



# WHO CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

## **Impact Teen Drivers Middle School Curriculum Facilitator Guide**

# Who Can Make a Difference?

## I Can, You Can, We Can!

### Facilitator Guide

**Target Demographic:** Middle school

**Topics:** Preventability and dangers of reckless and distracted driving, good decision-making and speaking up, strategies and solutions for young passengers and teen drivers to be safe

**Length:** 35–50 min

#### Step/Slide 1: Opening Discussion (3–5 minutes)

**Objective:** This first step is meant to engage students in a conversation about the power they have to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

**Facilitator Script:** Hello! I want to ask you all to take a minute and think about what it means to make a difference and I want you to think about a time someone made a difference in your life, your week or even just in your day! Maybe you forgot your lunch, and someone shared theirs...maybe you forgot your gym sneakers.... Can anyone share? (*Have 3–4 students share their answers.*)

**Transition:** Those were awesome examples. Today we are going to explore ways that you can make a difference and maybe even save a life.



## Step/Slide 2: Who Influences You? (2–3 minutes)

**Objective:** This step is meant to engage students in a conversation about who influences them and how they influence others.

**Facilitator Script:** So, who influences you? *(Have 2–3 students share their answers, and affirm or redirect their answers as needed.)* Those were some great examples. Influencers can be friends, parents, coaches, teachers, neighbors, and more.

Now, how do YOU influence others? Can we get a few examples of ways that you have influenced someone else? *(Have 2–3 students share their answers, and affirm or redirect their answers as needed.)*

Yes! Lots of examples. All of us have probably influenced our friends, whether it's trying a new food, seeing a particular movie, or maybe it was about making a safety choice.

**Transition:** Today we are going to explore how your choice to speak up can make a difference and save lives.



## Step/Slide 3: Speak Up. Save a Life. (video 1) (2–4 minutes)

**Objective:** Students will learn how to effectively speak up to their peers during unsafe situations. This video demonstrates a passenger causing a visual distraction for the driver and the driver speaking up calmly to keep the car ride safer.

**Facilitator Script:** What was not safe about that passenger's behavior? What was the driver doing right? Have you ever been in a car where a passenger was causing a distraction? (*Have 1-2 students share their answers per question.*)

**Transition:** So, in this example, the driver spoke up for herself so she could focus on the car ride. Now, I'm going to ask some questions I want you to answer to yourself silently. Have you ever thought about what makes a good driver? How about a good passenger? Let's see what goes into being a good driver or a good passenger.



The “Speak Up, Save a Life—Visual Distraction” video is already included in the PowerPoint presentation deck. The video can also be accessed on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/RbCdPuMReuE>



## Step/Slide 4: Safe Riding (3–5 minutes)

**Objective:** Students will identify the four primary types of distraction (visual, manual, cognitive, and auditory), as well as the importance of seat belts and driving at a speed that is safe for the conditions.

**Facilitator Script:** *(Take 1-2 responses per question.)*

What are some things that might take a driver's eyes off the road? *(Phone, changing the navigation, or looking for something in a bag...)* These are **visual distractions**.

What are some things that might take the driver's hands off the steering wheel? *(Texting, eating something or drinking coffee or water...)* These are **manual distractions**.

What could cause a driver's mind to not be focused on the road? *(Conversation, argument, thinking about a problem at school or work, being tired...)* These are **cognitive distractions**.

What are some things that could make a driver's ears not alert to what's outside of the car? *(Radio too loud, passengers too loud...)* These are **auditory distractions**.

Why are seat belts so important? *(They keep you in your seat, they keep you from being thrown from the vehicle...)* Seat belts are actually your first line of defense in a car crash.

What does driving at a safe speed look like here? What are some road conditions or road hazards that we have around here? *(We have snow/ice/rain... we have farm equipment/cyclists/pedestrians sharing the roads with cars...)*

**Transition:** Let's see why our time together today is so important and why we are talking about safe driving and riding at all...



## Step/Slide 5: Why Does This Matter? (2-3 minutes)

**Objective:** Students will learn that teen driver crashes are number one cause of preteen and teen serious injury and loss of life.

**Facilitator Script:** So, while you might have driven something in that past, like a golf cart, a go-kart, or something like that, most of you are not a lot, if at all, right? Why am I here at your middle school talking about being a safe driver and safe passenger? Did you know that the leading cause of serious injury and loss of life for people your age is teen reckless and distracted driving car crashes? Let me share how being a passenger can make the ride riskier for everyone.

Adding one teen passenger to a teen driver's car increases the risk of a fatal crash by one and a half times. Two teen passengers actually doubles the risk. And when a teen driver is carrying three or more teen passengers, the risk of a fatal crash quadruples.

And I want you to know that these injuries and deaths are 100% preventable. You can make the choice as a passenger to NOT get in a teen driver's car, especially if their license does not allow them to carry teen passengers. You might even need to tell an adult that you cannot ride with that teen driver. What are some ways you could tell someone that you cannot ride with a teen driver? *(Have 2-3 students share suggestions.)* Yes, you could say your parents don't allow it... that you don't want them to get an extra ticket if they get pulled over with you in the car...

**Transition:** Everyone has the power to make the choice to drive and ride distraction-free and make safe choices, whether you are a driver or a passenger.



## Step/Slide 6: Why Does This Matter? (1-2 minutes)

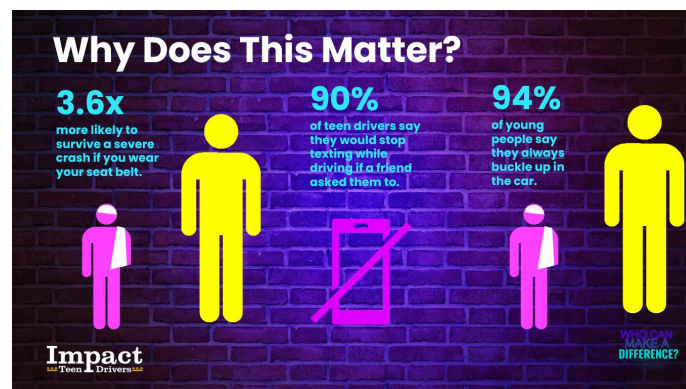
**Objective:** Students will learn that injuries and deaths in teen driver crashes can be prevented by simple behaviors.

**Facilitator Script:** There are so many things you can do to help keep yourself and your friends safer on the road.

I mentioned earlier that seat belts are your number one line of defense in a crash, they are so important for your safety. You are 3.6 times more likely to survive a severe crash if you are wearing your seat belt correctly! And most young people do wear their seat belt, 94% of young people say they always wear one while in a vehicle.

And your voice matters. 90% of teens say they would stop texting while driving if a friend asked them to.

**Transition:** Now we know that not only that our choices to be safer matter, we know some specific choices we can make to help keep ourselves and others safer on the road. Let's watch another example.



## Step/Slide 7: Speak Up. Save a Life. (Video 2) (2-4 minutes)

**Objective:** Students will learn how to effectively speak up to their peers during unsafe situations. This video demonstrates a passenger causing a visual distraction for the driver and the backseat passenger speaking up calmly to keep the car ride safer.

**Facilitator Script:** Who spoke up in this scenario? That's right, it was another passenger talking to the front seat passenger. The back seat passenger just spoke right up, "Hey!" What are some ways that you can speak up to a friend? (*Have 1-2 students share their answers.*)

OK, maybe we just tell them plain and simple "Stop doing that," maybe we make it a little funny "I don't want the cafeteria pizza to be my last meal, please stop distracting the driver," or maybe we say something friendly "I like hanging out with you lots of place, let's not make it the hospital though, can you keep your eyes on the road?"

**Transition:** OK, we've learned about different types of distraction and how we can choose to be a safe driver or passenger. Let's see just how much risk comes along with choices a teen driver could make and how things can be different.



The "Speak Up, Save a Life—Cognitive Distraction" video is already included in the PowerPoint presentation deck. The video can also be accessed on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/3v9KoFaLxPg>





## Step/Slide 8: Choices and Risks (3–5 minutes)

**Objective:** The interactive Relative Risk Wheel or “Wheel of Death” supports students’ concrete understanding of statistics associated with high risk behaviors for teen drivers their passengers.

**Facilitator Notes:** *Choose a day or night scenario that is likely to be familiar to a middle school student. Talk through the number of passengers riding with a teen driver, what the distractions are, and what the increased risk of a fatal crash is for each scenario.*

*Sample:* A teen sibling is driving you and two friends home from Saturday morning basketball practice. You all decide to go through the drive-thru for sodas and fries. Imagine the driver is taking a sip of their drink when they get a text message. Does this ride sound like a ride you might be a part of? Do you see how three passengers, eating and drinking, and reading a text in the daytime increases the fatal crash risk to almost 782% or 8x? If this driver were to text back, the crash risk goes up to 1282% making this ride almost 13x riskier. Let’s see what changes can be made to improve the safety of this ride. What could our driver have done differently with the phone? (*Ignore it, put it the phone in “do not disturb” mode before driving...*) That changes the risk to 482%. Wait until you get home to eat and the increased risk goes down to 282%. If the ride was just you and your sibling, things get a whole lot better, 139%.

**Transition:** This is why our actions in a car matter. These simple things that are OK to do outside of a car can have lifechanging consequences if done while driving.

**Technical Support:** Click Risks on the slide to be taken to the web-based Wheel. Or download the Wheel at that link, prior to your presentation, to embed the wheel into your PowerPoint. Instructions are available in the downloadable file.

Move the Wheel by clicking and holding each circle in turn and dragging it to align the little arrows. Visit the Wheel at <https://www.impactteendrivers.org/wcmad-wheel/>



## Step/Slide 9–10: Hunter’s Story or Ryan’s Story (7–8 minutes)

**Objective:** Show either Hunter’s Story (Teen Version) or Ryan’s Story. Students will connect emotionally with a real story and see the importance of good decision-making around teen driving and riding, the importance of speaking up, and the preventability of the real crash and fatality.

**Facilitator Script:** I’m going to share a real story with you, I am not going to show you anything gory or graphic.

**Play Slide 9, with the appropriate video.**

**Transition:** Do you see that this crash was 100% preventable? Let’s talk about what you can do to make a difference?

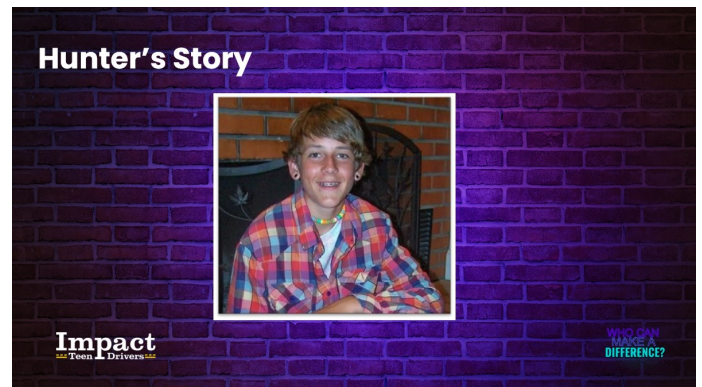
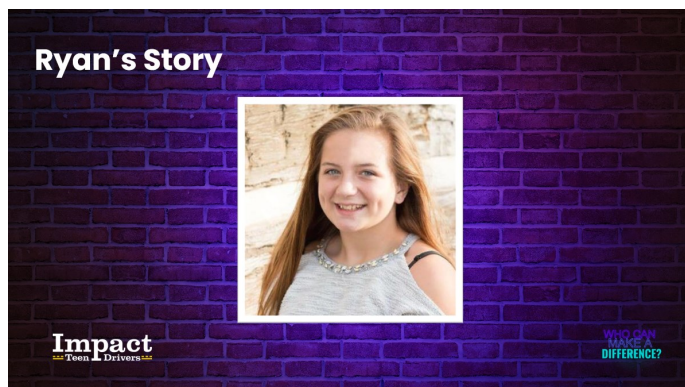
**Technical Support:** Choose either Hunter’s Story (Teen Version) or Ryan’s Story prior to your presentation. The videos are available to download at <https://www.impactteendrivers.org/personal-stories-videos/> to include in your PowerPoint presentation deck.

You can also access the videos on YouTube.

Hunter’s Story (Teen Version): <https://youtu.be/vT2bhstHxmk>

Hunter’s Story (Teen Version with Open Captions): <https://youtu.be/8FlsYXRq9N4>

Ryan’s Story: <https://youtu.be/CyI0nCsdmjc> (please note that the 0 in this URL is the numeral zero)



## Step/Slide 11: Who Could Have Made a Difference? (The Story Behind the Story) (3-5 minutes)

**Objective:** Students will engage in a discussion about Hunter's Story or Ryan's Story.

**Facilitator Note:** After viewing the video, cover the correct Story Behind the Story and discuss what could have been done differently.

### Hunter Clegg

Hunter was charismatic and vibrant, with a spirit that drew people of all ages to him. Hunter was very adventurous and loved the outdoors. He was gentle and kind, freely giving his time to support others. At 14 years old, Hunter was getting ready to become a high school freshman.



### The Day of the Crash:

Hunter had a close group of friends that he had grown up with and been friends with for years. One weekend, Hunter and his group of friends decided to go on an overnight camping trip together. They had a great time hiking, fishing, and hanging out. When it was time to go back home, the boys got into the car with Hunter's friend's older brother who was going to drive. The driver was 17 years-old, inexperienced, and had an Intermediate License (e.g. Provisional, Junior, Learner License) that he had only held for 2 months.

As they were driving *\*through the mountain roads*, the passengers started egging on the young driver to drift around a corner. He managed to drift around the first corner, and wanting to be the cool friend, decided to go even faster and to drift around the next corner. Unfortunately, the next corner came up too quickly. The inexperienced driver overcorrected the steering wheel, shot across the road, and hit a tree directly where Hunter was sitting, taking Hunter's life. The others walked away physically unharmed, but mentally devastated by the loss of their close friend.

## **Choices That Could Have Prevented the Crash:**

### Passengers:

- The passengers could have chosen not to put peer pressure on the driver to drift around the corner.
- Instead, the passengers could have spoken up when the car ride became unsafe. They could have said that they felt uncomfortable and unsafe.
- The passengers could have encouraged the driver to stay focused on the road and drive at an appropriate speed.
- The passengers could have chosen not to get into the car since the driver had an Intermediate License (it was not legal for driver to drive with teen passengers without an adult in the car).

### Driver:

- The driver could have spoken up about the driving restrictions of his Intermediate License and refused to drive the boys.
- The driver could have chosen not to cave into peer pressure.
- The driver could have asked the boys to settle down and be good passengers.
- The driver could have chosen to drive safely.

## **Message:**

This crash and Hunter's death were both 100% preventable. As a driver, it is your responsibility to get your passengers to where you are going safely. As a passenger, it is important that you do not distract the driver or encourage them to make poor choices. You have the power to speak up and use your voice to keep the car ride safe. It is important that you know your driver and only ride with drivers who have plenty of driving experience and who hold a valid license with no restrictions.

\*optional to share depending on the audience (ex: if you are presenting in an urban area, sharing this information may not relate to the audience and can be excluded).



## Ryan's Story Behind the Story:

Ryan was a funny, smart, and friendly 13 year-old. She was someone who could light up a room the moment she walked in. She became friends with almost everyone she met. Ryan and her 16-year-old sister, Riley, were very close. They hung out together all the time.



## The Day of the Crash:

One day after school, Riley and Ryan started to drive home from school. Riley's friend asked for a ride home, so she got to sit in the passenger seat while Ryan sat in the back seat of the car. Riley made the good decision to give her friend her cell phone to choose some music as they began to drive home. *\* They were driving on a rural two-lane highway with no shoulder.\**

About a half-mile from the school, Riley's friend was trying to shuffle the playlist. A crash had happened about a mile up the road on the other side of a small rise in the highway. As a result, the crash started to cause traffic to back up. Riley was not aware of the traffic that was backed up as she drove over the rise in the road and due to inexperience, she was not scanning the horizon to look for hazards. When Riley realized that traffic was stopped in front of her, Riley slammed on her breaks and lightly tapped the car in front of her.

The car behind them was driven by a 17-year-old girl who was driving her brother home after school. The driver was talking to her mom via speaker when she came over the hill. Due to inexperience and that moment of inattention, she did not start to slow down in time and crashed directly into Riley's car. Trapped between the two cars, Riley's car became like an accordion. Ryan and Riley were both taken to the hospital and Ryan was pronounced dead from her injuries.

### **Better Choices That Could Have Prevented the Crash:**

- Riley and the passengers in her car could have made sure the cell phone was put away so it would not distract them.
- The driver in the car behind them could have put away her cell phone so she was not distracted.
- The young, inexperienced drivers could have chosen not to have passengers in the car with them.
- Riley's friend could have chosen not to ask for a ride home, remembering that teen passengers are distractions.
- Riley could have scanned the horizon for hazards, seeing the traffic up ahead and stopping with enough distance between her car and the car in front of her.

### **Message:**

This crash and Ryan's death were both preventable. As a passenger, it is important that you encourage everyone in the car to put away distractions. You have the power to speak up and use your voice to keep the car ride safe. It is important that the driver always keeps their attention on the road and puts away any distractions. Even hands-free cell phone use can be a dangerous distraction as it takes your mind off driving. It is important that young drivers get plenty of experience before they start adding passengers to the car with them, even siblings can be a distraction.

\*optional to share depending on the audience (ex: if you are presenting in an urban area, sharing this information may not relate to the audience and can be excluded).

## Step/Slide 12: How Can You Make a Difference? (2-3 minutes)

**Objective:** This step revisits and summarizes, in a concrete and direct way, the positive behaviors and safer choices that have been discussed throughout the presentation, to emphasize that the problem of reckless and distracted driving is preventable and has simple solutions.

**Facilitator Script:** There are so many simple things we can all do to help keep our car rides safer. You should **Know Your Driver**. Think about if you really know that person, is it legal AND safe for you to ride with them?

**Know Your Passengers** too, are they people you can trust to make safer choices?

**Stop Distractions**, you can help keep the noise level low, encourage everyone to wait to eat until the car is parked, or some other way. What are some other ways you might help stop distractions? *(Take 1-3 answers from students.)*

**Ensure Everyone Wears a Seat Belt.** This is one of the most important things you have 100% control over for yourself. If you don't get a working seat belt, don't get in that car.

**Make Good Choices Every Ride.** Everyone think it won't happen to them, or an unsafe choice might be OK just this one time. But it does happen every day, and it only takes one time. There's no do-over after a car crash.

**Speak Up When You Feel Unsafe.** We went over some ways that you might talk to a driver or another passenger, whether it's simple and direct, it's funny, or it's extra kind.

**Transition:** Speaking up is the most powerful tool you have! It's your right to get where you are going safely, and it is no one's right to hurt someone else through their behavior in a car.



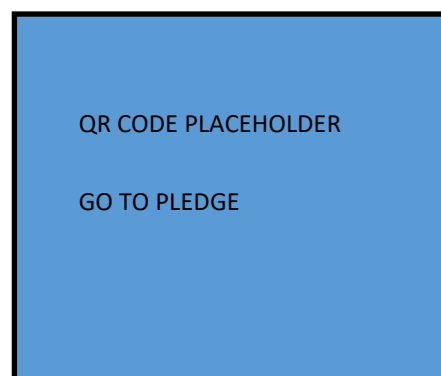
## Step/Slide 12: Make a Difference Pledge (2–3 minutes)

**Objective:** Encourage students to take the Make a Difference Pledge. The Make a Difference Pledge summarizes the concrete action steps a pre-teen or young teen can take to help keep car rides safer for everyone.

**Facilitator Script:** You know a lot about how to make a difference and help stop reckless and distracted driving. The *Make a Difference Pledge* is available here: [impactteendrivers.org/our-programs/middle-school](https://www.impactteendrivers.org/our-programs/middle-school)

**Facilitator Tip:** Make a Difference Pledge Cards are available to request or order. If you prefer to order Pledge Cards, please contact us by using the form at: <https://www.impactteendrivers.org/order-materials/>

**Conclusion:** Who can make a difference? You can, I can, together we can!





## Step/Slide 13: Conclusion (2-3 minutes)

**Facilitator Notes:** *Thank students and the teacher/adult for participating in the Who Can Make a Difference? Program. Feel free to customize this slide with your name and contact information.*



Questions about this program or Impact Teen Drivers?

Contact Impact Teen Drivers at

[info@ImpactTeenDrivers.org](mailto:info@ImpactTeenDrivers.org)

(916) 733-7432