SAFE & SUBSTANCE - FREE 2015

PARENT'S RESOURCE GUIDE FOR HELPING YOUR TEEN STAY SAFE THIS PROM & GRADUATION SEASON

Sponsored by:

Youth Health Connection/South Shore FACTS

Plymouth Country District Attorney's Office

Norfolk County District Attorney's Office

SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions)

Caron Treatment Centers

TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
Plymouth County District Attorney

Dear Parents:

As families across Plymouth County prepare for proms, commencement exercises, and other events, we encourage parents to take the time to remind their children about the importance of making responsible decisions as they enjoy these celebrations.

As District Attorney, I have seen firsthand the devastation that can result from poor decisions regarding drug and alcohol consumption. Lives can be lost and parents and teens can face criminal and civil liability in the wake of poor decisions.

Please join all of us in the law enforcement and education communities in encouraging our children to be more responsible. Take some time to talk to your children about these issues; it could save their life or the life of someone else.

We wish nothing but the best for your children and their continued success throughout their lives.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
District Attorney
Plymouth County

Dear Parents,

As we approach these special times of celebration, I urge you to reinforce with your children the importance of good decision making. To assist you in this effort, I am pleased to announce Project Prom Sense and Operation Graduation. These $250 grants are available again this year to high schools in Norfolk County to defray the cost of hosting school sponsored alcohol-free activities and safe transportation for students.

I would also like to reinforce the importance of safe storage and disposal of prescription medication. Sixty-eight percent of first time drug users get their drugs from their own medicine cabinets. I have partnered with police chiefs to provide medicine return boxes in nearly every police station in Norfolk County. Please dispose of your unused medicine today.

I see far too frequently the devastation that follows unsafe decision making involving underage drinking and drug use. The two primary causes of preventable death in Norfolk County are opiate overdose and motor vehicle homicide. We must all work together to prevent these tragedies.

For more information about these funding opportunities or resources for substance abuse prevention, please visit my website, www.norfolkda.com.

I wish you and your family safe and successful celebrations.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Morrissey
Norfolk District Attorney

Know the Facts about Underage Drinking and Drug Use

According to the results of the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Massachusetts Youth Health Survey in 2013:

• Thirty-six percent of high school students reported having an alcoholic beverage in the past 30 days (current use). Nearly one fifth (19%) reported binge drinking (having five or more drinks of alcohol in row within a couple of hours) in the past 30 days.

• Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and are two and a half times more likely to become abusers of alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21.

• In 2013, forty-one percent of all high school students reported having used marijuana in their lifetime and one quarter (25%) used marijuana in the past 30 days.

• Seven percent of high school students have used marijuana before the age of 13.

• Less than half (38%) of high school students reported that they believe smoking marijuana occasionally would be a moderate or great risk to their health.

• Seventy-five percent of high school students reported that it would be very easy or fairly easy for them to obtain marijuana.

• Thirteen percent of high school students reported ever taking a prescription drug that was not their own.

• Five percent of high school students reported taking over-the-counter medication to get high at least once in their lifetime.

Consequences of Underage Drinking

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems (higher absence and poor or failing grades)
- Social problems (fighting and lack of participation in youth activities)
- Legal problems (arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk)
- Physical problems (such as hangovers or illnesses)
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Disruption of normal growth and sexual development
- Physical and sexual assault
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide
- Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning
- Memory problems
- Abuse of other drugs
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects
- Death from alcohol poisoning

Tips for Parents

Be a Good Role Model

Studies show that parents significantly influence their teen's choices and lives. With this in mind, parents need to continue to effectively communicate with their teen. Learning to talk and listen to your teen can help prevent them from making poor choices, sometimes with devastating consequences. Communicate not only verbally, but also by the way you live. If you have used alcohol or other substances in the past, be honest, but brief. Set a good example in your own home and socially. ***"Walk the walk and talk the talk."*** Set consistent ***"no use"*** rules about underage drinking and other substance use. Parents need to provide opportunities for their teen to learn critical thinking and decision-making skills to combat the peer pressure to use alcohol or other substances.

Stay Involved With Your Teen

To help prevent early use of alcohol or other substances parents need to remain involved in their teen's life. If parents resign themselves to the belief that they cannot influence their teen's behavior, they increase the likelihood that their teen will use alcohol or other substances.

Focus on the Problem Before It Starts

People who go through adolescence to age 21 without smoking, using alcohol or other substances have a very good chance of never abusing these substances. Unfortunately, today's exposure to alcohol and other substances starts as early as grade school. Teens need to learn the skills to resist peer pressure to use alcohol and other substances before being exposed to that pressure.
Early prevention and education can decrease the possibility of drug use among teens.

"Everyone Uses Drugs/Alcohol"

Teens often believe the blatant misconception that "everyone uses drugs/alcohol" based on their peer relationships and the messages received by the media. Parents need to convey a message that not everyone uses drugs/alcohol and as parents we need to set clear guidelines.

Talk About the Dangers of Using More Than One Drug

Teens need to know the risk of each drug and the possible deadly combination of using more than one drug. Even when combining what is perceived to be a "harmless" herbal drug, using them together with another drug can be fatal. It is so important that teens are aware of the possible effects of combining drugs. For instance, marijuana can inhibit the natural feeling of nausea, thus decreasing the body's tendency to reject toxic amounts of alcohol. The unknowing teen could reach the lethal danger of alcohol overdose when using marijuana and alcohol together. Talking to your teen about drugs will not lead to using drugs, but rather help them make healthy decisions.

Don't Make It Easy For Your Teen to Use Alcohol or Other Drugs

Teens who are limited in their exposure to others who use drugs and alcohol are less likely to use substances themselves. Studies point to the pattern that limiting accessibility to drugs/alcohol decreases a teen's first experience with them. It is important for parents to be aware that their teen will most likely use drugs and/or alcohol at a friend's house than any other place. Do not always assume that your teen is being appropriately supervised when at a friend's home. Sometimes it is best to go with your instincts; if you feel uncomfortable about one of your teen's friends or their family, follow up on it. Build a support system and encourage open communication with your teen, so they receive consistent messages and supervision in nurturing environments.

Help Build A Healthy & Resilient Teen

Parents can help to create an environment that decreases the risk for drug use and other at-risk behaviors. The following list of proactive factors can help a teen become more drug-resistant:

- Positive communication - nurture an aspect of trust
- Daily family rituals - including eating dinner together
- Appropriate supportive parental role models
- Extended family involvement
- Diversity in peers and peer activities
- Community/religious involvement
- Positive presence of law enforcement
- Leisure family activities

Quick Tips for Parents

- Keep alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs and toxic chemicals locked up and out of reach.
- Appropriately dispose of unused prescriptions. Call local police to ask about self-service medication return kiosks.
- Know where your teen is at all times, especially during the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- Be aware of your teen's spending habits and limit their disposable income.
- Educate yourself and be aware of the signs and symptoms of substance abuse.
- Create a contract with your teen with a promise to not use drugs and alcohol with clear consequences outlined. (See page 11)
- Discuss the dangers of substance use with your teen.
- Set a clear curfew and enforce it.
- Provide your teen with specific refusal statements.
- Create a code word or phrase that your teen can use when in an uncomfortable situation involving drugs and/or alcohol.
- Be in touch with other parents and ask about adult supervision at social gatherings.
- Pay attention to frequent sleepovers and social gatherings at the same home.

Information provided by Caron Treatment Centers

Warning Signs of Underage Drinking or Drug Use

Adolescence is a time of change and growth, including behavior changes. These changes usually are a normal part of growing up but sometimes can point to an alcohol or drug problem.

Parents and caregivers should pay close attention to the following warning signs that may indicate underage drinking or substance abuse:

- Changes in mood, including anger and irritability
- Withdrawal, social isolation or other signs of depression
- Academic and/or behavioral problems in school
- Change in motivation to perform in school
- Rebelliousness
- Deceitfulness
- Interest in pro-drug culture (music/movies/literature)
- Legal issues
- Difficultly with communication
- Restlessness or giddiness
- Changing groups of friends or avoiding old friends
- Low energy level/fatigue
- Reduced interest in activities and/or care in appearance
- Finding alcohol, drugs or paraphernalia among a teen's things
- Smelling alcohol or "minty cover-up odor" on a teen's breath
- Problems concentrating and/or remembering
- Slurred speech
- Coordination problems
- Coming home after curfew and avoiding interaction
- Bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- Sudden concern for privacy or locking bedroom doors

Treating Adolescent Substance Abuse Problems

Some teens can experience serious problems as a result of drinking or drug use. These problems require intervention by trained professionals. Professional treatment options include:

- Seeing a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist or other health care professional.
- Participating in outpatient or inpatient treatment at a substance abuse treatment facility or other licensed program.

Communication Tips

Open communication is one of the most powerful tools parents can use to connect with and protect their teen. But, when discussing tougher topics such as drugs and alcohol, just figuring out what to say can be a challenge.

- Talk early and often, in developmentally appropriate ways, about your concerns and theirs, regarding alcohol and drugs.
- Remind them that you will not tolerate underage drinking and that it is illegal.
- Ask your teen if they have ever been in a situation in which alcohol/drugs were available or offered to them and then use their answers as a springboard for further discussion.
- Be prepared for those "challenging" conversations. Your teen may mention having tried alcohol; their friends' drinking habits; having felt pressured or uncomfortable around friends who were drinking; or may even ask you if you drank as a teen.
- Consider sending messages via email, text, and Twitter to reinforce your "no substance use rule" and to express your concern about the dangers that underage drinking holds for your teen.
- When you talk to your teen, have some responses ready. For example:
    - "It sounds like you had to make an important choice."
    - "I'm worried about you being in a situation like that."
    - "I'm glad you told me. Let's talk about it."
    - "How did you feel when your friends did that?"
    - "Let's plan some things you can do if you're in that situation again."
    - "How do you think you can avoid that situation in the future?"
- Teach your teen how to avoid, remove themselves and decline alcohol and other substances in a risky situation. Make sure they choose the best way for them. Use role-playing.
- Develop a family mission statement about your no substance use policy.
- Make sure you balance your conversations about the dangers of alcohol and other substances with care and support. For example, you can say:
    - "I don't want you to get hurt."
    - "I am here to help if you ever feel like you need alcohol to deal with stress/anxiety."
    - "Your life goals deserve your full attention."
- Make sure to set rules regarding:
    - The consequences for breaking the rules; consider using a contract. (See page 11)
    - Driving under the influence; riding with someone who has been drinking/using drugs.
    - Calling for help for a friend who has passed out from drinking/using drugs (911.)
    - Calling parents to ask for a ride with no questions asked. Establish a code word your teen can say to let you know they are in trouble.
    - Where they will be, who they will be with and what time they will get home, etc.
    - Attending or hosting parties only if they are alcohol and drug free.
    - How the trust you have in your teen is determined by their honesty and demonstrated responsible behaviors.
- Make sure your conversations with your teen are flexible. If they become heated, end the conversation until another, more appropriate time.

Underage Drinking and Driving

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
(Information from reports presented by the NHTSA unless otherwise noted)

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. In 2010, seven teens ages 16 to 19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries. Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash.

In 2013, 9 percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were between 15 and 20 years old.

In 2011, 32 percent of the young drivers (15 to 20 years old) who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher; 26 percent had a BAC of .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher.

Drivers are less likely to use restraints when they have been drinking. In 2011, 57 percent of the young drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking were unrestrained. Of the young drivers who had been drinking and were killed in crashes, 70 percent were unrestrained.

If you are under 21, you can also be arrested for alcohol impairment at .02% g/dl. Even under .08 you are still impaired. Under the law you can still be convicted for driving impaired.

Teen Distracted Driving

If you are driving with friends or family in the car, you are responsible for their safety. Don't get so engaged in talking that you lose your concentration on the road. Your distraction could seriously injure or kill others.

Teen drivers are especially susceptible to distraction while driving, and the consequences can be deadly. **Texting and cell phone use while driving are especially dangerous. For Massachusetts teens under the age of 18 yrs old, it is illegal as well. The only exception is when reporting an emergency.**

Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent - at 55 mph - of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)

A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive. Twenty percent of teens and 10 percent of parents admit that they have extended, multi-message text conversations while driving. (University of Michigan Transportation Institute)

Massachusetts Underage Drinking Laws

• **Person under 21 years of age purchases/attempts to purchase/makes arrangements for another to purchase/uses fake I.D. to purchase alcoholic beverages for self or another.**
Penalty: License suspended for 180 days, $300.00 fine. MGL ch. 138 § 34A

• **Minor in possession/transports/carries alcoholic beverages.**
Penalty: Maximum $50 fine, first offense, maximum $150 fine second and subsequent offense; license suspended for 90 days. MGL ch. 138 § 34C

• **Contributing to the delinquency of minor.**
Penalty: Maximum 1 year prison; $500 fine; or both. MGL ch. 119 § 63

• **Sale, delivery, furnishing alcohol to person under 21 years old.**
Penalty: Maximum prison term 1 year, maximum $2,000 fine; or both. MGL ch. 138 § 34

• **Operating Under the Influence of Alcohol. (OUI)**
Penalty: Penalties range from first offense/alcohol program and license suspension to subsequent offenses/imprisonment and license suspension.
MGL ch. 90 § 24P

- Under 21 years of age, refusal of breathalyzer or reading of .02 or greater, results in immediate 180 day suspension, up to 3 years suspension upon conviction.

- Impoundment of defendant's vehicle for 12 hours following a refusal, plus the costs of towing, storage & maintenance of the vehicle. MGL ch. 90 § 24 (f)(iii)

- Age 17-21 first offense with Blood Alcohol Count (BAC) .20 or greater, 14 day inpatient Driver Alcohol Education Program required. MGL ch. 90 § 24D

***OUI motor vehicle (MV) homicide.**
Penalty: Maximum prison term **15 years,** maximum $5,000 fine; license suspension **15 years** first offense, coupled with a prior OUI conviction or a subsequent offense MV homicide. MGL ch. 90 § 24G

***OUI serious bodily injury.**
Penalty: Maximum prison term, 10 years, maximum $5,000 fine. MGL ch. 90 § 24L

***Manslaughter by motor vehicle(MV).**
Penalty: Maximum prison term 20 years, 5 years minimum mandatory jail sentence; maximum $25,000 fine; license loss 15 years to life. MGL ch. 265 § 13½

Massachusetts Social Host Liability

"The kids are going to drink anyway, so why don't we provide a place in our home for them where they can be supervised?"

Good intentions aside, this approach may subject both parents and teens to criminal penalties and civil liability. If teenage alcohol consumption has taken place at a supervised party and the teenagers have left the home, the "social host's" responsibility does not end.

Will I be responsible for underage drinking even if I am not at home or at the place of the event?

YES! The Social Host Liability Law applies anytime you believe a party will take place at your home or any place that you have control over.

Social Host Liability Law places responsibility on the person who allows minors to possess alcohol. The intoxicated person remains responsible but now shares responsibility with the host who provided the alcohol.

Legal Consequences of Social Host Liability

Sale, delivery, furnishing alcohol to person under 21 years old.
Penalty: Maximum prison term 1 year, maximum $2,000 fine; or both. MGL ch. 138 § 34

Contributing to the delinquency of minor.
Penalty: Maximum 1 year prison; $500 fine; or both. MGL ch. 119 § 63

This information is brought to you through collaboration with:
Plymouth County District Attorney's Office
The Brockton Police Department
Brockton Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol: Health Imperatives

Social Host Liability - FAQs for Students

(Source: Campbell, Campbell, Edwards & Conroy http://socialhostliability.org/)

"I am under 21, does the Social Host Law apply to me?

- Yes, the law states "whoever" furnishes alcohol to a person under 21, "whoever" means everyone.

"I am having a party, but not providing alcohol. If some of my friends bring their own alcohol, can I be held liable as a social host?

- Yes, the law extends beyond the actual supplying to simply allowing underage person to consume alcohol on the premises the host controls.

Support Your Teen's After-Prom Activities

Reinforce Safe Driving Practices:

- Buckle Up: As a passenger, ask that your teen always buckles up. If your teen is the driver, make sure they ask all passengers to buckle up before they start the car. **Remind them this is the LAW!**
- No texting and driving. If your teen is driving ask them to put their cell phone away when driving. If they are a passenger, encourage them to speak up if the driver is texting while driving. They could volunteer to text for the driver.
- Practice the driving route: If your teen will be driving and if any location they are traveling to is new to them, take them on a test drive at night. Making a test drive at approximately the same time of evening when they will be driving will help your teen become aware of the route, road and lighting conditions.

General Safety Practices:

- Emergency Plan: It is a good idea to establish a code word that your teen can text or use in a phone call to alert you that they need to be picked up right away. Take the time before the event to discuss this plan.
- Be prepared:
  - For Teens: Make sure your cell phone is fully charged prior to the event and that you have a phone charger with you in case it is needed.
  - For Parents: Have the cell phone numbers of all the teens (or their parents) attending the event with your child.
- No alcohol or drugs.
- Curfew: Make sure your teen and friends they are with know what time each member of the group is expected home. Remind them all to allow extra time for dropping everyone off. Also remind any driver still on a Junior Operator License of the Night Restrictions which prevents driving between the hours of 12:30 A.M. and 5 A.M.
  (Commonwealth of MA Driver's Manual, Ch. 1, pg. 44. http://bit.ly/1kssnQb)

CONTRACT FOR LIFE

A Foundation for Trust and Caring

This Contract is designed to facilitate communication between young people and their parents about potentially destructive decisions related to alcohol, drugs, peer pressure, and behavior. The issues facing young people today are often too difficult for them to address alone. SADD believes that effective parent- child communication is critically important in helping young adults to make healthy decisions.

YOUNG PERSON

I recognize that there are many potentially destructive decisions I face every day and commit to you that I will do everything in my power to avoid making decisions that will jeopardize my health, my safety and overall well-being, or your trust in me. I understand the dangers associated with the use of alcohol and drugs and the destructive behaviors often associated with impairment.

By signing below, I pledge my best effort to remain free from alcohol and drugs; I agree that I will never drive under the influence; I agree that I will never ride with an impaired driver; and I agree that I will always wear a seat belt.

Finally, I agree to call you if I am ever in a situation that threatens my safety and to communicate with you regularly about issues of importance to both of us.

_____

YOUNG PERSON

PARENT (or Caring Adult)

I am committed to you and to your health and safety. By signing below, I pledge to do everything in my power to understand and communicate with you about the many difficult and potentially destructive decisions you face.

Further, I agree to provide for you safe, sober transportation home if you are ever in a situation that threatens your safety and to defer discussions about that situation until a time when we can both have a discussion in a calm and caring manner.

I also pledge to you that I will not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, I will always seek safe, sober transportation home, and I will always wear a seat belt.

_____

PARENT/CARING ADULT

Students Against Destructive Decisions

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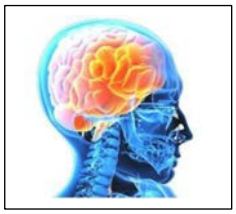
Resources

Contributor Resources:

1. **Youth Health Connection**, a community benefit program of South Shore Hospital has many resources available. To access these resources visit: **www.southshorehospital.org/yhc**
2. **The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office** has brochures and resources available on many topics. To learn more visit: **http://www.mass.gov/daplymouth/**
3. **The Norfolk County District Attorney's Office** has brochures and resources available on many topics. To learn more visit http://www.mass.gov/norfolkda/prevention.html
4. **ParentTeensMatter**, this website was created by SADD as a resource for parents. **http://www.sadd.org/ptm/index.html**
5. **Caron Treatment Centers** is a non-profit leading provider of drug and alcohol addiction treatment providing residential treatment as well as local Student Assistance Programs. To learn more visit: **www.caron.org** and **http://www.caronsap.org/**

Understanding Teen Brain Development

1. **National Institute of Mental Health** has a 10-page brochure entitled "The Teen Brain: Still Under Construction." Single copies can be ordered from the website, or to view the free pdf copy visit: **http://1.usa.gov/qdwenv**
2. The **drugfree.org site**, a section on teens and typical teen behaviors. Video clips, including "A Parent's Guide to the Teen Brain." Visit: **http://bit.ly/1iJSvDL**
3. **The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** has a new campaign targeting the prevention of underage drinking entitled "Talk, They Hear You." Visit: **http://1.usa.gov/174BZJi**



Parenting Resources:

1. **Lock the Cabinet** provides information for parents about the dangers of teen prescription drug use and access from the home medicine cabinet. For information, prevention strategies, an interactive FACTS section and news visit: **http://bit.ly/No4f6G**
2. **Power to the Parent** is a Westchester County New York-based Prevention Coalition and they have created a Prom Safety Toolkit for Parents that can be accessed at: **http://bit.ly/1bGRiQ2**
3. For answers to questions about the **Massachusetts Social Host Liability** Laws please visit: **http://bit.ly/186aU91**

Substance Prevention Awareness Resources:

1. **Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at Children's Hospital**, view "15 Minutes to Save Your Teen's Life" by Dr. John Knight: **http://bit.ly/HxMaAo**
2. The **drugfree.org site** has multiple community education programs such as PACT 360, Play Healthy, and Time to Act. There is even a program for grandparents titled Grandparents 360 **http://bit.ly/1fdPrxX**

Resources

Treatment Resources:

1. **Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse Services** provides the Commonwealth with prevention resources including a Helpline, 1-800-327-5050, publications, data, reports and more. To learn more visit: **http://1.usa.gov/1kYbDVo**
2. **Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR) -** link to guides that includes information on how and where to get help in MA. To learn more visit: **http://bit.ly/14dlX1f**
3. **Caron Boston** is a regional office through Caron Treatment Centers and was established as a key resource for professionals, the recovering community and Caron alumni. **http://bit.ly/1sdaUPX**

Vehicle Safety Resources:

1. **ATT "It Can Wait,"** this website is devoted to a public safety campaign to heighten the awareness of the dangers of texting while driving. There are powerful videos, social media sharing links, ways to pledge to not text and drive and even a section with a simulator. To learn more visit: **http://www.itcanwait.com/**
2. **Teen Driver Source: Research Put Into Action** is a program of Children's Hospital Philadelphia with funding from State Farm Insurance Co. There are resources for teens, parents, educators and researchers. To learn more visit: **http://bit.ly/1cSJXZc**

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Virginia Tech Transportation Institute: http://www.vtti.vt.edu/

For more information or to learn more about the Youth Health Connection Program, contact Kimberly Noble at Kimberly_noble@sshosp.org or via telephone at 781-624-7415.