

OPERATION SNOWBALL

Parent Closing Suggestions

By Gayla Boomer

GOALS OF A PARENT SESSION

- Familiarize parents/guardians with the OS program, philosophy and mission.
- Familiarize parents/guardians with the events and activities of your Sno event.
- Enlist parents as partners in prevention efforts
- Share opportunities for parents and community members to support the program
- Share community resources and parenting information with parents/guardians

SAMPLE AGENDA

While participants are in their closing session, hold the parent closing session.

1. Introductions – those not participating in the participant closing
2. OS Philosophy
3. Review the event schedule and activities. If possible, have your large group presenter tailor a presentation for the parents.
4. Share the importance of the parent/guardian in prevention efforts and ways for them to be partners in those efforts at home
5. Solicit support for future Sno programs
6. Volunteerism
7. Funding, in-kind donations, etc.

Have small groups join the parent session. Use this as an opportunity to introduce the small group leaders.

8. Share videos, pictures, and thoughts of the day.
9. Closing event – share theme song or have parents meet with their children.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Teach the parents one of the songs or chants that the participants learned during the event, and have them perform them for the participants when they join the closing. Examples that are well suited: Banana Dance, How Do You Feel?

One Sno group utilizes parent volunteers to serve meals. Take advantage of the time between meals to have parents participate in their own small group, with school social workers or others presenting information and facilitating discussion.

Appropriate skits

SKIT FOR PARENT CLOSINGS

Influences on the Child:

Supplies needed – bandana, sheets of paper

Start by having parents identify the challenges children and youth face today. For each challenge, crumple a piece of paper, and throw them on the floor to form an obstacle course (should be no wider than about 4-5 feet, about 8 ft. long. Can be adapted to space available)

Now, have them identify the persons who are influential in a child's life. They should identify both positive and potentially negative influences. Some people can be both (for example, a sibling!) Have the persons who identified the specific influence line up in parallel lines on the length on the outside of the obstacle course.

You now need two more volunteers. One is to play the role of a parent or significant adult caregiver. The second is to play the role of the child or youth. For the second person, let them know they will be blindfolded, and make sure they are okay with that and don't suffer from any dizziness issues.

Place the "parent" at one end of the parallel lines. Place the "child" at the other end, and blindfold them.

The object is for the "child" to get through the obstacle course (life) without hitting the "landmines". The "influence's" job is to direct the "child" through the course, giving either correct or incorrect information. The "influences" are encouraged to act out their roles. Give the child a few tries to get to the parent, depending on your time allowed. If they hit a "landmine" or life challenge, they need to return to the start. As the moderator, your job is just to call fouls and direct the game. Explain that no one is to touch the child – all persuasive actions must be verbal!

Once you have ended the efforts, let the "child" take off the blindfold, and have them process how it felt to have challenges to face and many influences telling them what to do. You may want to be prepared with some leading questions.

Next, you want to process with the "parent" to see how they felt about the process. If time allows, you may wish to process with some of the "influences" as well. Make sure to THANK everyone for their participation.

TO CONCLUDE: Use the experience to show the importance of parent/guardian involvement, but also those "influences" in the community, on the life of a child. Summarize the reactions and thank everyone again.

PARENT INVOLVMENT BACKGROUND

Over thirty five years of research show that the extent to which parents* are involved in their child's life is the single most important factor in that child's social, emotional, and educational success. This crosses educational levels, ethnic and racial boundaries, family make-up, parental age, etc. Areas of parent involvement include:

1. Communication
2. Parenting
3. Student Learning
4. Volunteering
5. Advocacy
6. Community Collaboration

Activities that relate to the prevention field for each of the categories are listed below and could be included as a portion of the parent closing. All six types of parent involvement must be present for the most effective parent involvement.

1. Communication – Share communication tips with parents. Identify opportunities for them to engage their children in conversation. If possible, hold a participant workshop for communication with parents, as well. Resource – “Parents: The Anti Drug” campaign.
2. Parenting – Share parenting tips. Most parents don't receive a parenting manual when they have children! This is especially important as their children get older and parents don't know what to expect from the pre-teen and teen years.
3. Student Learning – Share the effects of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs on student learning.
4. Volunteering – Share opportunities for parents to volunteer as part of the Sno family, including being an adult participant in your Sno program or the Illinois Teen Institute. Identify ways in which parents can respect their child's growing autonomy, while still contributing.
5. Advocacy and Decision Making – Identify prevention advocacy opportunities at the local, state and national level, as well as simple ways for them to make a difference. If there are school ad hoc committees, community action teams, etc. where parents can participate, give them the background and contact information. Share the importance of their involvement.
6. Community Collaboration – Share community resources with parents. Identify community activities that parents and families may participate in. You may want to utilize community resources to present on various topics.

* For the purposes of this material, parent is defined as any regular adult caregiver responsible for the daily life and routine of a child. It may be a birth, adoptive or foster parent; grandparent; day care provider, etc.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCES

IADDA/OS

www.iadda.org

Anne T. Henderson - *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement* (1994)

National PTA – *Building Successful Partnerships*

www.pta.org

IADDA/OS

www.iadda.org

Volunteerism – www.independentsector.org

Materials from Prevention First, Inc.

www.prevention.org

InTouch

Partnership for a Drug Free America

www.drugfree.org

Centers for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT)

<http://captus.samhsa.gov/central/central.cfm>

WALKING THE TALK

For an extensive agenda, utilize *Walking the Talk* (See Training Agenda attached)
<http://captus.samhsa.gov/central/services/CentralCAPWalkingtheTalk.cfm>

Training Overview

Walking the Talk: A Program for Parents About Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs -- Facilitator Training --

Goal:

To prepare participants to assist parents and other adults in initiating discussions with youth about the use and non-use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by conducting the Walking the Talk program.

Target Audience:

This training is designed for prevention program staff and other professionals to implement the program with parents in a variety of settings.

Training Objectives:

As a result of participating in this training, participants will be better able to facilitate a training to:

1. Understand the magnitude and severity of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use problems among school-age young people.
2. Understand the unique and important role of parents and other adults in influencing the alcohol, tobacco and other drug use behavior of young people.
3. Develop guidelines for their own use or non-use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
4. Help young people prepare for adult decisions about the use and non-use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
5. Initiate discussions about the appropriate use or non-use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs with family members and friends.
6. Model appropriate use and nonuse of alcohol and other legal drugs for young people.
7. Effectively talk with someone whose alcohol, tobacco and other drug use concerns them.

Format of Training:

This training will consist of brief presentations, small group and large group discussions. This training can be delivered in approximately 5 hours.