

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE

ACTIVITIES TOOLKIT

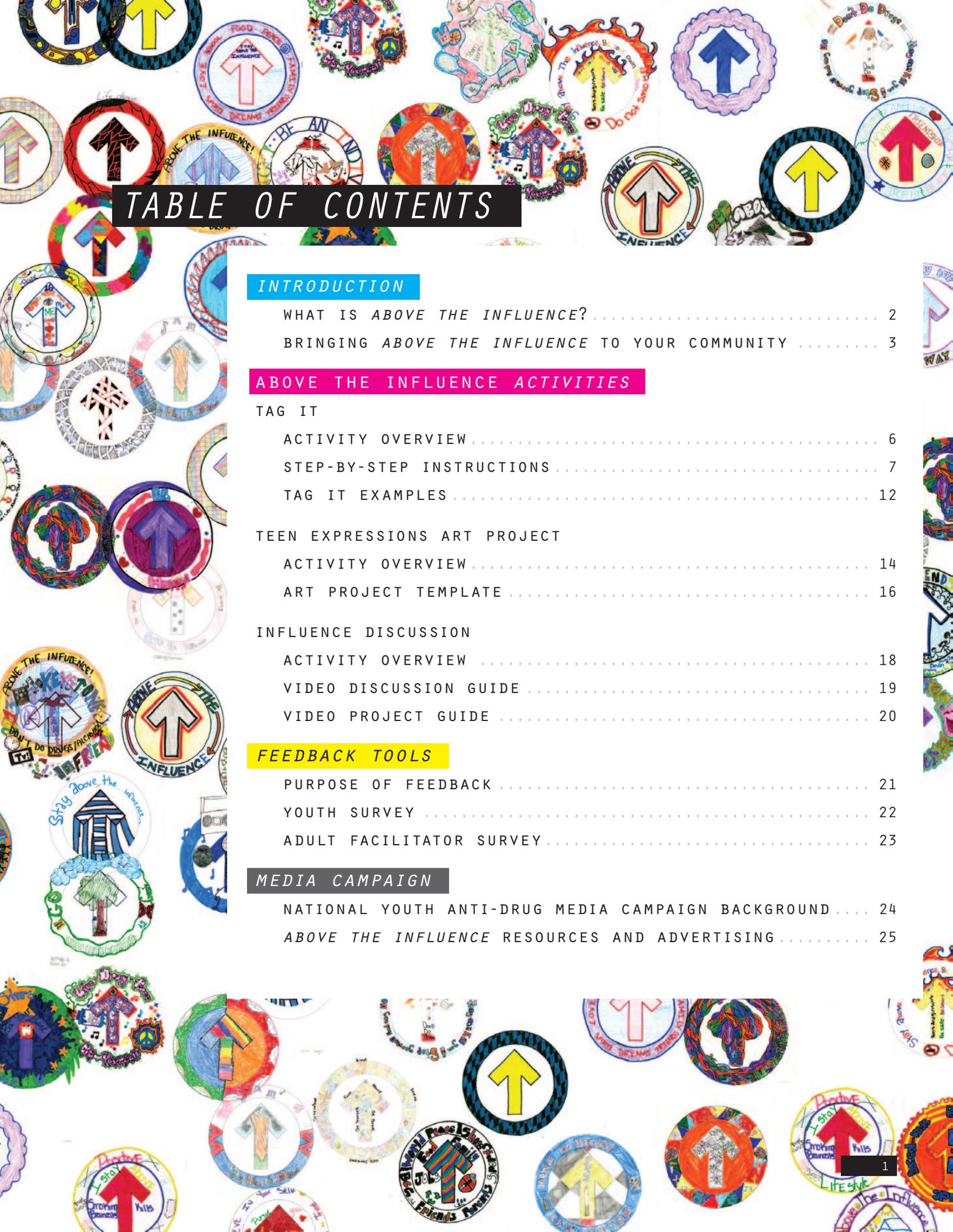


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WHAT IS ABOVE THE INFLUENCE?

Above the Influence (ATI) is a national campaign created and implemented by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, a program of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. ATI informs and inspires teens to reject illicit drugs via TV, print, Internet, and local radio advertising – and, most importantly, in partnership with community organizations.

ABOVE THE INFLUENCE IS A COMMUNITY OF TEENS,
FOR TEENS.

IT'S ABOUT BEING AN INDIVIDUAL.
NOT A FOLLOWER.

IT'S STANDING UP TO NEGATIVE INFLUENCES.

IT'S KNOWING THE FACTS ABOUT DRUGS
AND ALCOHOL, AND MAKING SMART DECISIONS
ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL.

Every teen's life is filled with pressure, some of it good, some of it bad. Our goal is to help teens stand up to negative pressures and influences. We want teens to live *Above the Influence*. The more aware they are of the influences around them, the better prepared they will be to stand up to them, including the pressure to use drugs and alcohol. It's not about telling teens how to live their lives, but rather giving them another perspective and the latest facts so they can make smart decisions.



BRINGING ABOVE THE INFLUENCE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

TEENS KNOW *ABOVE THE INFLUENCE*.
THEY UNDERSTAND IT.
AND THEY EMBRACE IT.

Findings from the Campaign's year-round survey of teens indicate that not only are 80 percent of teens aware of *Above the Influence* advertising, but 75 percent of teens (regardless of gender or ethnicity) say *Above the Influence* speaks to them.

More importantly, survey data show that youth who are aware of *Above the Influence* advertising are consistently more likely to have stronger anti-drug beliefs than those unaware of the Campaign's advertising. Research makes clear that teens who hold strong anti-drug beliefs are less likely to use substances.

We want to make it easy for you to apply *Above the Influence* messages in the work you are already doing to provide teens the foundation they need to stay safe and succeed.

We have designed this toolkit to be a user-friendly resource to help youth group leaders facilitate discussions with teens about influence and ways to stay above it. Community leaders are welcome to use these resources as designed or as a guide for developing your own strategies and tactics in addressing issues of influence, peer pressure, and risky behaviors.

BRINGING ABOVE THE INFLUENCE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

As our expert partners, we ask that you help us learn and improve this work by having teen participants provide feedback on their experience. We have provided you with very simple tools to capture this information. To date, a number of local groups have tested these activities and told us the toolkit resources and activities have worked well with their existing programs, emphasizing that the *Above the Influence* messaging hits home with their teens:

“THE TEENS IN OUR COMMUNITY WERE ENGAGED IN THE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE PROJECT ON MANY LEVELS AND THIS POSITIVE EXPERIENCE WILL REVERBERATE IN THEIR LIVES AND IN THE CULTURE OF OUR PROGRAMS. IT WAS MUCH MORE THAN JUST AN AD CAMPAIGN AND PRESS CONFERENCE.”

– Heidi Hynes, executive director of the Mary Mitchell Family & Youth Center in the Bronx

And teens appreciate that the activities are empowering, encouraging them to speak their minds:

“PARTICIPATING IN THE ACTIVITIES LIKE ‘TAG IT’ REMINDS PEOPLE THAT THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE LIKE THEM WHO DON’T USE. IT’S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A CONNECTION TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO DON’T USE SO, EVEN IF SOME OTHER PEOPLE THINK YOU’RE LAME, IT’S COOL.”

– Chloe Jones, 17, Wilson High School, Portland, OR



ABOVE THE INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

While we all know and have seen teens exert their strong sense of independence, the reality is that teens are still very impressionable. And everywhere they look there are influences that point them toward or away from a healthier and happier future. It's hard to try and tell a teen "what is good or bad for them." That fierce streak of independence is quick at detecting when someone is trying to convince them what to do, regardless of how subtly they do it.

That's why it's important that we allow teens to more clearly see and discover the positive influences and experiences around them for themselves. To come independently to see what influences are worth pursuing, and which others lead to a dead end. When we do this, we open up opportunities for teens to explore new passions and interests and share them with each other. After all, the one influence we can count on having an impact on teens, one way or another, is each other.

In the following pages, we have provided simple steps to instruct and help you implement the Above the Influence activities.

TAG IT

“TAG IT” ASKS TEENS TO LITERALLY TAG THE INFLUENCES IN THEIR LIVES AND SHARE THEM WITH THE WORLD.

The activity builds “influence literacy” and gets teens to recognize the power of influence. It also hints at empowerment – providing a tangible way to say, “I see it, and I’m above it.”

“Tag It” is easy for your organization to execute, and it takes only a few simple steps.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the “Tag It” activity is to: increase teens’ awareness of influences in their environment and how influences may prompt them to make decisions – both positive and negative, healthy and unhealthy. In particular, “Tag It” is focused on raising teens’ awareness of drugs as a negative influence in life, and in providing them with opportunities to discuss ways to avoid drug use and other risky behaviors.

After completing “Tag It,” teens should:

- Be able to define influence and provide at least three examples of common influences in their lives;
- Understand the difference between positive and negative influences;
- More easily recognize the power of influence – that there are influences all around them – both positive and negative – that play into their decision-making process;
- Recognize that drugs are a common negative influence in the lives of teens;
- Empower teens to think more critically about negative influences, like drugs, and the ways to stay above them.



PREPARATION

Hosting and staging “Tag It” is easy for youth leaders and fun for teens. Start by finding an appropriate, comfortable space to accommodate your group. For the preliminary discussion and activity set-up, choose a location that is big enough to accommodate all of your teens and quiet enough to watch a video and facilitate a brief discussion. To implement the “Tag It” activity, you will need to send teens off in groups or pairs so they can tag and photograph their influences. Some recommended settings include shopping malls (be sure to check in with mall management and security first to get their permission), schools, parks, and the local neighborhood.

What you need:

- A room large enough to accommodate your group
- Computer (if available)
- “Post-It Notes” (about 8 ½ by 11) or downloadable ATI “tag” (see below)
- Markers
- Cameras or cell phones that are equipped w/cameras

Depending on the time you have available with your teen group, “Tag It” can be executed in three distinct sessions. Or, if you are planning a half- or full-day with your teens you can complete the activity as one comprehensive session.

I AM :

PDF OF ATI “TAG” AVAILABLE AT
WWW.YOUTHRESOURCES.THEANTIDRUG.COM

TAG IT

SESSION ONE

OPEN THEIR EYES TO INFLUENCE

Start the exercise by playing the three Influence videos, which can be viewed at www.YouTube.com/abovetheinfluence. Facilitate a brief discussion with the group about the videos and influence in general. You can guide your discussion by asking the following questions:

- What was the first thing that popped into your mind as you watched these videos?
- What is the main message that you are getting from them?
- What were some of the influences that were referenced in the videos? Were they positive, negative? [Continue until drugs are mentioned or probe on this topic.]
- Thinking about drugs, do you consider them a similar influence in your life? Why or why not?
- What have you heard or seen about the *Above the Influence* campaign?
- What does “ABOVE the Influence” mean to you?
- What does “UNDER the influence” mean to you?
- What causes people your age or like you to become under the influence?
- What happens to them if they become under the influence?
- What are some bad influences that you see or encounter on a regular basis? They can be things you see or experience in your life that make you think about doing things that you know aren’t good for you.
- Where do you encounter negative influences most often? When do you feel pressured most?



SESSION TWO

SEND THEM OFF “TAGGING”

Start the day by bringing the teens together for a short recap of the “influence discussion” held during the previous session. Explain the “Tag It” exercise and send the teens off in groups or pairs to “tag” their influences and take photos.

1. Distribute *Above the Influence* branded “tags” to teens, which can be downloaded at www.YouthResources.TheAntiDrug.com
2. Ensure each pair or group of teens has one camera or camera phone with them
3. Send them off:
 - Teens can find and tag influences anywhere around them: the mall, the park, their home, or school.
 - Ensure that teens put a tag on each influence, fill in the label, photograph it, and then remove the tag.
 - Appoint a designated time and meeting place for Session 3, when the group will come back together and share what they tagged.

RECOMMENDED SETTINGS: SHOPPING MALLS,
SCHOOLS, PARKS, AND LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS



TAG IT**SESSION THREE****SHARE THE EXPERIENCE**

Gather the same group of teens again to have them share what they tagged and talk about the things that influence them in their daily lives. Ask each of them to share some of their favorite photos and ask them why they chose to tag those particular things as influences. After the group shares their photos, engage them in a short follow-up discussion, using some of the following questions as a guide:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- After doing this activity, has your definition of “influence” stayed the same or has it changed since we first discussed it in Session 1?
- Were you surprised by some of the influences that your friends here today tagged? What were some of the most surprising influences to you? Why?

Now, show the Portland “Tag It” video, which can be downloaded at www.YouTube.com/abovetheinfluence. Then, continue the discussion with the following questions:

- Now that we’ve done this activity, how were our “Tag It” influences the same or different than those in Portland?
- Do you feel that the influences of drugs here in our community are the same as in Portland? Why/why not?
- In what ways did this exercise make you think about the influences in your life?
- Did this exercise make you think about the influence of drugs in our own life? How so?
- We all have some bad or negative influences in our lives. How do you make sure that you are staying on a path to doing the right thing in your own life? How do you “stay above it”?



- Let's talk about positive influences. What are some good or positive influences in your life? They can be people, things, activities, events, etc.
- Why do you consider these things/people positive influences?
- What can you or this community do to help maximize the positive influences in your life?



Following your final group discussion, ask the teens to upload their “Tag It” photos to your organization website and/or Facebook page to showcase their visuals among organizational members. Teens can also upload their photos to their personal Facebook pages to share the experience with their friends.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

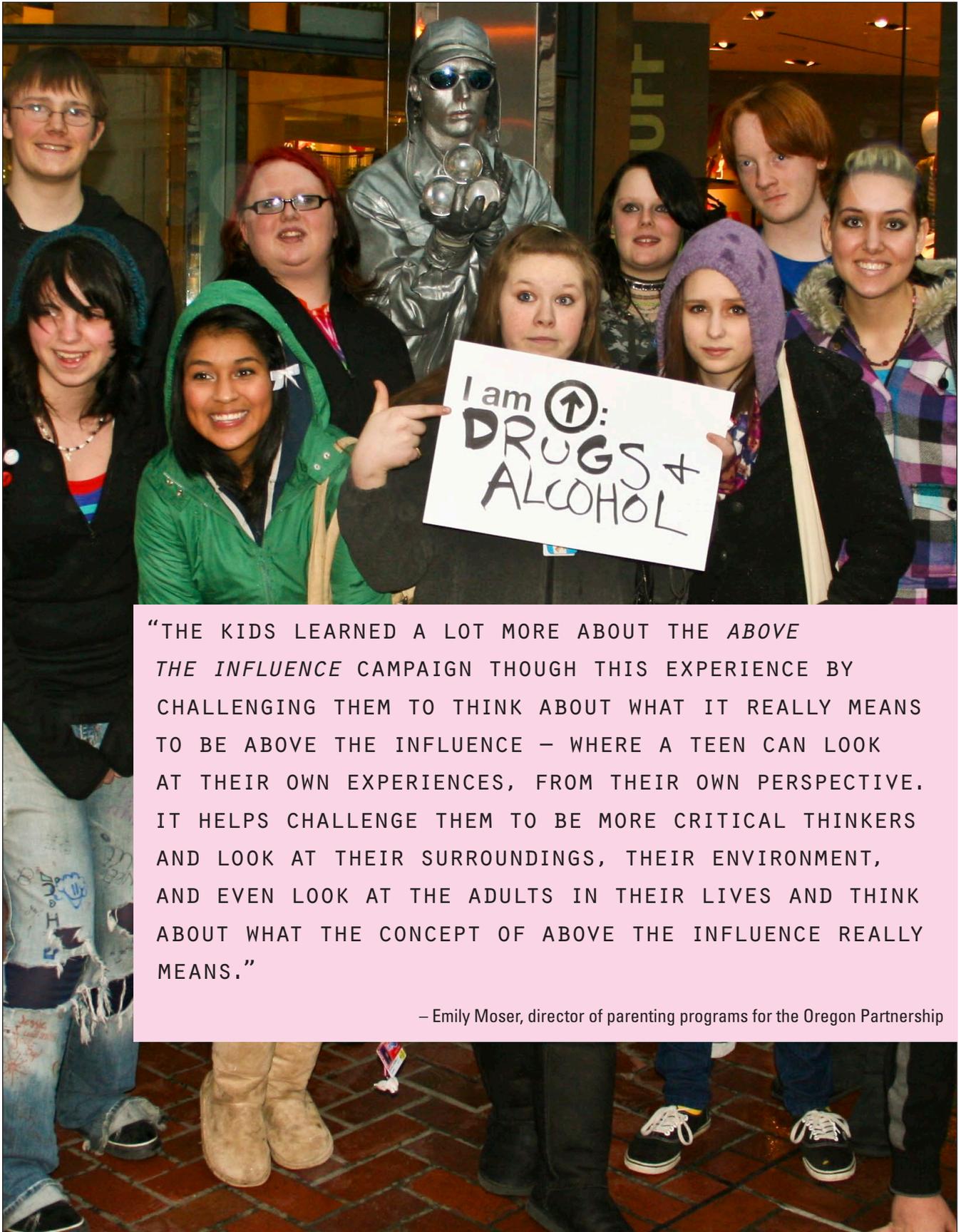
After you complete the “Tag It” activity, please ask the teens who participated to fill out the brief paper survey included on page 22 of this toolkit. Additionally, please complete the adult facilitator survey on page 23. Please mail these surveys to us at the address provided. Your feedback is important to us and will help us refine this activity and inform future ATI planning.

NEED MORE INFO?

*For more specific guidance on working with teens and facilitating logistical details of “Tag It,” please see our companion primer, *Planning Your ‘Tag It’ Day*, available online for downloading at: www.YouthResources.TheAntiDrug.com.*

TAG IT EXAMPLES





“THE KIDS LEARNED A LOT MORE ABOUT THE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN THROUGH THIS EXPERIENCE BY CHALLENGING THEM TO THINK ABOUT WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO BE ABOVE THE INFLUENCE – WHERE A TEEN CAN LOOK AT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES, FROM THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE. IT HELPS CHALLENGE THEM TO BE MORE CRITICAL THINKERS AND LOOK AT THEIR SURROUNDINGS, THEIR ENVIRONMENT, AND EVEN LOOK AT THE ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES AND THINK ABOUT WHAT THE CONCEPT OF ABOVE THE INFLUENCE REALLY MEANS.”

– Emily Moser, director of parenting programs for the Oregon Partnership

TEEN EXPRESSIONS ART PROJECT

GO STRAIGHT TO THE SOURCE –TEENS THEMSELVES–
TO SEE HOW THEY REPRESENT THEIR IDEAS FOR
STAYING ABOVE THE INFLUENCE.

The Teen Expressions Art Project asks teens in your community to:

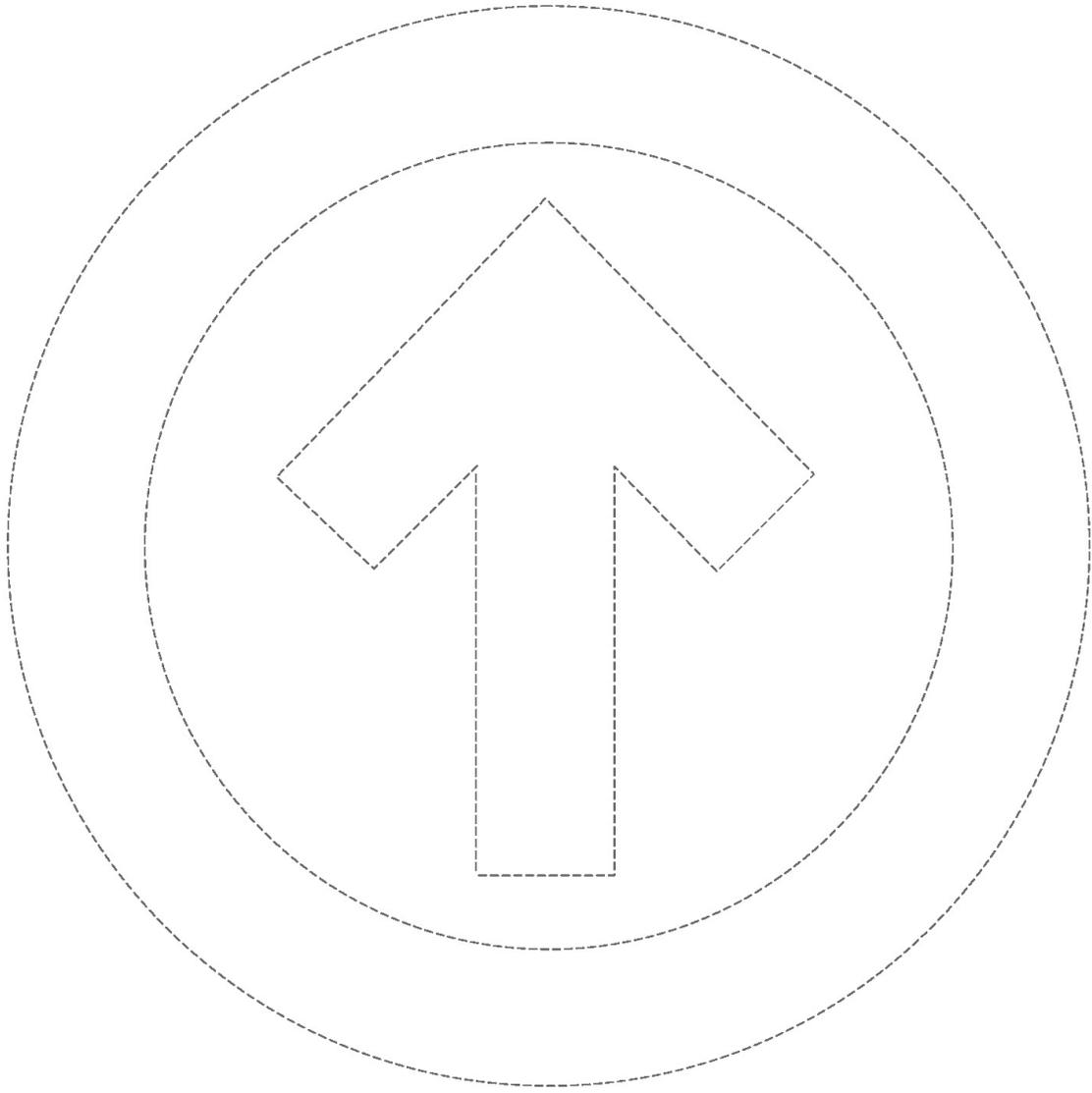
- Create their own visual expressions of the *Above the Influence* symbol using the *Above the Influence* logo template, which can be downloaded at www.YouthResources.TheAntiDrug.com. Activity leaders may photocopy the template as much and as frequently as needed.
- As community youth leaders, art teachers, and other adults who work with teens, you can spread the word about this activity and encourage local teens to participate.
- Work with local art clubs, movie theaters, malls, or other community spaces to host an art exhibit. Offer prizes for the best or most original art. Check in with local businesses – they may be willing to offer prizes!
- After your contest or event, feature the best art in your clubs or organization meeting rooms.
- To ensure submissions can be featured, make sure that teens know there should be no profanities, no corporate logos or name brands and no overt symbols of violence (guns, gang signs or symbols, etc.), or any other rules that apply to the activity in your community.



SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

After you complete the Teens Expressions Art Project activity, please ask the teens who participated to fill out the brief paper survey included on page 22 of this toolkit. Additionally, please complete the adult facilitator survey on page 23. Please mail these surveys to us at the address provided. Your feedback is important to us and will help us refine this activity and inform future ATI planning.

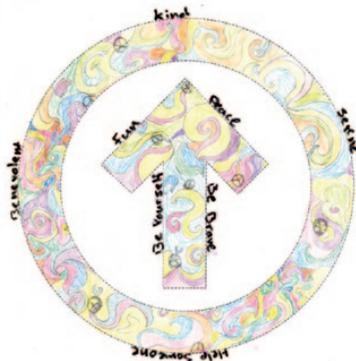
*NOTE: You may download the Art Project template at:
www.YouthResources.TheAntiDrug.com*





TEEN EXPRESSIONS ART PROJECT

EXAMPLES



INFLUENCE DISCUSSION

ENGAGE TEENS IN YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT “INFLUENCE.” CHALLENGE YOUR LOCAL YOUTH TO THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF DRUG USE AND THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE INFLUENCES SURROUNDING THEM IN THEIR SOCIAL AND MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS.

The *Above the Influence* campaign has some great tools that can help you spark your local discussions:

The *Above the Influence* “Influence Videos” series showcases what teens in the Bronx, NY, Portland, OR, and Milwaukee, WI, think about influence in their lives and hometowns and how they stay “above it.” Show these videos before you engage your group of teens in discussion to help them start thinking more critically about the influences around them. The videos can be found at:

www.YouTube.com/abovetheinfluence.

The *Above the Influence* website invites teens to share their positive influences and see what other teens from their hometowns – and across the country – are saying. The site includes a “heat map” that shows the positive influences that teens submit and where the most submission activity is generated. Encourage teens to visit the heat map and input their own influences and see what other teens around the country are saying: www.AbovethelInfluence.com/speak/heatmap.



VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

The “Influence Videos” feature real teens engaging in intimate conversations about their thoughts and perspectives on the topic of influence. The videos provide teens, parents, educators, and others with a first-hand look at the various issues and influences teens face in different parts of the country.

These videos and the accompanying discussion questions can be used as instructional tools and a centerpiece for dialogue about teen influences, along with other materials provided in this toolkit. In a large- or small-group setting, we suggest you play the videos on the website first, and then lead a conversation using the discussion questions below:

- Let’s talk about your life. What does life look like for you on a daily basis? Who is a regular part of your life?
- Let’s talk about you. What are some words you would use to describe yourself? Or, if it’s easier, what are some words your friends would use to describe you?
- What are some of your dreams and goals?
- Who supports you in achieving your dreams and goals?
- Who are your heroes? Who do you look up to? What makes them so special to you?
- What’s the best thing about living in your neighborhood?
- What does the word “influence” mean to you?
- What are some good or positive influences in your life? They can be people, things, activities, events, etc.
- What are some bad influences in your life? They can be things you see or experience in your life that make you think about doing things that you know aren’t good for you.
- We all have some bad or negative influences in our lives. How do you make sure that you are staying on a path to doing the right thing in your own life? How do you “stay above it”?

NOTE: All teens featured in these videos have given the Media Campaign permission to use this footage for educational and promotional purposes. Parents and guardians have signed release forms for children under the age of 18.

VIDEO PROJECT GUIDE

If your teens view the “Influence Videos” and are inspired to produce their own videos highlighting their views on positive and negative influences, there are a few low-budget ways to help them coordinate production:

1. View the videos at www.YouTube.com/abovetheinfluence.
2. Borrow a flipcam or video camera from a local school or community college with a multimedia department.
3. Teens can record each other answering the discussion questions recommended above. Encourage teens to be creative and make the videos their own unique expression.
4. For a larger group of responses, the teen production team can host a panel of teens for a town hall or back to school night event, inviting more teens to share their influences on camera for this project.
5. Work with the same school or a local television outlet to use their multimedia department as an editing room and learning experience for your teens.
6. Post the resulting video on your organization’s website, YouTube, or Facebook page, thanking the partnering school or TV outlet for their support.

Once your organization has posted the teen-produced video, tell us on Facebook and we’ll promote your project:

www.facebook.com/AbovethInfluence.

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

After you complete the Influence Discussion activity, please ask the teens who participated to fill out the brief paper survey included on page 22 of this toolkit. Additionally, please complete the adult facilitator survey on page 23. Please mail these surveys to us at the address provided. Your feedback is important to us and will help us refine this activity and inform future ATI planning.



PURPOSE OF FEEDBACK

In order for us to improve these activities, we need input from you and your youth participants! We ask that after the teens complete each of the ATI activities, please have them take a few minutes to complete the youth survey (using paper and pen), included on page 22 of this toolkit. The information that we gather from teens will provide us with helpful information as we design other *Above the Influence* activities.

We also value YOUR opinion as a youth development professional and ask that you please complete the facilitator survey on page 23 of this toolkit and return it with your youth surveys.

After you complete each activity, please gather all of the completed youth and adult facilitator surveys and return them to the address provided below. Or, feel free to email a scanned copy of your surveys to ATIResources@fleishman.com.

Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.
ATTN: Joy Lammie/National Youth Anti-Drug Media
Campaign
1615 L Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

Above the Influence Activity Youth Participant Survey

We welcome your feedback regarding *Above the Influence* activities. Your answers are anonymous. Please do not sign or print your name on this form. Please indicate how much you **agree or disagree** with the following statements about *Above the Influence*.

I participated in the _____ activity.

Please select one answer for each item.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. <i>Above the Influence</i> messages hit home	4	3	2	1
2. <i>Above the Influence</i> makes me think about why it's better to make my own decisions	4	3	2	1
3. I am more aware of the risks of letting other people or things guide my decisions	4	3	3	1
4. I have gone or plan to go to the <i>Above the Influence</i> website or Facebook page to learn more	4	3	2	1
5. I have or plan to blog, post or share something online about <i>Above the Influence</i>	4	3	2	1
6. I have or plan to discuss <i>Above the Influence</i> with my friends	4	3	2	1
7. I would like to see more information about <i>Above the Influence</i>	4	3	2	1
8. I'd like to help <i>Above the Influence</i> get the word out	4	3	2	1
9. I think my friends would benefit from this activity	4	3	2	1
10. Please tell us what else the <i>Above the Influence</i> campaign can do to help you be more empowered or confident about your own decisions.				

I have participated in the following activities:

- Tag it
 Above the Influence Logo Art Project
 Influence Discussion

My age: _____

My city: _____

Above the Influence Activity Activity Facilitator/Youth Development Professional Survey

We welcome your feedback regarding *Above the Influence* activities. Your answers are anonymous. Please do not sign or print your name on this form. Please indicate how much you **agree or disagree** with the following statements about *Above the Influence*.

I facilitated the _____ activity for _____ (number) youth participants in _____ (name of your city).

Please select one answer for each item.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. <i>Above the Influence</i> is relevant to the teens I work with	4	3	2	1
2. I know more about how to speak to/engage teens about not using drugs or alcohol	4	3	2	1
3. I plan to go to the <i>Above the Influence</i> website to learn more about the campaign	4	3	3	1
4. I plan to do this activity with other teens	4	3	2	1
5. I plan to share this activity with others I know who work with teens	4	3	2	1
6. I would like to do more <i>Above the Influence</i> activities in the future	4	3	2	1
7. Please tell us what else the <i>Above the Influence</i> campaign can do to support you in your work with teens.				

NATIONAL YOUTH ANTI-DRUG

MEDIA CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign created *Above the Influence* (ATI) to capture the attention of youth when they are most likely to be first exposed to substances of abuse and are most vulnerable to negative social and cultural influences. The brand has become a philosophy for teens and inspires them to think critically about drug use and the influence of their social environment so they can make more informed choices.

The *Above the Influence* Campaign is a critical component of the Nation's prevention efforts, as outlined in the *National Drug Control Strategy*, and includes broadened messaging to focus on substances most abused by teens. It delivers prevention messaging at the national level as well as more targeted efforts at the local community level. This two-tiered approach allows the Campaign to continue reaching out to teens across the country with a highly visible national media presence, while fostering the active engagement and participation of youth at the community level.

While a national campaign remains a valuable asset to which communities can anchor their individual programs, the Campaign recognizes that it is at the community level where youth substance abuse prevention must ultimately occur.

Above the Influence targets youth ages 12-17, with an emphasis on ages 14-16, the critical transition years from middle school to high school when teens are most likely to initiate drug use.

Youth who are aware of the *Above the Influence* advertising are consistently more likely to have stronger anti-drug beliefs compared to those unaware of the Campaign's advertising. 75 percent of teens (both genders and all ethnicities) say that *Above the Influence* speaks to someone like them and 80 percent of teens are aware of ATI advertising. The strength and high levels of brand awareness of *Above the Influence* allow communities to localize and customize the Campaign's messages to address local drug issues.



ATI ADVERTISING AND RESOURCES

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign offers a range of downloadable resources to help teens stay above the influence.

These resources help teens, parents, educators, and community groups recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse and other risky behaviors, kick-start discussions, and get help when it's needed.

Questions about alcohol or prescription drugs? Wondering how to address substance abuse in Hispanic, African American, or American Indian communities? It's all here.

Please visit www.TheAntiDrug.com/Resources to download our brochures, posters, and other materials.

And, visit www.AbovetheInfluence.com/the-ads to view the latest *Above the Influence* advertising.

