfortable with silent spaces—just listening and asking questions might be perfect. Many of the topics young people want guidance about are personal—and therefore difficult to talk about. It helps to take questions at face value without reading too much between the lines or making assumptions or judgments.

Break it down. When youth are trying to solve a problem, help youth break it down into smaller, more digestible pieces. Help them find their own solutions by asking curious questions (*So, what could you do differently to tackle this problem?*), rather than telling them what you would do. You can help by acting as a sounding board and asking questions to encourage self-discovery.

Ask helpful questions; youth probably have the answer themselves. When young people are challenged by something, help them think through their options by asking questions rather than solving it for them. Try these questions: *What have you already tried? Have you ever had a similar problem; what worked? Do you need more information? Can I support you in getting what you need or want?*

Think outside of the box! Offer information and practical help to solve a practical problem, loan something they may need, offer to connect them to other adults or resources, give them a ride, help them find a job or work on their college essay, throw a baseball, or turn music pages for them.

Broaden the web of relationships. Connect young people to others who share their interests or can expand their world. Ask about and encourage their development of meaningful relationships with other adults. Support youth to explore what relationships in their lives bring them comfort, including those with peers and pets.

Look up local and other resources together. Work with youth to find helpful resources and information. Model by sharing about times that you have asked for help.

Youth want meaningful conversations and practical information about their concerns. It's ok to google it!

- For ideas on how to talk with young people about drugs and alcohol, check out parentupvt.org
- What about sexuality and sex ed? Try lets-talk.how and advocatesforyouth.org
- Check out *Relationship Status* on the vtnetwork.org site to talk together about navigating dating and romantic relationships: <https://vtnetwork.org/relationship-status-booklet>
- For ways to support children and youth in managing stress at home, school, and in their everyday lives:
 - ▶ Look for youth mindfulness activities on positivepsychology.com/category/mindfulness
 - ▶ Find guidance for parents at bradleyhospital.org by searching for "managing stress in teens"
 - ▶ And search for the *Teen Stress Management Plan* on healthychildren.org

Don't give up! Believe you can do it! Understand that it can be challenging.



The Askable Adults Campaign is a project of the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence. Find more tools and information about the campaign at

vtnetwork.org

Resources:

www.searchinstitute.org; <https://cssp.org>