

# TOGETHER FOR LIFE

## *Adult Toolkit*

*for Community Coordinators*

---

A pilot project to increase seat belt  
use in Utah's rural communities

---



[www.togetherforlifeutah.org](http://www.togetherforlifeutah.org)

# TOGETHER FOR LIFE *Adult*

Seat belt use is important for the individual, for families, and for communities. The economic costs and societal impact of traffic crashes in the United States are devastating and affect everyone. The Together for Life Project “tools” developed for the Adult Toolkit are designed to increase seat belt use using multiple strategies for this level of the social ecology.

The Together for Life Adult tools were developed to help community coordinators grow protection and reduce harm associated with not wearing a seat belt. The three specific actions for adults include:

- promoting the importance of always wearing a seat belt;
- engaging others to always wear a seat belt; and
- establishing family rules about always wearing a seat belt.

## Promoting the Importance of Always Wearing a Seat Belt

With regard to a driver’s decision to wear a seat belt, the research in Utah reveals there are discrepancies in day and night time driving, and whether the driver is driving in a rural or urban area.<sup>1</sup> Community coordinators can highlight the importance of ALWAYS wearing a seat belt and can draw attention to the discrepancies that exist between what people think they should do and what people actually do.

The goal is to create behavior change by highlighting gaps between what people are thinking and what people are doing. For example,

- If I believe it is important to protect myself by always wearing a seat belt, why don't I always wear a seat belt?
- If people who care about me want me to always wear a seat belt, why don't I always wear a seat belt?
- If I want people I care about to always wear a seat belt, why don't I always ask others to wear a seat belt?

See the *Utah Community Survey of Adults on Seat Belt Use*.

## Engaging Others to Always Wear a Seat Belt

Bystander engagement emphasizes the importance of a shared responsibility for the safety and well-being of others. Encouraging people to speak up and get involved to prevent unsafe behaviors sends a message of caring about the community. Safety is everyone's responsibility. Bystander engagement is increasingly being emphasized in the literature regarding the influence that bystanders have on behavior. Various researchers have studied bystanders in relation to a variety of situations including cyber bullying,<sup>2</sup> relationship violence,<sup>3</sup> and risky driving behaviors such as not wearing a seat belt.<sup>4</sup>

Getting others to always wear a seat belt is an important action to increase seat belt use. Results from the Center for Health and Safety Culture, Utah Community Survey of Adults revealed unifying attitudes about getting others to wear a seat belt, but also identified misperceptions.

## Establishing Family Rules about Seat Belt Use

Adults are in a position to significantly influence the behaviors and decisions of youth. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and injury for youth ages 1-24.<sup>5</sup> In Utah, for drivers and passengers, wearing a seat belt is a primary law.<sup>1</sup> Adults play a large role in ensuring that children are properly buckled in a car seat or when appropriate, are wearing a seat belt. Developing family rules about seat belt use is a strategy supported by Utah residents already.

Having family rules about always wearing a seat belt is one targeted strategy to grow protection. Family rules might include:

- Wear a seat belt at all times while driving or riding in a vehicle.
- Have all passengers in the vehicle you are driving wear a seat belt.
- Have all passengers in a vehicle in which you are a passenger wear a seat belt.

In addition to establishing rules about seat belt use, families might also consider consequences for not following family rules about seat belt use. When developing consequences, it is important to connect the consequence to the original behavior.<sup>6</sup> It is also helpful for the consequences to be task and time specific.<sup>6</sup>

Some consequence examples that parents might consider related to seat belt use include:

- Suspending or limiting driving privileges for a specified length of time.
- Not allowing peers or others to ride in the vehicle for a specified length of time.

A meaningful conversation about the importance of wearing a seat belt and the dangers and risks associated with not wearing a seat belt can set the stage for developing family rules about seat belt use. Adults are in a position of authority to influence children's behaviors. Setting family rules about seat belt use is a critical action that establishes clear expectations for children and teens.

## Conclusion

Always wearing a seat belt, getting others to wear seat belts, and establishing family rules about seat belt use are strategic action steps that adults can take to increase seat belt use in Utah. Growing protection and reducing harm associated with not wearing a seat belt requires everyone to get involved. Prevention leaders can engage communities in dialogue about this important topic by steering conversations, highlighting common values and protective behaviors among adults, and closing misperceptions.

## Tools

### 1. Statistical Report

Complete Utah Community Survey of Adults on Seat Belt Use.

### 2. Key Findings Report

An overview of the behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes of adults based on the Utah Community Survey.

### 3. Activity Decision Making Worksheet

A worksheet designed to examine the impact of an activity to increase protective behaviors of adults.

### 4. Speaking Points

Important information to engage adults in meaningful conversations.

### 5. Press Release

Sample press release.

### 6. Video

Suitable for television or web placement, created with county specific data.

### 7. Audio

Suitable for radio or web placement, created with county specific data.

### 8. Print Media

Pieces to coordinate with video/audio with county specific data.

### 9. Event-Based Resource

For local communities.

## References

1. Utah Department of Public Safety, Highway Safety Office. (2018). *Utah Crash Summaries*. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Department of Public Safety. Retrieved from <http://highwaysafety.utah.gov/crash-data/utah-crash-summaries/>
2. Barlinska, J., Szuster, A., & Winiewski, M. (2013). Cyberbullying among adolescent bystanders: Role of the communication medium, form of violence, and empathy. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 23, 37-51. doi: 10.1002/casp.2137
3. Potter, S., Fountain, K., & Stapleton, J. (2012). Addressing sexual and relationship violence in the LGBT community using a bystander framework. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 20(4), 201-208. doi: 10.3109/10673229.2012.712838
4. Otto, J., Ward, N., Swinford, S., & Linkenbach, J. (2014). Engaging in worksite bystanders to reduce risky driving. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behavior*, 26(Part B), 370-387.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System). Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars>
6. Devine, M. (2015). *Using consequences to maintain your parental authority*. Empowering Parents Child Behavior Help. Retrieved from: <https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/using-consequences-to-maintain-your-parental-authority/>

**Recommended Citation:** Center for Health and Safety Culture. (2021). *Utah Together for Life Adult Toolkit for Community Coordinators*, Bozeman, MT: Montana State University.