

ASKABLE ADULT CAMPAIGN



Be Someone They Can Talk To

Thank you for tuning in as we continue to explore ways to be askable for children and youth. This week, we'll hear Thomas and Laurie's story, explore parents as askable adults, learn some tricks to building connection, and offer a tool to bring this learning to your communities. Please share this blog with your adult community and commit to building your askable adult skills by checking out the [askable adult website](#).

Askable Adult Skill #2 Commit to Consistent Connections

[Listen here](#) as Thomas and Laurie tell the story of their unlikely connection.

"You matter to me" is the message that Laurie consistently gives to Thomas. She lets him know that he matters by being present and by reflecting back to him the capable young person she knows him to be. Connections foster well-being. Your strong commitment to maintaining dependable and safe relationships with the youth in your life will make you a more askable adult for them.

Parents and Caregivers as Askable Adults

"Often, I get caught up by the "shoulds"—reacting to what I think my kids "should" do, or how I "should" respond. When I "should" myself, I'm more prone to anger and frustration, and it's harder for my kids to trust me. If I want my kids to trust me enough to tell me hard things, sometimes that means letting small things go." ~Natanya, mother of 11y/o and 14 y/o boys

Parents experience unique challenges to being "askable" for their own children. Parenting is stressful and it is hard to fully listen and be present when you're also managing your family and providing guidance for your children. Caregivers worry about their children getting hurt—both physically and emotionally—using substances, and growing up with healthy brains and bodies. It's easy to get caught up in the "shoulds"—all the things we and our children "should" be doing—and harder to be present in the moment.

The good news is that when we deepen our connections with our kids, it actually makes parenting easier and more rewarding, as well as benefiting our kids. [The Search Institute](#) reminds us that young people who have stronger relationships with caregivers are more likely to report greater self-awareness and emotional competence, higher academic motivation, and see helping others as a personal responsibility.

For a deeper dive into how you can strengthen relationships with your children at every developmental stage, check out the Search Institute's **Keep Connected!**

Also, explore the **Askable Adult Skill Building Toolkit** for tips on strengthening relationships with your children.

Connection Tip: Help Youth Navigate Stress

Children and youth experience stress at home, school, and in their communities. Sometimes their stress is normal and manageable and sometimes it is **complex and toxic**. You can help youth manage stress by simply listening and reflecting what you hear without rushing to fix it. You can support them to do things that they love like being in nature, sports, writing, music, or art. You can also share **tools for mindfulness** that help people manage stress by focusing on the sights, sounds, and sensations in their bodies and the immediate environment.

Learn ways to better connect with youth by clicking on "**Toolkit**" and looking over our Connections tool.

Start Conversations with Other Adults!

Go to vtnetwork.org/askableadult to check out our new *Askable Adult Lesson Plan and Conversation Starter Facilitator and Participant Guides*. This accessible curriculum is designed for any youth/adult team or adult to bring to other adults in their workplace or community. It outlines flexible lessons and informal conversation starters that increase understanding and skills for adults to become more connected and askable for children and youth in their lives.

If you are interested in following along, [join our email list](#) here. And, give us a follow on **Instagram** and **Facebook** to join the conversation.

Thank you for being an askable adult for the children and youth in your life,



Amy Torchia

Children's Advocacy Coordinator

Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence