



## Role of the SADD Chapter Advisor

Adults become chapter advisors in several ways.

- ⇒ Students approach an adult and ask him or her to be an advisor for an established group or to assist them in organizing a SADD chapter.
- ⇒ An adult chooses to assume the role of advisor.
- ⇒ An adult is assigned the role because of his/her position (e.g., health educator) at the school or in the community.

Although having expertise in adolescent psychology or in youth alcohol- or drug-related issues is helpful, being a prevention specialist is not required. The only real requirements are that the advisor cares about and is committed to the SADD philosophy and can empower students to communicate the SADD message in the school and community.

The advisor's role is to facilitate the activity and dynamics of the SADD chapter. The advisor acts as a liaison between the students and the school administration and promotes a SADD chapter culture that is inclusive and collaborative. The advisor also ensures that the chapter activities are aligned with the SADD mission and adhere to SADD and school policies.

SADD advisors should have a strong ability to listen to what students have to say and treat their contributions with respectful consideration. To be empowered, SADD students must feel that their ideas and input are important and valuable. The advisor has the responsibility of encouraging and reinforcing individual student efforts by facilitating each student's sense of inclusion and connectedness, power to influence, and openness to others.

- ⇒ Facilitating a sense of inclusion and connectedness allows students to begin to trust themselves and the people around them. Advisors can do this by welcoming all types of students and then helping students in the chapter discover common threads of experiences. Advisors can also help students identify perceptions, values, and beliefs they share with one another.
- ⇒ Facilitating a sense of influence allows students to learn that they have power and what they say has value. Advisors promote this sense of influence by encouraging active listening within the chapter, providing opportunities for student-led brainstorming activities and chapter meetings, and allowing students to choose activities and assignments.

- ⇒ Facilitating a sense of openness enables students to engage in discussion, share personal experiences, and value one another's perspectives and ideas. Advisors can help students learn to be open by encouraging problem solving and collective deliberation when discussing issues and by honoring the value of diversity. Such processes allow students to learn how to respect others and how to negotiate, compromise, and build consensus.

Ultimately, successful advisors are those who foster a sense of safe community within the SADD chapter, promote collaboration and diversity, and empower students to engage in, get involved in, and lead activities.

### **Advisor Guidelines**

The following are some specific guidelines for the SADD chapter advisor.

- ⇒ Be a role model for SADD students. Advisors have the ability to demonstrate collaboration, compassion, active listening, positive decision-making, a respect for differences, appropriate behavior, and a number of other values and skills that students need to learn to be successful in their SADD chapter and individual lives.
- ⇒ Understand SADD's mission and act as a resource for information about alcohol and other drugs, impaired driving, and other related issues. Advisors are not required to have expertise in the issues that their SADD chapters choose to address. It is, however, very helpful to the SADD chapter if the advisor is able to direct students to available resources that will provide the information they need.
- ⇒ Clearly define SADD's philosophy and mission to interested students. Help students understand the difference between enabling and being a friend. Often, students struggle with how to appropriately respond to their peers' drinking and/or other destructive behaviors. An advisor can assist young people in learning how to offer healthy support to their friends without compromising their own values and choices.
- ⇒ Assist SADD students in recruiting peers from diverse backgrounds. The SADD chapter should represent all the different grades and youth populations in the school. Advisors can help chapters identify and become recognized as an inclusive group in which students of different skill sets, peer groups, and other identities (gender, race, religion, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, etc.) are welcome and embraced.
- ⇒ Work with and empower students to achieve the goals and objectives of the SADD chapter. Foster a positive community atmosphere among all SADD students in which individuals feel comfortable and respect one another. SADD students are most successful when they know their advisor trusts and believes in them.
- ⇒ Help students make decisions about policy and procedures for their SADD chapter (electing officers, meeting times, etc.). There are different models of governance. Help SADD students choose the model that they feel is the best fit for the chapter.

- ⇒ Your State Coordinator can be a valuable resource. By contacting your State Coordinator, you will receive important state information, including details about available state conferences, program grants, state leadership boards, campaign information, and training opportunities. Check the SADD Web site at [www.sadd.org/scoordinators.htm](http://www.sadd.org/scoordinators.htm) or contact SADD National toll-free at 877-SADD-INC (723-3462) to see if your state has a SADD State Coordinator.
- ⇒ Register your chapter by completing the registration form online at [www.sadd.org/chapterreg.htm](http://www.sadd.org/chapterreg.htm) or by filling out and mailing or faxing the downloadable form there. Registering will ensure that you receive all mailings from SADD National. Please be sure to re-register your chapter every fall.
- ⇒ Stay in touch with SADD National. We're eager to hear about your wonderful work. Please send pictures and details of your events and activities; your chapter might be featured on the SADD website, in the SADD newsletter, or the annual report.
- ⇒ Act as liaison between school administration and the SADD chapter. Often, SADD chapters need administrators' collaboration to achieve their goals. By cultivating interest and support from key administrators, staff, and other adults in the community, advisors can gain support for SADD programming and activities.
- ⇒ Serve as facilitator for all student efforts and activities related to SADD. Help students complete the tasks they have taken on by gently providing support, guidance, and direction when needed. The goal is to empower students to feel ownership of projects and get the work done. Advisors often need to teach SADD students *how* to do things and refrain from doing things for them.
- ⇒ Encourage the chapter to involve community members, such as local law enforcement, government officials, charitable organizations, etc., in activities related to SADD. Community involvement strengthens SADD programming because it brings together resources and helps youth and adults move toward a common goal. Community involvement promotes real change in which young people and adults work together to change destructive attitudes and behavior.
- ⇒ Offer a "friendly ear" and support to all student concerns. Often students seek their advisor's counsel on projects, activities, school and family issues, and other personal situations. Successful advisors always respect and value their SADD students' input and experiences and lend support and compassion when students divulge personal feelings or perspectives.
- ⇒ Cultivate a strong relationship with parents. Parents can be a key component to the success of a SADD chapter. If supportive and enthusiastic, they can reinforce SADD and provide assistance at various levels. They can help by encouraging students to participate, lending a hand on a project, raising funds for the chapter, or advocating for SADD with other parents and influential adults in the community. Make sure parents are committed to letting students complete tasks.
- ⇒ Identify local media contacts who oversee the youth beat and keep them apprised of SADD chapter activities. Getting media coverage for SADD programming increases SADD chapter visibility and support in the community and in the school. Develop a working relationship with reporters and be sure to invite them to SADD chapter events and programs.

## Working With School Administrators

The SADD advisor is the advocate for the SADD chapter with the principal or superintendent, so it is important to keep the lines of communication open and positive.

To secure collaboration and support from the school community, advisors are encouraged to meet with administrators to discuss the need for SADD, its mission, and the positive impact it can have on the student body. Explain that SADD's message is one of empowerment and responsibility. Share SADD's literature and emphasize how SADD operates as an effective prevention program that builds student resiliency and promotes service-learning and productive youth citizenship within the school and community.

Finally, let administrators know that SADD has been scientifically evaluated and adheres to evidence-based prevention principles.

The following are some guidelines for working with the school administration.

- ⇒ Arrange a meeting between SADD chapter participants and school administrators to discuss SADD's mission, the school climate, and student issues.
  - Invite a small number of SADD students (two to six) to join the meeting.
  - Set an agenda in advance and discuss it with the students who will attend the meeting.
  - Prepare with the students what points need to be made and assign who will make which points.

Ask administrators for a commitment to support the SADD chapter. Administrators can show support in a number of ways. The following are just a few.

- Provide time and space for the chapter meetings.
- Offer a stipend for the advisor or activity funds for programming.
- Attend SADD activities.
- Encourage students to join SADD.

These are some ways that advisors can work with school administrators throughout the school year.

- ⇒ Help SADD students create goals and objectives that are consistent with school policies.
- ⇒ Seek approval in advance for all SADD activities, especially those that require full school attendance.
- ⇒ Request approval for early release times for SADD students when appropriate.
- ⇒ If the advisor is a teacher, ask for a substitute teacher when the SADD chapter participates in activities off campus.

Advisors should include student representatives at meetings with administrators whenever possible.