

Off to College: Important Conversations to Have

HAVE SERIOUS TALKS WITH YOUR COLLEGE-BOUND TEEN: 6 GOOD REASONS WHY

Your 18-year-old is entering an environment where alcohol use among 18 to 20-year-olds escalates dramatically. Talk with your young adult about avoiding underage drinking, even if you suspect alcohol use during high school. Research suggests that teens who talked with their parents about alcohol avoidance strategies before they began their first year of college were more likely to avoid alcohol, limit its use, and spend less time with heavy-drinking peers.

STATS PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

ACADEMIC: About 25% of students report academic consequences of drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.

HEALTH: 19 % of college students meet the criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence.

SAFETY: 696,000 students are assaulted by another student who has been drinking; 97,000 students are victims of alcohol - related sexual assault or date rape; 400,000 students have unprotected sex; 100,000+ students report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex; 3.3 million students drive under the influence of alcohol.

LEGAL: 5 percent of students are involved with the police or campus security as a result of their drinking; 110,000 students are arrested for an alcohol related violation.

KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING:

Continue to keep the lines of communication open throughout all college years. Regular conversations show your continuing concern about your young adult's well-being and also provide an opportunity to reinforce your zero-tolerance stance of underage drinking. Regular communication also makes it easier to check for any potential alcohol use or early signs of a problem. Academic, social, or emotional difficulties can be signs of heavy drinking as well as risk factors for other serious concerns.

