



Getting Started: Frequently Asked Questions

Here are the answers to frequently asked questions about how to get your SADD chapter started!

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1. WHY SHOULD I START A SADD CHAPTER?

What is SADD?

Founded as Students Against Driving Drunk in 1981, SADD has grown to become the nation's dominant peer-to-peer youth prevention organization with thousands of chapters in middle schools, high schools and colleges. In 1997, in response to requests from SADD students themselves, SADD expanded its mission and name, and now sponsors chapters called Students Against Destructive Decisions.

What does SADD do?

SADD's unique approach involves young people delivering education and prevention messages to their peers through school- and community-wide activities and campaigns responsive to the needs of their particular locations. Projects may include peer-led classes and theme-focused forums, teen workshops, conferences and rallies, prevention education and leadership training, and awareness-raising activities and legislative work.

How is the work of SADD chapters important?

SADD believes in the power of young people and their ability to make sound, intelligent decisions. SADD empowers students to act on their convictions. SADD puts the responsibility for making safe, informed choices on teens themselves rather than telling them what to do or what not to do. SADD encourages teens to consider the impact of their choices on their friends, their families and their future.

How is SADD unique?

SADD's unique approach involves young people in informing, supporting and assisting their peers to have the best tools to make healthy decisions. Through its expansive network of chapters across the country, SADD can deliver information and messages to hundreds of thousands of teenagers.

SADD relies on scientifically grounded prevention principles. As a youth prevention program that begins and evolves from local level efforts, SADD is:

- age appropriate
- culturally appropriate
- long-term, continuing throughout the school career
- cost effective

In addition, SADD promotes programming that includes:

- targeting all forms of drug use
- skills to resist drug offers
- social competency skills
- normative education designed to correct students' misperceptions about their peers' drug use
- a parent component
- outreach to all populations including children with behavior problems or learning disabilities
- interactive methods, such as peer discussion groups
- media campaigns and lobbying for policy changes

What is the Contract for Life?

The Contract for Life is a SADD signature product whereby a student and a caring adult exchange mutual promises to facilitate communication and promote safety. The Contract for Life provides an important foundation for trust and caring. The Contract for Life is available on the SADD Web site, www.sadd.org; you may download, copy, and distribute it.

2. HOW DO I START A SADD CHAPTER?

How do I get people involved?

Approach your friends, members of your school's student government, team captains, and students who volunteer or mentor regularly. Most importantly, you need to recruit a diverse group of students in order to appeal to everyone in your school; students will realize that SADD offers something for everyone if they see that it is led by a unique, diverse group of their peers.

How do I find a faculty advisor?

Appeal to a teacher, coach, counselor, or administrator who is trusted and well respected by the school community. It is important that you find someone who is passionate about your cause and who has the time, energy, and creativity necessary to be an effective SADD chapter advisor. Be sure to communicate your expectations to your potential advisor.

- He/she should be able to attend all SADD chapter meetings.
- He/she should be willing to sponsor and chaperone SADD chapter activities.
- He/she should be willing to act as a liaison between the SADD chapter and the school administration.

When should I hold meetings?

Schedule regular meetings at a time when all members and your advisor are able to attend. Some schools set aside time during the school day for clubs and activities to meet while others opt to meet after school. In order to ensure maximum attendance, consider offering snacks or providing a small door prize of some sort.

What should we discuss at our meetings?

At your first meeting, you should be sure that you inform all members about the SADD philosophy and mission statement. Generate a list of issues that your chapter thinks are the most pressing in your school. You may want to design a survey of student concerns and behaviors. Consider what kind of decisions students in your community have to make on a daily basis and define the pressures that they regularly face. Determine what an appropriate response to these pressures would be and what activities your SADD chapter can sponsor to empower your schoolmates to make positive choices.

What kind of activities can we plan?

SADD chapters plan a wide variety of activities and events in their communities. The more creative your chapter members are, the better! You can plan peer education opportunities in the middle or elementary schools, fund-raisers, awareness-raising events, substance-free parties and much more. To get started, you can refer to the SADD Manual (available for purchase from SADD National) or the SADD Web site, both of which have a variety of ideas and suggestions for how to plan a fun and effective event.

3. HOW DO I REGISTER MY SADD CHAPTER?

What steps should I take to register my new chapter with SADD National?

1. Contact SADD National.

Register your chapter by returning the registration form enclosed in this packet or visiting the SADD Web site, www.sadd.org. This will ensure that you receive all mailings from SADD National.

Once you register, you will receive a New Chapter Packet including a Certificate of Membership, SADD National's most recent newsletter, and a list of ideas for potential activities and fund-raisers. In addition, you will be qualified to participate in a variety of SADD National sponsored activities, including the annual National Conference.

2. Contact your State Coordinator.

By contacting your State Coordinator, you will receive important information about state conferences, potential funding, and training opportunities. Many State Coordinators sponsor their own programs and distribute relevant information to their chapters. Check the SADD Web site at www.sadd.org or contact SADD National toll-free at 877-SADD-INC (723-3462) to see if your state has a SADD State Coordinator.

3. Contact other area SADD chapters.

You may contact either the National Office or your State Coordinator to find out where there are other SADD chapters in your area. Veteran SADD chapter members and advisors can provide valuable advice to those just getting started. They may be willing to co-sponsor activities and events or to tell you what has worked well for their chapter and what has not. This kind of communication may be especially beneficial for smaller chapters or for chapters in rural areas.

4. Stay in touch with SADD National.

SADD National is eager to hear about the wonderful work its chapters are doing across the country. Please send pictures and details of your events and activities; your chapter might be featured on the SADD Web site or in the SADD newsletter.

If your chapter members are interested in attending the SADD National Conference in July, up-to-date information is available on the SADD National Web site, www.sadd.org.

4. WHAT KINDS OF RESOURCES ARE THERE FOR SADD CHAPTERS?

What does SADD National do?

Located in Marlborough, Massachusetts, the national office of SADD supports the growth and development of SADD chapters across the country and promotes awareness of youth issues in the population at large. SADD National assists chapters via a network of state coordinators funded through government or charitable organizations to deliver education and prevention materials and programming to youth. SADD National also produces and distributes a national newsletter and program information, hosts a Web site, runs an annual national conference, conducts national research on teen attitudes and behaviors, sponsors a national Student Leadership Council and a Student of the Year, oversees use of the SADD name and mark, and raises funds for dissemination of information and programming.

What is a State Coordinator?

SADD has State Coordinators in many states. The State Coordinator is responsible for identifying existing chapters in their states and promoting new ones, supporting the work of the chapters, providing information and resources on a regular basis to the chapters, advocating for SADD programs within their states, and providing a link between chapters and the National Office. Some State Coordinators provide materials and financial assistance to their chapters.

What is the Student Leadership Council (SLC)?

SADD National has developed a competition for selecting up to 20 talented and energetic students to serve as ambassadors for SADD and advisors to the SADD National office in carrying out SADD's mission. These students typically are accomplished individuals who have demonstrated their commitment by reaching out to peers, friends, and younger students through SADD and other peer support programs. They are individuals who have exemplified the SADD model of empowerment and care giving through involvement in community service, especially in projects relating to substance abuse prevention, highway safety, and other issues that affect youth. SLC application materials go out to registered SADD advisors in the spring and are due back in the summer.

Do I need the SADD manual?

The SADD manual contains valuable information that will be helpful in the life of your chapter. To order a copy, contact SADD National by telephone at 877-SADD-INC (723-3462) or by e-mail at info@sadd.org.