



## NATURAL HIGH'S 4 FOR 4 SERIES: 4 WEEKS, 4 WAYS TO ENGAGE

*Note: This series was originally shared via four emails in May 2020. For anyone who missed them, this downloadable PDF provides all of the same content that was offered as part of that email series. Enjoy!*

We all know that staying at home has its challenges — parents grapple with how to keep conversations fun and engaging. Educators need to help kids develop key skills in a distance-learning environment.

**The fact is that keeping our kids engaged and active is more important now than ever.**

This is a vital time to build protective measures that will help your child or student make good decisions. Prevention experts are already warning that we are seeing a rise in drug use and addiction rates during this time of stay at home. We need to help our young people cultivate positive coping mechanisms — and that starts with crucial conversations and activities that keep them focused.

That's why Natural High is kicking off our **4 for 4 Series**.

Below you will find 4 weeks of conversations and activities designed to help you engage your kids with discussions that are compelling and that build key skills.

Our goal is to help you use your time at home to strengthen bonds while promoting healthy decision-making. We know there are challenges right now, and we're here to help.

If you have friends who are looking for compelling ways to engage their kids, and you think that they might benefit from a month's worth of thought-provoking activities and discussions, then let them know about Natural High's **4 for 4 Series**!

## **Week One: Share Your Natural High**

**Fact:** We know that if young people are directly engaged in awareness and prevention, they are less likely to choose drugs and alcohol. In fact, if middle schoolers choose not to consume drugs and alcohol, they are 14x less likely to ever become addicted. That's why we have a proactive approach - we teach kids to say **no** to drugs and alcohol by saying **yes** to a natural high.

**A natural high is an activity that engages you. It can be something you're already doing or a brand new activity you're just trying out.** A natural high can be a sport, playing an instrument, listening to music, taking a hike, reading, hanging out with friends - there are many options.

**Do:** Now's the time to really focus on your natural high if stay-at-home directives allow for it. And, if not, maybe you have discovered a new activity that brings you joy. Talk to your kids about your own natural highs.

- How did you discover them?
- How do they make you feel, especially during times like this?
- Are there new natural highs you have discovered, or olds one you have rediscovered as a family, during these past several weeks?
- If your kids are having to adjust their go-to activities, discuss the change with them. Discuss potential activities that could be fun for them. Help them come up with new natural highs!

**Share:** We'd love to see you doing what you love and what brings you joy! **Share an image of you, your kids, your students, or your family doing your Natural High with #4for4 on Facebook @LiveNaturallyHigh or Instagram @NaturalHigh2020.**

**And, if you still want more:** If you're looking for an independent activity for your child or student to help guide them in researching a natural high, look no further than our activity library: [Research Your Natural High](#)

## Week Two: Conversations About How We Cope

This week we focus on conversations about coping strategies.

**Fact:** More than half of high-school seniors have tried alcohol or drugs. Kids can turn to drugs and alcohol when they are going through challenging transitions, to relieve stress, and to fit in.

**What You Can Do:** Share *your* coping strategies with your kids. **Remember, there is a lot of research showing that positive family influences, such as family bonding and ongoing dialogue, are factors in increasing the likelihood that our kids will make healthy decisions when it comes to drugs and alcohol.**

Here are some ideas for starting and continuing the conversation about positive ways to cope:

- How are you getting through these times? Do you meditate, exercise, talk with friends? Think of what you want to share with your child.
- Have your child share their coping mechanisms with you. What works for them?
- Next time one of you feels stressed, remind each other to focus on a strategy to relieve some of your anxiety. Maybe try one another's strategies as well!

In her Natural High video, singer/songwriter, [Colleen D'Agostino](#), talks about managing stress. Listening to her story is another way to start the conversation with your kids.

**Something to Share:** We'd love to know what coping strategies work for you and your child. Share your strategies with us! Maybe your wisdom will help others get through these challenging times as well.

Share a strategy that works for you and/or your kids using **#4for4** on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

**And, if you still want more:** If you're looking for an activity for your child or student to help guide them in thinking through their coping strategies, look no further than our activity library. While staying at home, family conversations or virtual conversations with peers can spark ideas for new strategies: [Stressors and Coping Strategies](#)

### Week 3: Make Time for Family Time

Welcome to week three of Natural High's 4 for 4 Series. This week our focus is on making time for family time.

**Fact:** The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University found that **teens who frequently eat with their families have half the risk for substance abuse as the average teen.** [Read on](#) for a very quick and highly informative summary of these findings.

Staying at home is hard, but it's also a great opportunity to make more time for family and key discussions with your kids — maybe even get them chatting about topics they haven't talked about openly before. **Below are this week's suggestions for making the most of your time around the table together.**

**Watch Together:** Professional skateboarder, [Terry Kennedy](#), lost his mother to an overdose at an early age. Listen to him describe the impact family has on an individual, how he stays naturally high and why it's important to him.

**Talk Together:** Talk tonight with your kids! Sharing can happen over dinner, while taking a walk together, or as a quick check-in before everyone heads off to bed. Competing schedules, extracurriculars and the challenges of modern life make routine meal times challenging for many families. **The key is making time when and how you *can*, and incorporating family routines and rituals that allow you to connect.** Here are some conversation starters for when you do:

- What is one thing you've learned about yourself during these challenging times of staying at home?
- What is one thing you wish we *could* do that we can't right now?
- What is something we have in our home right now or that we *can* do right now that makes you grateful?

We hope this exercise helps bring you closer to the kids in your lives and to remember the value of family gathering time once daily life returns to its typical hustle and bustle.

## Week 4: Who's on Your Kid's Support Team?

Welcome to the last week of Natural High's 4 for 4 Series. This week's topic focuses on decision-making and how a strong support network can help promote healthy decisions.

For those of us parenting, teaching or mentoring kids, we know that cultivating good decision-making skills is an important part of our job.

**“Decision making is crucial because the decisions your children make dictate the path that their lives take,”** writes psychologist Jim Taylor, Ph.D., in [Psychology Today](#). **“They need to judge the risks and rewards of their decisions in the short run and the long term.”**

Offering opportunities for young children to make decisions when the stakes are low is a great way to nurture this skill. As kids get older and are faced with more choices, the stakes get considerably higher, especially when it comes to drugs and alcohol.

**Fact: Substance abuse is one of the leading causes of death for youth, and 1 in 4 families are touched by addiction.** We can help our kids choose a natural high over an artificial one by teaching them how to find support when confronted with peer pressure or faced with decisions they are unsure about.

**What You Can Do:** Who we seek out for advice and support makes a big difference. As adults, we have our go-to people we can count on when we need to talk through a tough decision. Our kids can count on us of course, and there may be times when they need or even prefer help from others as well.

**Talk with your kids about who they feel would make up their support team - who they would turn to for help and guidance.** One of our favorite Natural High activities walks kids through identifying these people. We encourage you to take a look at it – it's a great tool for opening a parent-child conversation: [Develop My Support Team](#)

After you talk with your kids, make sure that any support team members know they are on your kids' team and that your kids know how to contact them.

We hope this series has helped to bring you closer to the kids in your lives and helps reinforce the value of taking time to connect and reflect. Together, we can give young people the tools they need to thrive!

Sincerely,

Gina Morris - CEO, Natural High



## **SUPPORT NATURAL HIGH**

We provide all of our content free of charge so that kids, educators and families everywhere can access quality drug and alcohol prevention resources. We rely entirely on philanthropic support to make this happen. If you enjoyed this series and would like to make a contribution in support of our efforts, we would greatly appreciate it!

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