

## HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

1. Connect with Me conversation starter cards are for starting conversations anywhere, anytime to connect with each other. They can be asked by adult to youth, youth to adult, or youth to youth.
2. These cards were created for youth around middle school age and older, but can be simplified for younger ages. Some topics may be more geared for older youth. Use the cards as you see fit.
3. Ice Breakers start the conversation in a relaxed way. Each category also has an “*Ice Breaker*” card to get you started on that specific topic.
4. These cards are not meant to be done at one sitting or all in order. Pull out a few at a time while at dinner or stuck in traffic. If you find yourself wanting to cover a specific topic, pull out that section and use it.

Continued on other side...



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES

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Health Services with permission from Missouri  
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## HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

5. When using these cards to connect, remember that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.
6. Youth may bring up thoughts or ideas that differ from your own. Challenge yourself to keep an open mind when having these discussions with young people.
7. No card set could cover everything you need to discuss about “The Tough Stuff,” but in this topic there are a few questions to start some difficult conversations.
8. To order more cards and learn more, visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Adolescent Health website: <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/adolescent-health.htm>.
9. Spanish version available to download through the website. Para cartas en Español, visite el sitio abajo.



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## CATEGORIES FOR DISCUSSION

	Ice Breaker
	Building Connections
	Taking Action
	Technology
	Relationships
	Development
	Body Image
	Mental Health
	Substances
	Growing Up
	Tough Stuff



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Connect With Us at:

[https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/  
adolescent-health.htm](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/adolescent-health.htm)

and

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Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Would you rather be the worst  
player on a winning team or  
best player on a losing team?  
Why?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

If you could describe yourself  
as one type of ice cream, what  
would it be? Why?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What interesting thing  
happened today?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

\_\_\_\_\_ has been all over  
the news lately. What have  
you been hearing about  
this?



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***Start talking!***

If you could have any  
super power, what would  
it be?



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***Keep going!***

What would you do with  
that super power?



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***Start talking!***

What sorts of things do you  
do after school (like sports,  
volunteer, hang-out, work  
or clubs)?



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***Keep going!***

What are other activities  
that you would like to do?  
What is keeping you from  
doing them?



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## *Ice Breaker*

What are some pet  
peeves that you have?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you won a million dollars, how would you spend the money?



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## *Ice Breaker*

What animal represents  
you the best? Why did  
you choose that animal?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you could be on any reality  
or game show, which one  
would it be and why?



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## *Ice Breaker*

Would you rather be alone  
on an island or be with  
someone who never stops  
talking?



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## *Ice Breaker*

How do you find a  
common interest with  
someone you just met?



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***Start talking!***

What are some things you  
love about school?



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***Keep going!***

What are some things you  
would change?



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***Start talking!***

What is your favorite tradition?  
What makes you like it the  
most?



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***Keep going!***

What traditions would you  
like to pass on to others?



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***Start talking!***

What does a good role model look like? Is \_\_\_\_\_ a good role model?

(Include well known figures, local community members, etc. Do not include family members.)



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***Keep going!***

What differences would there be in a role model for teens versus adults?



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***Start talking!***

When you need to talk about  
something important, who  
do you turn to?



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***Keep going!***

How do you choose who to talk to about certain things?



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***Start talking!***

What was the best part of  
your day? Why?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What was the worst part of  
your day? Why?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How do teachers try to encourage and show they care about you and other students?



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***Keep going!***

What would you rather they  
do to show encouragement  
and care to students?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you could get everyone's attention in the world for one minute, what would you say or do? Why?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you could solve one  
problem in the world, what  
would it be?



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***Start talking!***

What do you like about  
where you live? What do  
you dislike?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What could you do to make it better? What could others do to make it better?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What kinds of things do you  
see happen that make you  
feel uncomfortable?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What do people do when  
these things happen? What  
could you do?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What does bullying look  
like at school? In our  
community?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Why is it difficult to step in  
when people are bullying?  
What could make it less  
difficult?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What are some signs  
that someone may be  
experiencing abuse?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Who could you tell if  
you found out a friend is  
in an abusive situation?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What does the word  
respect mean to you?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do people show  
each other respect?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What does it mean  
to lose respect for  
someone?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

If you ever lost respect for  
someone, how did that  
affect your relationship?



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***Start talking!***

Are there things that happen  
during the school day that  
cause you to feel unsafe?  
What kinds of things?



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***Keep going!***

What are ways to make  
students feel safer at school  
during the school day?



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## *Ice Breaker*

Would you rather have a phone but no one to be social with, or spend a day with friends but have no phone?



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## *Ice Breaker*

What is your favorite  
website, social media  
platform, or way to connect?  
Why?



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***Start talking!***

How do people act different  
online versus in person?  
What makes it different?



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***Keep going!***

How do you wish people would  
treat each other on line? What  
would that look like?



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***Start talking!***

I've heard the term  
"cyberbullying."  
What does that mean?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What does cyberbullying  
have in common with  
in-person bullying?  
What's the difference?



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***Start talking!***

Do your friends share their  
passwords (phone, e-mail,  
social media)?

Do you think it's OK to do this?



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***Keep going!***

What if they are sharing with  
family? A dating partner?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How do you decide who to  
share your passwords with?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What would you do if someone asked for your password and you didn't want to share it?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What are some unspoken  
rules about texting?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do you feel when  
someone texts you too much?  
Doesn't text you back?



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## ***Start talking!***

What are the advantages of using technology to communicate? What are the risks of using technology to communicate?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How can a person keep  
himself or herself safe?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you could take a trip  
anywhere, where would you  
go and who would you take?



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## *Ice Breaker*

Describe the relationships  
that you have.



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***Start talking!***

What's the difference  
between “someone you  
know, but are not close with”  
and “someone who is your  
friend”?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What steps would you take  
to become friends with  
someone?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

Which qualities are  
especially difficult to find in  
a friend?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Are you a good friend  
according to the qualities you  
mentioned? What can you do  
to be an even better friend?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Has a friend ever upset  
you? Why did they upset  
you?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Have you ever upset a friend?  
If so, how did that feel?  
What did you do to fix it?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How are relationships  
different in real life than in  
the media?  
(e.g. books, movies, TV, etc.)



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How are break-ups  
different in real life than in  
the media?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Describe your idea of  
a healthy and happy  
relationship. How would you  
treat each other?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What are the things that  
you won't put up with in a  
relationship?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

Is being in a relationship  
important to you? Is it  
important to your friends?  
Why?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What can be fun about  
dating? What's not so fun  
about dating?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How does your partner  
respond when you say  
no or set a boundary?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

All relationships have conflict. How do you both handle conflict in this relationship?



Connect With Me

## *Ice Breaker*

If you could trade places  
with anyone in the world,  
who would it be? Why?



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## *Ice Breaker*

What would the world be  
like if everyone was the  
same?



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## ***Start talking!***

Think about life in elementary school. What do you miss about it? What don't you miss?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Think about life as a teenager.  
What do you like or are excited  
about? What don't you like or  
makes you nervous?



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***Start talking!***

What does puberty mean  
to you?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How does it affect male  
and female bodies  
differently?



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***Start talking!***

What physical changes have  
you experienced?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What was the hardest change  
for you? Where did or could  
you go for advice?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What emotional changes  
have you experienced?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What was the hardest change  
for you? Where did or could  
you go for advice?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

Body changes start at all different times. How would it feel to be one of the first or last to go through these changes?



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***Keep going!***

Are your friends going through  
the same body changes?  
How do you compare?



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you had a theme song,  
what would it be? Why?



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## *Ice Breaker*

List three things that  
you like about yourself.



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***Start talking!***

What do you think a  
healthy body looks like?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What is healthy about your  
body?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How does what you see in  
the media/ads make you feel  
about your body?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Is it realistic to compare  
bodies in the media to people  
in your everyday life?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What would your friends say  
are your best features?  
(physical or otherwise)



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Do you agree with your friends? Would you add to or take away anything from that list?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What does your  
“body image” mean  
to you?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What can positively and negatively influence a person's body image?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What would the world look  
like if we all looked the  
same?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do differences affect the  
world?



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## *Ice Breaker*

Describe your perfect day.



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## *Ice Breaker*

If you described your day  
using emojis, what would it  
look like?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What does it mean to you  
to be happy?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Is it realistic to be happy all the time?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

When have you felt  
stressed? What makes you  
feel stressed?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do you deal with  
stress?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What have you heard people  
say that has hurt someone's  
feelings?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How did you feel or what did  
you do when you heard those  
things?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Describe the last time you felt angry. How did you handle that situation?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How did you calm  
yourself down when  
feeling angry?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

Sometimes emotions are hard to control. If you or a friend needs help, who could you talk to?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How could you  
encourage someone else  
to seek help?



Connect With Me



## ***Ice Breaker***

Would you rather go to a party with a lot of people you barely know or spend time at home with a few close friends?



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## *Ice Breaker*

What is your favorite commercial jingle? Can you sing it?



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***Start talking!***

What are you hearing  
about substance abuse?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Do those messages  
make a difference?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

How do you define  
substances? Give a list of  
examples.



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What kind of substance  
are you aware of in your  
school/community?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What are some examples  
of drugs and alcohol used  
in the media?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do these examples  
affect decisions you and  
your friends make?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What effects of substance  
use have you seen?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How does that make you  
feel?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Why do you think some  
young people use  
substances?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What might be some  
consequences/  
advantages?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

Why do you think some  
young people choose  
not to use substances?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What might be some  
consequences/advantages?



Connect With Me

## *Ice Breaker*

What adult privileges  
are you looking forward  
to?



Connect With Me

## *Ice Breaker*

What adult responsibilities  
are you not looking forward  
to?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What big changes  
are happening in  
your life?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do those  
changes make you  
feel?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What are you doing to prepare for  
\_\_\_\_\_?  
(an upcoming change/transition)



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What do you still need to  
learn to feel ready? Where  
can you find help?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What are you most looking  
forward to in the next few  
years?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What obstacles do you think you will face? What are your plans to overcome them?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

Change often brings stress.  
Do you know anyone that went  
through a big life change? How  
did they cope?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What would you have done  
in that situation?



Connect With Me



***Start talking!***

What do you want your  
future to look like?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What steps do you need to  
take to get there?



Connect With Me

## ***Know Before You Go***

Here are some suggested conversations to have with youth before they are on their own (schooling, move out, get a job, military, etc.).

“Do you know how to...”

- Manage money? (pay taxes, credit/debit cards, budgeting, online banking, apply for loans)
- Schedule health related appointments?
- Do laundry?
- Cook healthy meals?
- Use public transportation and vehicle maintenance?
- Find employment?
- Practice good hygiene?
- Interview and follow a dress code?
- Wake up and be on time (punctual)?
- Have manners or be respectful of others?
- Communicate effectively with others?



Connect With Me

## *Ice Breaker*

What experiences  
have you learned  
from?



Connect With Me

## ***Ice Breaker***

What topics do you talk about with friends that you would not normally with an adult? Who do you think knows more about those topics?



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What would a  
perfect family look  
like? Why?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

How do you want your  
future family to be different  
from the family you have  
now? How do you want it to  
be the same?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

Messages about sex are  
all around us. Where  
are you getting your  
information about sex?



Connect With Me



***Keep going!***

What messages do  
you believe? What  
have you questioned?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

What are reasons some  
people say “no” to sex?  
What are some reasons  
people say “yes” to sex?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What should someone  
do before having sex?



Connect With Me

## ***Consider This...***

*Trauma can be defined as, “a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.” Each person’s experience is different, so one may see an event as traumatic while another does not.*



Connect With Me

## **Consider This...**

*Different types of traumatic events that may need to be discussed could include divorce, break-ups, bullying, suicide attempt or a death of someone, family or dating violence, natural disasters, sexual abuse, etc.*



Connect With Me

***Start talking!***

What are some traumatic  
events you have heard  
about?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

Everyone reacts differently  
to traumatic events. What  
reactions have you seen from  
other people?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

What traumatic events have happened to your friends and/or family? How have they handled it?



Connect With Me



***Keep going!***

How could you help someone  
who has been through a traumatic  
event?



Connect With Me

## ***Start talking!***

Everybody experiences trauma at some point in their life. Who can you talk to about a traumatic event?



Connect With Me

***Keep going!***

What could make it hard to  
heal from a traumatic event?  
What could make it easier?



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