



A TOOLKIT FOR COUNSELORS & ADVISORS

Start a Non-User Group

The complete playbook for building a student group that makes the non-using majority visible — with the original documents from the group that started it.

"To defeat the perception that all teenagers are using chemicals."

01 Why This Exists

A conference that almost did the opposite of what it intended

When I was in tenth grade my school sent a group of us to a youth leadership conference about staying substance-free. During a break, students from other schools stood around talking about the parties they were going to when they got home — what they'd drink, who was hosting.

We were at a substance-free conference listening to people plan their weekend. And the feeling that came over our group wasn't anger. It was something worse: *what's the point?* If everybody's doing it anyway, why are we the ones sitting out?

Our advisor asked what we were going to do about it. We said it seemed like everybody was using. He told us that wasn't true — that the data said most students weren't. The problem was that nobody could see them.

The majority was already there. It was just invisible.

And there was a second problem underneath it. If you made a bad decision, you got punished. If you made a smart one, nothing happened at all. There was no reward on the healthy side of the ledger — no reason, beyond your own conviction, to keep choosing it.

So we built something. We called it the N.U. Group — Non-User Group. We didn't lecture anyone. We raised money, ran fun activities, and made membership something you had to qualify for. The only entry requirement was that you didn't use.

We started small on purpose — about thirteen students the first year. The second year we opened membership but capped it. Being in it meant something because not everyone was.

This toolkit is the actual paperwork we used, updated for today, plus everything I've learned since about why it worked. The original documents are reproduced at the back.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

This is not a curriculum, and it will not work as one. There is no lesson plan here and no assembly script. A non-user group is a *social structure* — it changes what students believe about each other, which is a different mechanism than teaching them facts. If you are looking for prevention education, this isn't it. If you are looking for the thing that makes prevention education stick, keep reading.

02 Why It Works

The evidence behind making the majority visible

When we built this in the late nineties, we were working on instinct. The research has since caught up, and it says the instinct was right.

Most students are not using — and they don't know it

7.1%

of US high schoolers currently
use e-cigarettes (2025)

2.6%

of middle schoolers

>9 in 10

students are not vaping at all

-18%

per year — youth vaping since
2022

National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2025. Park-Lee E et al., *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 2026.

Ask a student what percentage of their classmates vape and they will almost always guess high — often three or four times the real number. That gap between perception and reality is not harmless. It is one of the strongest known predictors of whether a student starts.

Perceived norms predict use better than actual peer behavior

A 2025 study followed students across nine schools and tested two things: how many of a student's friends actually vaped, and how much vaping the student *believed* was normal and accepted.

Perceived norms predicted uptake in all nine schools. Friends' actual behavior predicted it in six.

What students *think* everyone is doing matters more than what everyone is actually doing. Which means the belief is a target you can act on — and a non-user group acts on it directly, by giving the majority a face.

Piombo SE, de la Haye K, Valente TW. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 2025;27(9):1583–1590.

Be honest about what education alone does

You should know this before you invest a year in anything, including this:

THE UNCOMFORTABLE FINDING

The best available meta-analysis of school-based vaping prevention found **no evidence of a durable effect on use** at longest follow-up — and noted that some programs *increased* use. Knowledge and attitudes improved in the short term. Behavior largely did not.

Gardner LA, Rowe AL, Newton NC, et al. *Prevention Science* 2024;25(7):1104–1121.

That is an argument for this model, not against it. Information alone does not change adolescent behavior. What changes behavior is changing the social environment the behavior happens in — the perceived norm, the visible peer group, the reward structure. That is what a non-user group is for, and it is why it belongs *alongside* your education efforts rather than instead of them.

One more supporting finding worth having: across seventeen randomised trials covering nearly 14,000 young people, **peer-led** programs outperformed adult-led ones on tobacco outcomes. The students carrying the message matters as much as the message.

MacArthur GJ, et al. *Addiction* 2016;111(3):391–407.

03 Before You Start

Three things to do before you write a mission statement

1 Get your own data

Survey your building. You need two numbers: what students are actually using, and what they *think* everyone else is using. The gap between those two is your entire case — to your administration, to your students, and to funders.

If your district already runs a Youth Risk Behavior Survey or a Communities That Care survey, the data may already exist. Ask before you build your own.

2 Find out if students actually want this

A second short survey: would you join a group like this? Would you come to the events? Start with groups that already exist — athletic teams, student council, clubs. You are looking for a core of ten to fifteen students who will carry it, not a mailing list.

3 Take them somewhere first

We went to a leadership conference before we started, and it's the reason the group existed. Students need to meet other students doing this. Look for state interscholastic athletic association leadership summits, regional prevention coalition youth events, or a neighboring district already running a group.

If there's no conference available, the substitute is a single off-site day — even a half day somewhere that isn't school — where the only agenda is deciding what this group is going to be.

WHAT YOU NEED FROM AN ADVISOR

One adult who will still be there in year three. That's the job. The group we built ran because our advisor showed up to every meeting for years, wrote the letters, chased the sponsors, and treated it like it mattered.

It does not have to be the counselor. It should not be someone who was assigned. A health teacher, a coach, a librarian — anyone who wants it. Ask for a two-year commitment up front and mean it, because a group that loses its advisor in year two usually doesn't reach year three.

NAME IT CAREFULLY

We called ours the Non-User Group, and in 1999 that worked. Test it with your students before you commit. Some schools find "non-user" reads as negative — defined by an absence rather than a thing you're for. Alternatives worth putting to a vote: names built around the majority ("The 90"), around the choice, or around the activities. The one rule: **let the students pick it.** A name assigned by adults is a name nobody defends in the cafeteria.

04 Getting Approval

What administration needs to hear

Approval is usually easier than advisors expect, because you are asking to start a club, not to change policy. What administrators want to know is who is responsible, what happens if a member uses, and whether this creates work for them.

COVER THESE FIVE POINTS

- 1. **What the group is** — students who have committed to not using, meeting monthly, running activities.
- 2. **The evidence of student demand** — your survey results. Numbers, not enthusiasm.
- 3. **Who advises it** — named adult, with a commitment.
- 4. **What accountability looks like** — the contract, the requirements, and what happens on a violation. See §07 — get this right before you present it.
- 5. **What you need from them** — meeting space, a spot in the activities calendar, permission to fundraise. Usually that's all.

Template provided: *Administration Approval Request* in the editable template pack. It's modelled on the letter our wellness coordinator sent, reproduced in the archive at the back.

TWO QUESTIONS YOU WILL BE ASKED

"Doesn't this single out the students who do use?" — It shouldn't, and the design decides that. A group organised around *what its members do* (activities, service, showing up) is different from a group organised around what other students don't do. This is the reason the no-preaching rule matters: the moment the group becomes about other people's behavior, it becomes exclusionary and it stops working.

"What if a member gets caught?" — Have the answer written down before the meeting. §07.

05 Build the Structure

The paperwork, in the order you'll need it

DOCUMENT	WHAT IT DOES
Mission statement	One sentence. Ours: <i>"To defeat the perception that all teenagers are using chemicals."</i> It names the enemy as a <i>belief</i> , not a behavior — which is what keeps the group from becoming preachy.
By-laws	Officers, meeting frequency, voting, how members join and leave. Keep it to one page.
Membership requirements	What you must do to be a member and stay one. Ours: application, signed contract, six hours of community service, committee participation, meeting attendance, remain substance-free.
Application of Intent	Written application with an interview. Two adult references who aren't family. The friction is deliberate — it's what makes membership mean something.
Student & parent contract	Both sign. The parent signature is not a formality; it puts the commitment in the home.
Community service log	Simple tracking sheet. Hours, date, supervisor signature.

All six are in the **editable template pack**, rewritten in current language with the fields blank for your school.

06 Run It: Officers, Committees, Activities

The part that determines whether anyone joins

Officers and committees

President, vice president, secretary, treasurer — elected by members. Then split the work into committees so that every member has a job. Ours ran seven, and the specific list matters less than the principle: **a member with no assignment becomes a former member.**

COMMITTEES THAT EARNED THEIR PLACE

- **Social events** — one per month. The engine of the whole thing.
- **Fundraising** — three to four per year, funding the above.
- **Sponsors** — juniors and seniors who vouch for and mentor applicants.
- **Communication** — school, businesses, families.
- **Outreach** — middle school recruitment. See §08.

ACTIVITIES THAT WORKED FOR US

- Bowling, mini-golf, ice skating
- Movie nights
- Sporting events as a group
- Rented YMCA or fitness facility time after hours
- An annual banquet with pin presentations
- An overnight camp-out

This is an activities group with an entry requirement. Not an abstinence group with activities attached.

That distinction is the whole design. Nobody joins a club to be told what not to do. They join because their friends are going bowling on Friday and they want to go. The substance-free commitment is the price of the ticket — and paying it, publicly, in front of peers, is what does the actual work.

Reward the decision that usually gets nothing

Schools are built to punish the wrong choice. Almost nothing is built to notice the right one. Deliberately correct that asymmetry:

- **A pin, patch, or cord** earned through the requirements — something visible, not something handed out.
- **A local business discount card.** Ours was called the Renaissance Gold Card; local businesses honoured a discount for cardholders. It cost the school nothing and told students that adults outside the building were paying attention.
- **An annual banquet** where members are recognised by name in front of families.
- **Graduation recognition** for members who completed all four years.

ONE LINE TO HOLD ON TO

Our advisor wrote it to local businesses in 2001, and it is still the best case for the discount card: *"It is an encouragement to them to know that adults believe the decision to not use drugs is the right one and you are supporting them in this decision."*

07 Accountability: Choose Your Model

Two approaches that both work — pick the one your school can support

Membership has to mean something or the structure collapses. A group that keeps members who are using stops being credible to exactly the students you most need to reach. Every group needs a written answer to one question: **what happens when a member uses?**

There are two ways to build it, and the right one depends on your school's culture, your district's policy, and how much your advisor can be present. Decide before you accept your first member, and put it in writing where applicants can read it.

MODEL A — ADVISOR-ROUTED

Any concern about a member goes to the advisor privately. The advisor follows the school's existing substance-use protocol. Members are not asked to raise it with each other.

Best when: your district has a formal protocol you must follow, your advisor isn't at every informal gathering, or your group is new and the trust isn't built yet.

MODEL B — PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

Members agree up front to hold each other to the commitment — to say something directly, privately, and supportively, and to bring the advisor in when it's beyond them.

Best when: your group is small and close, your advisor is genuinely present, and members have chosen this together rather than had it assigned.

We used Model B. Our original policy said that if a member was suspected of using, the group should privately approach that member *and be willing to stand by them* — and that second half is the part that made it work. It wasn't a tribunal. It was a group of friends who had made the same promise, refusing to let one of them quietly break it alone.

Peer accountability isn't a lesser option. Done well, it's the stronger one.

It's also the harder one. It only works when members opted into it knowingly, when the tone is support rather than suspicion, and when there's a clear line where it stops and an adult takes over. Set those up front and it's the most powerful thing a group like this can offer. Skip them and it becomes a group of teenagers accusing each other.

If you choose Model B, build in these five things

- **Consent at the door.** Peer accountability goes in the commitment agreement, so every member signs up for it knowingly. Nobody should be surprised by it later.
- **Support, not investigation.** The conversation is *"I care about you and I'm worried"* — never a confrontation, an interrogation, or a group confronting one member. One or two people who know them well, privately.
- **A clear handoff line.** Members bring in the advisor when there is any sign of dependence, distress, safety risk, or when the member asks them to. Teach the line explicitly — students will honour it if they know where it is.
- **Confidentiality, with the limits stated.** What members share stays in the group, with the understood exception of safety concerns and anything the advisor is legally required to report. Say the exception out loud at induction so it's never a betrayal later.
- **Advisor visibility.** The advisor should know when a peer conversation has happened, even without details. Not to police it — to catch the situation that has outgrown what students should be carrying.

The optional practice, and the baseline both models share

OPTIONAL: THE COMMITMENT CIRCLE

Our group ran something we called Challenge Time — new members shared where they were coming from, including any past use, and the group talked openly about it. It built real trust, and members have told me since that it was the moment the group became serious to them.

If you run it, run it carefully. **Disclosure is voluntary** and nobody is required to share history to be a member. **The advisor is present.** Ground rules are agreed in advance: what's said here stays here, nobody is questioned about it afterward, and no one is pressed to answer. And any student who wants to talk about their history one-to-one instead should be able to, with no loss of standing.

If those conditions can't be met — and in some schools they can't — skip it. Commitment can be entirely forward-looking: *what I'm promising from today.* The group works either way.

The baseline both models share

SITUATION	RESPONSE
Missed meetings	Three missed meetings adds six hours of community service. Keep this administrative — attendance is a requirement, not a moral question.
A member has used and says so	First occurrence: probation plus additional service hours, and the advisor offers a private conversation about support. Second: membership ends. Written down before anyone joins.
Signs of dependence or distress	Advisor, immediately, in both models. This is past what a peer group should carry, and every member should know that.
A member leaves or is removed	Handle it quietly. No announcement. The goal is a door they can walk back through.

BUILD IN A ROUTE BACK

Our original rule was two strikes and permanently out. If I were writing it today I'd add a path back after a defined period and a conversation — because a student who slips and then wants to return is exactly the student this group should be able to hold. Permanent removal teaches the whole membership that one mistake is fatal, which is the opposite of what you want them to believe about their own decisions.

WRITE IT DOWN BEFORE YOU NEED IT

Whichever model you choose, the single most useful thing you can do is put it on paper before your first member joins — and have applicants read it as part of applying. Almost every problem groups run into with accountability comes from making the rule up in the moment, under pressure, with a specific student in front of you. Decide it while it's abstract. Apply it when it's not.

08 Funding and Growth

Paying for it, and making it last past the founders

Funding

Activities cost money and the point of the group is the activities. Four sources, roughly in order of how quickly they pay:

- **In-school fundraising** — three or four a year. Ours ran dances, a car show with the local Lions Club, and product sales.
- **Service organisations** — Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks. They fund youth leadership, they meet monthly, and they will often say yes to a student who presents in person. Send students, not the advisor.
- **Local businesses** — for the discount card and for direct sponsorship. Template letter provided.
- **Prevention coalitions and grants** — your regional substance-use coalition, state health department youth prevention funds, and employer community-giving programs. Most are small, recurring, and unglamorous, which is why few groups ask.

BEFORE YOU LAUNCH A DISCOUNT CARD

Ours ran through a national scholastic vendor. Programs like that come and go — verify what's currently available before you promise students anything. A card your group prints itself, honoured by a dozen local businesses you recruited, works just as well and belongs to you.

Growth

- 1 Stay small on purpose in year one**
Ten to fifteen students. You are building the culture, not the roster. Everything the group becomes is set by the people in the room the first year.
- 2 Open with a cap in year two**
Limited membership is not exclusion for its own sake — it's what makes the pin mean something. A cap creates a reason to apply early and a reason to keep the requirements.
- 3 Send members to the middle school**
The single highest-leverage thing we did. High schoolers talking to eighth graders about what high school is actually like — and that a group like this exists and they can join it — does more than any assembly. It also builds your next cohort before they arrive.
- 4 Recruit across social groups, deliberately**
If the group becomes one clique, it stops correcting the norm and starts reinforcing it. Athletes, artists, gamers, band, the quiet kids. Visible variety is the message.

Succession is the difference between a group and a moment.

Elect officers a term early so they shadow. Write down what you did — every fundraiser, every contact, every mistake. The groups that die are the ones where four seniors carried everything and graduated on the same day.

09 Your First Year

A working sequence

WHEN	WHAT
Spring (prior yr)	Run both surveys. Identify core students and your advisor. Approach administration informally.
Summer	Submit the approval request. Draft mission, by-laws, requirements, application and contract <i>with</i> your core students, not for them.
August	Off-site day or conference with the core group. Decide the name. Set the year's activity calendar.
September	First meeting. Elect officers. Assign committees. Open applications.
October	Interviews and inductions. First social event. First fundraiser planned.
Nov–Dec	Business outreach for sponsorship and the discount card. Monthly event continues.
January	Mid-year check: attendance, service hours, what's actually working. Adjust.
Feb–Mar	Middle school outreach visit. Plan year two membership cap.
April	Re-run the perception survey. Compare to the fall. This is your evidence.
May	Banquet and pin presentation. Elect next year's officers. Write down everything.

What to measure

If you want this funded in year two, bring numbers:

- ☐ Members enrolled, and members retained
- ☐ Community service hours completed by the group
- ☐ Events held and total attendance
- ☐ Dollars raised and businesses recruited
- ☐ **Perceived-use survey, fall vs spring** — the one that matters most, and the one almost nobody collects

THE NINE TEMPLATES — §11, AND AS AN EDITABLE WORD FILE

- Administration Approval Request
- Mission Statement & By-Laws worksheet
- Membership Requirements & Accountability Policy (*updated per §07*)
- Application of Intent
- Student & Parent Commitment Agreement
- Community Service Log
- Business Sponsorship Letter
- Meeting Agenda template
- Student Perception Survey

One last thing.

Harvard's Center on the Developing Child, synthesising decades of resilience research, found that the single most common factor among children who do well despite serious hardship is *at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult*.

Our group existed because one adult took a group of deflated sophomores seriously and asked what we were going to do about it. If you're reading this, that's the job you're volunteering for.

Questions, or want help launching one? dynamicinfluence.com

10 The Original Documents, 1999–2001

Reproduced as they were used

What follows are the actual documents from the Shepherd Hill Regional High School N.U. Group and the neighbouring Charlton Middle School — the master formation outline, the mission statement, membership and disciplinary requirements, the Application of Intent, the student and parent contract, the administration approval request, the business sponsorship letter, and a meeting agenda from September 2000.

They are included for two reasons. First, because a counselor deciding whether to attempt this deserves to see that it was a real thing real students built, not a concept. Second, because the gap between these pages and the updated templates is itself instructive — you can see exactly what a group figured out on its own, and where twenty-five years of practice has moved on.

A NOTE ON THE MEMBERSHIP PAGES

The membership requirements page and the September 2000 agenda describe the peer-accountability model and the commitment circle discussed in §07. Read them alongside that section — it covers what to put in place if you choose to run it that way, and what the alternative looks like if you don't.

What's in the archive

DOCUMENT	WORTH NOTICING
Development of a Non-User Group	The master outline — why, beginning, procedures, organisation, committees. Everything in this toolkit grew out of this one page.
Student commitment framework	Eight points, written by students. Point seven is the whole philosophy: <i>"Don't preach, just be an example."</i>
Administration approval request	A real letter from a wellness coordinator to a principal, including the detail that she couldn't advise it herself but would help find someone who could.
Mission statement & goals	One sentence, aimed at a perception rather than at other students' behavior.
Membership & pin requirements	The requirements and the accountability model. Read with §07.
Application of Intent	Two essay questions and two non-family references. The friction was the point.
Substance use contract	Student half and parent half, both signed.
Business support letter	April 2001, to local business owners, explaining the Renaissance Gold Card — and why adult backing matters to a teenager.
Meeting agenda, Sept 2000	A real agenda from the start of a school year: officer elections, t-shirts, membership drive, conference, camp-out.
Formation notes	A second working version of the outline, with the survey-first sequence spelled out.

Direct telephone numbers have been removed. Documents are otherwise unaltered. Shepherd Hill Regional High School, Dudley, Massachusetts, and Charlton Middle School, Charlton, Massachusetts.

11 The Templates

Nine documents, ready to adapt

Everything you need to launch, in the order you'll need it. Anything in [ORANGE BRACKETS] is a blank for you to fill in with your school's details.

These same nine templates are supplied as an **editable Word file** alongside this PDF, so you can type directly into them, add your letterhead, and delete what doesn't apply. Use the Word version to work in; these pages are here so the whole toolkit reads as one document and so you can print a set without opening anything else.

BEFORE YOU USE THESE

Nothing here has been legally reviewed. Have your district look at the **Commitment Agreement** and the **Accountability Policy** before you put them in front of a student or a parent — policies on substance use, confidentiality and mandated reporting vary, and yours has to sit inside them.

TEMPLATE	USE IT WHEN
1 · Administration Approval Request	Before anything else. One page to your principal.
2 · Mission & By-Laws Worksheet	Your first working session with founding students.
3 · Membership & Accountability Policy	Written before your first member joins, not after.
4 · Application of Intent	Opening applications.
5 · Commitment Agreement	At induction. Student and parent both sign.
6 · Community Service Log	One per member per year.
7 · Business Sponsorship Letter	Recruiting discount-card partners and sponsors.
8 · Meeting Agenda	Every meeting. Keep them to 45 minutes.
9 · Student Perception Survey	Fall and again in spring. Your evidence.

Administration Approval Request

Send to your principal or assistant principal. Keep it to one page.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

Date: [DATE]

To: [PRINCIPAL NAME], [TITLE]

From: [YOUR NAME], [YOUR TITLE]

Re: Request to establish a student non-user group

Dear [PRINCIPAL NAME],

I am requesting approval to establish a new student group at [SCHOOL NAME]. The group would be made up of students who have committed to remaining free of alcohol, nicotine and other substances, and who want to make that choice visible to their peers.

Why this group

In [MONTH YEAR] we surveyed [NUMBER] students in grades [RANGE]. Two findings stood out:

- [X]% of students reported no substance use in the past 30 days.
- Students estimated that [Y]% of their classmates were using — roughly [Z] times the actual rate.

That gap matters. What students believe their peers are doing predicts their own use; in a 2025 study across nine schools, perceived norms predicted uptake more reliably than friends' actual behavior. A visible group of non-using students addresses that belief directly. We also found that [NUMBER] students said they would join a group like this.

How it would work

- Monthly meetings, held [WHEN / WHERE].
- Membership by written application and interview, with a student and parent commitment agreement.
- Requirements: [X] hours of community service, committee participation, meeting attendance, and remaining substance-free.
- Student-run social activities funded by group fundraising and local business sponsorship.
- Advisor: [ADVISOR NAME], committed for a minimum of two years.

What we are asking for

- Approval to operate as a recognized student group
- Meeting space [WHEN]
- A place on the activities calendar
- Permission to fundraise under existing school procedures

Any concern about a member's substance use is handled under the group's written accountability policy, attached. Concerns involving dependence, distress or safety come to me immediately and follow [SCHOOL NAME]'s existing substance-use protocol.

I am glad to answer questions or present this to [ADMIN TEAM / SCHOOL COUNCIL].

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR TITLE]

[EMAIL] · [PHONE]

Mission Statement & By-Laws Worksheet

Complete this *with* your founding students. A mission they wrote is one they defend.

Part 1 — Mission statement

One sentence. Name what you are trying to change.

"To defeat the perception that all teenagers are using chemicals."

The original group's mission. Note what it targets: a *perception*, not other students' behavior. That distinction is what keeps a group from becoming preachy — and preachy groups fail.

Our mission:

Part 2 — Goals

Three to five. Concrete enough to check at the end of the year.

Part 3 — Group name

Let the students choose. Test it out loud in a hallway before you commit.

Name: _____

Short form / initials: _____ Motto: _____

The original group used "not everybody's doing it" and "Stay the Course."

Part 4 — By-laws

Article I — Purpose

Article II — Membership. Open to grades _____ Maximum members, if capped: _____

Admission requires written application, interview, and signed commitment agreement.

Article III — Officers. President · Vice President · Secretary · Treasurer

Elected _____ Term _____ Officers-elect shadow for _____ weeks.

Article IV — Meetings. Frequency _____ Day/time _____ Location _____

Quorum _____ Minimum attendance required per year _____

Article V — Committees. Every member serves on at least one. This year:

Article VI — Amendments. By-laws may be amended by _____ vote of members present, with advisor approval.

Membership Requirements & Accountability Policy

Choose one accountability model, delete the other, and have your district review it.

Membership requirements

To join and remain a member of **[GROUP NAME]**, a student must:

1. Complete a written Application of Intent and an interview.
2. Submit a Commitment Agreement signed by the student and a parent or guardian.
3. Complete **[SIX]** hours of approved community service per **[year / semester]**.
4. Serve on at least one committee.
5. Attend at least **[X]** of **[Y]** meetings per year.
6. Remain free of alcohol, nicotine and other non-prescribed substances.

Recognition. Members who meet all requirements receive **[PIN / PATCH / CORD]** at the **[ANNUAL BANQUET]**, and are eligible for **[DISCOUNT CARD / GRADUATION RECOGNITION]**.

Accountability — choose your model

MODEL A — ADVISOR-ROUTED

Any concern about a member is brought to the advisor privately. The advisor follows **[SCHOOL NAME]**'s existing substance-use protocol. Members are not asked to raise concerns with each other.

MODEL B — PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

Members agree, as a condition of joining, to hold each other to the commitment — to speak up privately and supportively, and to bring the advisor in when a situation is beyond them.

If you choose Model B, include all five: consent at the door (written into the commitment agreement) · support not investigation (one or two people, privately, never a group confronting an individual) · a clear handoff line to the advisor · confidentiality with its limits stated at induction · advisor visibility when a peer conversation has happened.

Optional commitment circle. If new members share where they are coming from: disclosure is voluntary and never required for membership, the advisor is present, and ground rules are agreed in advance. If those conditions can't be met, skip it — commitment can be entirely forward-looking.

The baseline both models share

SITUATION	RESPONSE
Missed meetings	Three missed meetings adds [SIX] hours of community service. Continued non-attendance may result in removal.
A member has used and says so	First occurrence: probation for [PERIOD] plus [TWELVE] service hours, and a private conversation with the advisor about support. Second: membership ends.
Dependence or distress	Advisor immediately, under either model.
A member leaves or is removed	Handled privately. No announcement.
Returning after removal	May reapply after [PERIOD] following a conversation with the advisor.

Confidentiality. Anything a student shares with the advisor about their own use is handled under **[SCHOOL NAME]**'s confidentiality and mandated-reporting policies. Tell students what those limits are before they join.

Application of Intent

The friction is deliberate. An application that takes effort makes membership mean something.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD] · [GROUP NAME]

Name _____

Date _____ Grade _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Student ID _____

1. Why do you want to be a member of this group?

2. Why have you chosen not to use alcohol, nicotine or other substances?

3. What would you contribute? Which committee interests you, and why?

4. List two adults (not family members) who can serve as references.

Reference 1

Name _____

Relationship _____

Email / phone _____

Reference 2

Name _____

Relationship _____

Email / phone _____

I understand that membership requires an interview, a signed commitment agreement, community service hours, committee participation, meeting attendance, and remaining substance-free.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

FOR ADVISOR USE

Interview date _____ Interviewed by _____ Sponsor assigned _____

References contacted ☐ 1 ☐ 2 Decision ☐ Accepted ☐ Deferred ☐ Declined Date _____

Student & Parent Commitment Agreement

Both signatures matter. The parent signature puts the commitment in the home, not just the building.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD] · [GROUP NAME]

Student commitment

As a member of [GROUP NAME], I commit to the following:

- I will not use alcohol, nicotine or other non-prescribed substances.
- I will follow my school's rules regarding alcohol and other drugs, on and off school grounds.
- I will represent this group by example rather than by lecturing others. My focus is my own choices, not other students' choices.
- I will learn what I can about the effects of alcohol and other drugs, so my decisions are informed ones.
- [MODEL A: If I am concerned about a group member, I will bring it to our advisor privately.] [MODEL B: If I am worried about a group member, I will speak with them privately and supportively, and I will bring our advisor in if the situation is beyond me or involves anyone's safety.]
- I will meet the membership requirements: service hours, committee participation and meeting attendance.

I have read the Accountability Policy and I understand what happens if I do not keep this commitment.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT)

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

Parent / guardian support

I support my child's decision to join [GROUP NAME] and to remain substance-free.

- I will support my child in keeping this commitment.
- I understand the group's membership requirements and accountability policy.
- I understand how concerns about substance use are handled, and that I will be contacted in accordance with school policy.

PARENT / GUARDIAN NAME (PRINT)

SIGNATURE

DATE

Best contact _____

BEFORE YOU USE THIS

Have your district review this agreement. Delete whichever accountability model you did not choose so the signed document matches your written policy.

TEMPLATE 6

Community Service Log

One sheet per member per year. Advisor keeps the original.

Member _____ Grade _____ Year _____

Hours required _____ Hours completed _____

DATE	ACTIVITY / ORGANIZATION	HOURS	SUPERVISOR	SIGNATURE

Advisor verification _____ Date _____

TEMPLATE 8

Meeting Agenda

Keep meetings to 45 minutes. A meeting that runs long is a meeting students stop attending.

Date _____ Time _____ Location _____ Facilitator _____

ITEM	TIME	NOTES
Welcome & attendance	3 min	Secretary records. Flag anyone at risk on the attendance requirement.
Minutes	3 min	Approve or amend.
Treasurer's report	5 min	Balance, income since last meeting, upcoming costs.
Committee reports	12 min	Two to three minutes each.
Upcoming event	10 min	What's decided, what's outstanding, who owns each piece.
New business	8 min	Member proposals. Vote where needed.
Service hours check	2 min	Deadline and current standing.
Close	2 min	Next meeting date. One thing each member will do before then.

Business Sponsorship Letter

Send students to deliver this in person where you can. It works far better than mail.

[SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Dear [BUSINESS OWNER / MANAGER],

My name is [NAME] and I am the advisor to [GROUP NAME] at [SCHOOL NAME]. We are a group of [NUMBER] students who have made a commitment to stay free of alcohol, nicotine and other substances — and who are trying to make that choice visible to the rest of our school.

Our mission is to defeat the perception that everyone is using. Most students at [SCHOOL NAME] are not: our own survey found [X]% report no use in the past 30 days. But students estimate the number is far higher, and that belief is one of the strongest predictors of whether a young person starts. We exist to correct it.

Our members are involved in athletics, arts and activities across the school. What brings them together is a desire to have fun without substances. They run community service projects, hold monthly social events, and meet as a group [FREQUENCY]. Membership requires an application, a signed commitment agreement, service hours, and staying substance-free.

How you can help

- [DISCOUNT CARD NAME] — offer a discount to card-carrying members, [FREQUENCY / TERMS]. It costs very little and tells students that adults in the community notice what they're doing.
- **Event sponsorship** — contribute toward the cost of a student activity. Sponsors are recognized at the event, in our materials, and at our annual banquet.

There is a reason this matters beyond the discount itself. When a student sees a local business backing their decision, it tells them adults outside their school believe they made the right call. For a teenager, that is worth more than the ten percent.

I will follow up in the next two weeks. If you would like to talk sooner, I can be reached at [EMAIL] or [PHONE].

Thank you for considering it.

[NAME]

[TITLE], Advisor to [GROUP NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

WHO TO APPROACH FIRST

Service organisations — Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks — fund youth leadership, meet monthly, and will often say yes to a student who presents in person. Send students, not the advisor. Then local restaurants, ice cream shops, bowling alleys, cinemas and sporting-goods stores: the places your members already go.

Student Perception Survey

Run it in the fall and again in the spring. The change between them is your evidence.

Anonymous. Please do not write your name. Grade _____

Part A — Your own choices

In the past 30 days, how many days did you use any of the following?

	0 DAYS	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–19	20–30
Alcohol						
Nicotine vape / e-cigarette						
Nicotine pouches						
Cigarettes						
Cannabis (any form)						
Any other non-prescribed substance						

Part B — What you think others are doing

Out of 100 students at this school, how many do you think used each of these in the past 30 days?

Alcohol _____ /100 Nicotine vape _____ /100 Nicotine pouches _____ /100 Cannabis _____ /100

Part C — Norms and belonging

Strongly disagree · Disagree · Neutral · Agree · Strongly agree

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Most students here would disapprove of a classmate vaping.					
It is easy to say no here without it being a big deal.					
I know students here who have decided not to use.					
There are fun things to do here that don't involve substances.					

Part D — Interest

Would you be interested in a student group for people who have chosen not to use, that runs social activities and service projects?

☐ Yes, I'd join ☐ Maybe ☐ I'd come to events but not join ☐ No

What kinds of activities would you actually want to go to?

HOW TO USE THE RESULTS

Compare Part A to Part B. The distance between the real number and the guess is the misperception your group exists to close. Report both back to students — a poster reading "**[X]**% of us don't vape. Most of you guessed **[Y]**%" does more work than any assembly. Re-run in the spring and show the change.

Development of A Non-User Group

- Why:
1. To impact the school environment proactively and positively.
 2. To help combat drug use peer pressure.
 3. To encourage students not to use illegal drugs.
 4. To support the non-user in his/her choice not to use.

- Beginning:
1. Attend a "You Lead" conference to inspire the students.
 2. Establish drug use data by doing a drug survey. How good/bad is it?
 3. Develop and administer a student survey regarding student interest in a non-user group.

- Procedures:
1. Administration Approval Letter
 2. Mission Statement (Establish objectives to support the Mission Statement).
 3. Establish By-Laws.
 4. Membership Requirements (Discipline/Conflict Measures)
 5. Application of Intent (Interview).
 6. Non-User Contract
 7. Community Service Form
 8. Renaissance Gold Card (Business Support) Jostens Ring Company.

- Organization:
1. Officers (Pres. V.P. Sec. Treas.)
 2. Meetings (Once/Twice per month) Attendance required for one.
 3. Application Process with interview.
 4. Contract Submission (References required/follow-up)
 5. Business Support Contacts
 6. Non-user Banquet

- Committees:
1. Technology (Web Site)
 2. Sponsors (Jr/Srs for question mark applicants).
 3. Fund Raisers – Dance, Gourmet Lollipops, ESPN the Magazine, Lions Club Car show(Three/Four per year)
 4. Social Events (One/month) – Mini-golf, bowling, Ice skating, Movies, Sporting Events, and YMCA/Fitness rented time.
 5. Communication-School, Business, and students.
 6. Conference-You Lead/MIAA
 7. Outreach-Middle school recruitment.

- 1.) The students will develop and create a core group and seek an advisor committed to the formation of a non-user group.
- 2.) The student will obtain administration approval for the formation of a non-user group.
- 3.) The students (core group) will develop rules of order and function. (Admittance, Attendance, Social Functions, Service, Discipline & Accountability)
- 4.) The students will be willing to be a constant example and role model in and out of school of a non-user of chemicals.
- 5.) The students will have social events and fundraisers for the Non-User members. (Family and friends allowed upon advisor's approval)
- 6.) The students will be open to volunteer in my way for community services.
- 7.) The students should make the focus their own non-use versus other students use. (Don't Preach!, Just be an example)
- 8.) The students can actively seek to have other students join this group as well as volunteer to speak to 8th grade students about it and the high school experience.

Charlton Middle School

2 Oxford Road
Charlton, MA 01507

NON-USER STUDENT GROUP

To: Mrs. Katherine Tucker

From: Mrs. Linnea Bond

Regarding: Student Non-User Group Formation

Dear Mrs. Tucker,

We are seeking approval for the formation of a new student group at Charlton Middle School. This group would be composed of students who have made a commitment to not use drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, and illegal substances. These students would have monthly meetings, during which they would develop future activities and determine how to recruit other students. Please let us know if there is anything else you will need in order for this group to function on our campus.

From surveys that we have conducted among our seventh and eighth grade classes, there are many students in our school who would like to see a group like this at Charlton Middle. They would also like our school to host a middle school non-user conference next fall. They are excited about this and clearly want to see others involved as well.

I would love to see a group like this at Charlton Middle School. There is a definite need to support those students who have chosen to avoid drugs and alcohol. At this point, I am not sure that I will be available to become this group's main advisor, although I would like to be involved at some level. I am sure that there are some people on our faculty who would be wonderful at working with this group, and Mr. Sullivan is very willing to lend his support during the formation of this group.

Sincerely,



Linnea Bond
Wellness Coordinator

N.U. Group

Mission Statement: To defeat the perception that all teenagers are using chemicals. .

Goals: Our efforts combined to reduce the use of chemicals in school, make it known that not every teen is using chemicals, to promote a smoke-free building and to make healthy choices with respect to chemicals.

Shepherd Hill Regional High School



Dudley-Oxford Road
Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

Sean M. Gilrein
Principal

David H. Grenier
Assistant Principal

Timothy M. Schur
Assistant Principal

George C. Proulx
Supervisor of Guidance

NON-USER MEMBERSHIP/PIN REQUIREMENTS

1. Application process.
2. Parent/Student signed contract.
3. Six hours of community service.
4. Committee participation.
5. Acceptable attendance to group meetings.
6. Remain drug free.

Disciplinary Measures.

1. Each issue will follow due process.
2. Three missed meetings will result in an additional six hours of community service.
3. If a member is suspected of using, the group should privately confront this member and be willing to stand by them.
4. When there is proof and the accused denies it, Mr. Sullivan is notified and he will deal with it.
5. If a member has used and admits to it, the first offense will be probation and 12 additional community service hours. On the second offense, he/she will no longer be invited to participate in the group.

⑥ illicit a sponsor if desired (for admitted use)

"not everybody's doing it"
and "Stay the Course"

Shepherd Hill Regional High School

'00
'86
'84



56

Dudley-Oxford Road
Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

Sean M. Gilrein

Principal

David H. Grenier

Assistant Principal

Timothy M. Schur

Assistant Principal

Mary A. Pierangeli

Assistant Principal

George A. Proulx

Supervisor of Guidance

APPLICATION OF INTENT

NAME:

DATE:

ADDRESS:

GRADE:

PHONE #:

LD.#

In a short paragraph, please explain why you would like to become a member of the Non-User group?

Please explain why you choose not to be involved with any kind of chemical substances?

Please list two adults(non-family) who would be a reference for you.

Name:

Address:

Phone #:

Shepherd Hill Regional High School

943-6700
923-9224 Mr. Sullivan
948-3281 Liz LaPlante
948-9635 Christian Hanson
943-5956 Fax



Dudley-Oxford Road
Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

Sean M. Gilrein
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SHEPHERD HILL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL N.U. SUBSTANCE USE CONTRACT

STUDENT: *I will respect the rules of my school regarding the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs as a member of the non-user group at Shepherd Hill because I realize they exist for my protection and the protection of others.*

I will be subject to the alcohol and other drugs rules, discipline, and procedures during the time I am on school grounds and expect others to do the same.

I will promote pride and unity in my school by not involving myself with alcohol and other drugs at anytime because they may cause harm to me or those close to me.

I will attempt to learn as much as I can about the negative effects of alcohol and other drugs because I realize that the more knowledge I possess, the more healthy decisions I will make.

I will take pride in my school by being willing to support the rules of my school and the non-user group.

I will be willing to support other students and friends in seeking help and assistance for any possible substance use/abuse issues. I will vow to help others become and/or stay substance free.

PARENT: *I am pleased to support my son/daughter in promoting pride and unity for a drug free school environment.*

I will assist my son/daughter in obeying the illegal substance use rules while they are in school and part of the non-user group.

I respect the substance use rules of the school and the non-user group because I realize they exist for my son/daughter's protection and the protection of others.

I will support my son/daughter in their decision to be a non-user member and I will do all I can to assist them in following the non-user rules and guidelines.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

PARENT SIGNATURE

DATE

Shepherd Hill Regional High School



Dudley-Oxford Road
Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

Sean M. Gilrein
Principal
David H. Grenier
Assistant Principal
Timothy M. Schur
Assistant Principal
George C. Proulx
Supervisor of Guidance

4/6/01

Dear Business Manager/Owner,

My name is William Sullivan and I am the District Health Coordinator for the towns of Dudley and Charlton. I am also advisor to a very unique group of high school students who call themselves the Shepherd Hill Regional High School non-user group. We have been in existence for two years and have 29 members presently.

The group's mission statement is to defeat the perception that all teenagers are using drugs. The goals are to reduce the use of chemicals by their peers, promote a smoke free building, and make it known that not all teenagers are involved with drugs.

These young people are involved in all types of high school activities and what's brought them together is a desire to have fun without drugs. They are all involved in group committee work, positive peer influence, community service projects, group meetings, and social events. As a group we get together socially and have our business meetings once a month. There are disciplinary measures taken if students cannot abide by the chemical contract that is required for admittance. A parent support contract is also a requirement for membership. There are disciplinary measures taken if the students cannot abide by the requirements. The most important requirement is to remain drug free for four years of high school.

We believe this group is extremely unique within the high school population around the country. Our goal is to have a group like ours in each grade 9-12 with an advisor to guide them. We are seeing an interest in our group springing up within our two middle schools. This is very exciting.

We would hope that it would be your opinion that keeping kids off drugs is a good thing and would be willing to support us in this endeavor. We would hope that there would be some way you could help us, which would be such an encouragement to us. It is our desire to make this group so attractive that students who are on the fence in deciding to use would join us without hesitation.

There are businesses supporting us by honoring our Renaissance Gold Card with discounts on products once per grading term. I will be contacting you in the near future to explain how this program works. Thank you from these kids because it is an encouragement to them to know that adults believe the decision to not use drugs is the right one and you are supporting them in this decision. Thank you for your support,

William Sullivan

William Sullivan
Non-user Advisor
Shepherd Hill Regional High School

"not everybody's doing it"
and "Stay the Course"

herd Hill Regional High School



Dudley-Oxford Road
Dudley, Massachusetts 01571

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Mary A. Picrangel

Assistant Principal

George A. Proulx

Supervisor of Guidance

9/12/00

Hi Bob,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer vacation! It's certainly been a long one. At this point some of you have already been back to some form of athletic practice and that's great. I hope you've been able to go through the summer safe and without any form of chemical experiences to heighten or liven up your life. It's almost time to get back to the work of making the NU group something special for those who want it to be.

I have some wonderful surprises and exciting news regarding our future as a group and experiences for you. Some will require work but it will certainly be worth it. Everyone has been delegated to a special group to make us visible and known. At this point I need to inform you of our first meeting. It will be Monday September 25th at 7:30 p.m. at Shepherd Hill. We will be meeting in the library. There is a lot to discuss and plan for, so I expect to see you all there.

If you don't know by now, I will be teaching at the Charlton middle school this year, so you'll have to work through Mr. Burke as far as communicating to me. I will give you my home phone number and school numbers as soon as I have them.

I'm extremely excited to get back to work with you. You energy me so much and it's such a privilege to be associated with you. See you on the 25th at 7:30.

Sincerely,

William Sullivan

AGENDA:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Officer Nominations/Elections. | 2. Induction Dinner Sponsor |
| 3. N.U. T-Shirts. | 4. Oct. 12 th , 26 th , and Nov. 7 th Speaking. |
| 5. Group Responsibilities. | 6. Senior N.U. Membership Drive. |
| 7. Community Service. | 8. Holy Cross Conference. |
| 9. N.U. Communication within Conference. | 9. SHRHS N.U. shopping discount card. |
| 11. Camp Out - Koininea | 12. SHRHS N.U. Conference. |

New Members must be aware of the N.U. Challenge Time for each other. This is a very important step in your honesty, trust, commitment, and the group support network. This will include time for sharing about the following information: Previous drug use (if any), How long ago used, What made you decide to use or not use, length of use, What made you decide to stop, and present use status (if any). Time will be allowed for other members to challenge you on your past use and present use. This is how we will keep the group honest and above board because we absolutely cannot have users in it.

"... to advance the knowledge and well being of our children and community."

Non_User Group Formation

How to Organize/Develop

Why? To help combat drug use peer pressure.
To encourage the non-user not to use.
To support the non-user in his/her choice not to use.

Establish data of drug usage within the building(drug survey).

How bad/good is it?

Do a student survey with questions relative to student interest in this type of group.(start with the already established student groups and athletes).

Attend a "You Lead" conference with student leaders to inspire them for this group formation.

1. Administration Approval Letter
2. Mission Statement
3. Establish By-Laws
4. Membership Requirements(Discipline Measures)
5. Application of Intent
6. Non-User Contract
7. Community service Form
8. Renaissance Gold Card(Business Support) through Jostens Ring Company.

Organization Breakdown

Officers (Pres. V.P. Sec. Treas.)

Meetings (Once/Twice per month) Attendance required at least one

Application process with INTERVIEW

Contract Submission (References required)

Business Support

Non-User Banquet

Committees

Technology (Web Site)

Sponsors (Jr/Sr for question mark applicants)

Fund Raisers (3/year)

Social Events (one/month) This could depend on numbers

Communication- School, Business, and student.

Conference Committee – You Lead and MIAA