

**CONNECTEDNESS
IS KEY**

TEENS NEED SUPPORT: FAMILY EDITION

YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOUTH WELLBEING

Findings show two types of social supports most impact teen health: family and peer support. In May 2019, the Winnebago County Health Department heard from high school students on issues of family support or “social connectedness” and how it impacts their wellbeing.

What do we mean by Social Connectedness?



Family Support is Sometimes a Challenge for teens

“IT IS EASIER TO TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS SOMETIMES; I FEEL DISCONNECTED TO MY PARENTS.”

“I CAN’T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME MY MOM HUGGED ME.”

“IF I DID ANYTHING WRONG THAT IS WHEN MY PARENTS WOULD TALK TO ME. THEY WOULD NOT SAY THEY ARE PROUD OF ME ABOUT THE GOOD THINGS.”



1 IN 6

high school students are not getting the support they need from their family.



2 IN 3

high school students that don’t receive the support they need from their family also felt sad almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row in the past year.

TEENS LOOK TO FAMILY FOR STABLE SUPPORT



“ I TRUST MY MOM SO MUCH. I’VE GAINED FRIENDS AND I’VE LOST FRIENDS. I WILL ALWAYS HAVE MY MOM. ”

Teens rely on family and peers for support. Support that will always be there for them. Teens want:



Support in making decisions and choices



To be heard and understood



To contribute to and be valued as part of the family/household



To be seen and recognized, even in little ways



To have fun, relax and to be together regularly as a family



To have their interests supported even if the family can’t relate to why they are important

“THEY WILL ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BACK NO MATTER WHAT YOU ARE GOING THROUGH.”

“TALKING TO ME ABOUT OPTIONS OR OPPORTUNITIES MAKES ME FEEL SUPPORTED.”

“HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY? JUST ASKING WILL PROBABLY MAKE MY DAY. IT REALLY HELPS TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE CARES ABOUT ME.”



How We Can Support Our Teens

- ✓ Have deep and important conversations with open-ended questions.
- ✓ Include teens in household decision making.
- ✓ Show affection. Hug and say, “I love you” even when they may pull away.
- ✓ Attend activities and support their interests.
- ✓ Eat meals and do activities together.
- ✓ Let them find their own paths; they don’t need to follow their parents’.
- ✓ Take time to relax and talk; downtime is important for kids and parents.



Public Health
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