

Potential Signs of a Drinking Problem

- Drop in grades
- New friends that you don't know
- Ignoring or defying rules
- Mood changes
- Sudden lack of motivation
- Reduced self discipline or hygiene



If you think your teen has a problem:

- Be calm and talk with your teen
- Avoid arguing with your teen if he or she is drunk
- Let your teen know that you are concerned and willing to help
- Avoid making excuses or covering up
- If your teen stays out late, stay awake for them when possible, to show you care and are interested in what they are doing

TALKING POINTS

Discussing the effects of alcohol before your teen is invited to a party can be helpful. Teens often don't know how drinking on a given occasion will affect them. What is common to all individuals is that alcohol depresses the brain and slows down its ability to control the body and the mind. This is one reason why alcohol can be dangerous.

How can I reduce the chances that my teen will drink if he or she is invited to a party?

- Get the address or phone number of the party.
- Make sure a parent will be present and confirm that alcohol or drugs will not be allowed (e.g., call the parent and offer to help).
- Offer to pick up your teen if a situation at the party becomes uncomfortable.
- Discuss the kinds of situations in which your teen might want to call you.
- Greet your teen when they come home from a party.

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- Individual community members
- Centre County Community Foundation
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- ONDCP Drug Free Communities
- Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, Bureau of Alcohol Education
- Prevention Research Center, the Pennsylvania State University

Selected References

Cremeens, J. L., et al. (2008). Parent-child communication to reduce heavy alcohol use among first-year college students. *College Student Journal*, **42**: 152-163.

Turrisi, R., Wiersma, K., & Hughes, K. (2000). Binge drinking –related consequences in college students: The role of drinking beliefs and parent-teen communications. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, **14**: 342-355.

For more information:

www.CentreCares.org

Parents are the Solution

Part 5 in a Series of 6

TALKING TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT ALCOHOL

Tips for Enhancing Discussions about Drinking

A Collaboration of the State College Communities that Care Partnership

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TO TALK TO THEIR TEEN ABOUT ALCOHOL?

- Over 90% of teens try alcohol outside the home before graduating from high school.
- Although health classes offered in school provide some information about alcohol, many important issues related to drinking are not covered.
- Having discussions with your teen about alcohol use will allow you to share your values and expectations about drinking.

HOW DO I BRING UP THE TOPIC?

This can often be done by personalizing an issue. For example, you can refer to your own experiences:

- “When I was a teen, many kids drank alcohol in order to make it easier to talk to people. What have you noticed? What do you think about this?”
- Another alternative is to refer to someone you know: “A friend of mine at work has a son who got arrested for drinking and driving. What do you think about this?” Specific responses are less important; these are just examples of ways to break the ice.

AVOIDING CONFLICT

Conversations about alcohol use can become very heated and may turn into lectures about what is right and what is wrong. Teens will turn off to this approach. Picking a time to have conversations when both of you are calm and neutral is helpful. Try to focus on using open-ended questions that engage your teen and get him or her to talk about his or her own feelings.

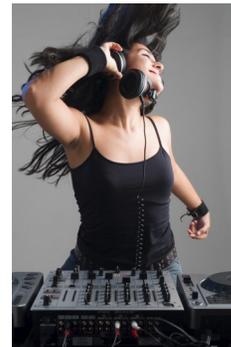
SOLVING PROBLEMS

Teens drink for a variety of reasons, such as releasing social inhibitions and feeling good. These “positive” motivations for drinking need to be put into perspective for the teen. If you address the issues directly with your teen, then he or she will be better able to think through the choices he or she makes.

WHY DO TEENS DRINK?

Research has shown that teens drink for the following reasons:

- To celebrate
- It makes it easier to socialize
- It gives them something to do
- To feel more like an adult
- Peer pressure
- To improve their mood
- To feel sexier
- To feel powerful
- To worry less
- To sleep better



SOLUTION: Discuss alternative ways your teen can accomplish these without alcohol, such as celebrating without alcohol, etc.

SOME REASONS WHY TEENS DON'T DRINK

- To avoid alcohol consequences such as hangovers or getting sick
- Underage drinking is illegal
- Don't want to drink and drive
- Committed to a healthy lifestyle
- Concern about getting caught
- Risk of health problems
- Concern about developing a drinking problem

TALKING POINTS

Discuss reasons for not drinking and the short- and long-term risks associated with drinking. How do reasons for drinking and NOT drinking balance each other?

