

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER BULLETIN

January-February 2008

Don't serve alcohol to teens.

It's **unsafe**.

It's **illegal**.

It's **irresponsible**.

Learning to Drink Responsibly

Some young people talk about "learning to drink responsibly" before they get to college. Learning to be responsible about drinking does not require learning how to drink. Parents may think about introducing their kids to alcohol at home. STOP and THINK!

Studies show that the

younger teens are when they start drinking, the more likely they are to develop problems with addiction in the future. Furthermore, the legal drinking age is 21. If you imply to your teens that it is okay to break the law "as long as you do it here at home with me," you are sending them a basic message that individuals can

decide which laws they will obey and which laws they will break. Instead, we can educate our children to make responsible decisions about NOT drinking when they are under the legal drinking age.

Editorial by Pat Giuliani, Walton High School Parent Leader.

Mark your
CALENDAR



NC Parent Network Meeting
Wednesday, January 30,
2008

10:30 AM-1:00 PM

Host: Wake Forest University Health Sciences
Topic: Substance Abuse is a Disease
Presenter: Dr. Allyn Howlett, Anthony Liguori, Linda Porrino
Location: Piedmont Triad Research Park
Piedmont Triad Community Research Center
215 South Chestnut Street
Winston-Salem NC

NC Parent Network Meeting
Wednesday, March 26, 2008
10:30 AM-1:00 PM

Host: NC National Guard, Charlotte
Presenter: Kim Shropshire, NCDPI
Topic: Dropout Prevention

4th Annual NC Parent Network Conference
Making Prevention a Priority: Get Involved, Get Results!
April 22-23, 2008
First United Methodist Church of
Elon, NC
www.ncparentresourcecenter.org

ANSWERING THE QUESTION: "DID YOU EVER USE DRUGS?"

For many parents, this question is a tough one to answer. Unless the answer is no. You want your kids to follow your rules and you don't want them to hold your history up as an example to follow — or as a tool to use against you. But the conversation doesn't have to be awkward, and you can use it to your advantage by turning it into a teachable moment.

Some parents who used drugs in the past choose to lie about it — but they risk losing their credibility if their kids ever discover the truth. Many experts recommend that you give an honest answer — but you don't have to tell your kids every detail. As with conversations about sex, some details should remain private. Avoid giving your child more information

than she asked for. And ask her a lot of questions to make sure you understand exactly why she's asking about your drug history. Limit your response to that information.

The discussion provides a great opportunity to speak openly about what tempted you to drugs, why drugs are dangerous, and why you want your kids to avoid making the same mistake. The following are good examples of the tone you can take and wording you can use:

- "I took drugs because some of my friends used them, and I thought I needed to in order to fit in. In those days, people didn't know as much as they do now about all the bad things that can happen when you

take drugs."

- "Everyone makes mistakes and trying drugs was one of my biggest mistakes ever. I'll do anything to help you avoid making the same stupid decision that I made when I was your age."

- "I started drinking when I was young and, as you can see, it's been a battle ever since. Because of my drinking, I missed a big part of growing up, and every day I have to fight with myself so it doesn't make me miss out on even more — my job, my relationships, and most importantly, my time with you. I love you too much to watch you make the same mistakes I've made."

www.drugfree.org

WHEN DID REHAB BECOME SO COOL?

British pop singer Amy Winehouse wasn't kidding when she released that single your child's incessantly singing—called, what else, "Rehab" — earlier this year. Just months after the U.S. debut of the song, in which the soulstress belts, "They tried to make me go to rehab / I said no, no, no," Winehouse has been in and out of rehab facilities for alleged alcohol and drug abuse.

She's not the only teen idol to fall from grace. They've been flocking to rehab in droves. The story goes something like this: Celebrity abuses drugs or alcohol. Celebrity engages in crazy stunt (you know, stealing a white GMC or shaving head in front of paparazzi). Celebrity hits rock bottom. Celebrity enters rehab. Celebrity quits rehab. Celebrity repeats cycle.

Lindsay Lohan, Nicole Richie, Britney Spears all fit the mold. Each had the potential

to be a teen role model. Celebs in rehab are nothing new. But, the Internet makes people, especially teenagers, more aware. When the media shows images or footage of these places, they look like resorts. And, when you've got people like Lindsay Lohan going, there's an added cool factor. This sends teens the message that it's okay to be irresponsible because rehab offers a quick fix.

What Can You Do?

Try using pop culture to teach your children about addiction. Ask your kids candidly what they think about drug and alcohol addiction, and rehab. A good opener might be: "I see pop stars going to rehab on the front page a lot. What do you know about all that?"

Try role-playing with your children. A lot of this is helping them learn how to handle those tough situations. Talk through it with them.

SO WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A YOUNG ADULT TODAY?

Parents and caregivers often feel like they're way out of touch with their teens. Here are the top five trends you should be aware of:

1. **They're stressed!**
2. **They're hyper-sexualized.** Mini-skirts at school, sex on TV and on the internet—Kids trying to act like adults while adults are trying to act younger, like kids.
3. **Friends are the new "Family."** This cohort seems to equally value their circle of friends as their secondary family.
4. **Traditional Family has been redefined.** Many teens report very close relationships with their parents, rather than rebellious relationships. Parents are becoming more like a friend than a parent in some cases. Also, the family unit itself

has changed: more single dads/moms, and stay at home dads, gay parents, parents who are dating, adopted siblings, etc.

5. **Diversity isn't something they are taught...its their reality.** This generation is one-third non-Caucasian. They sometimes take diversity for granted. "Live and let live -- as long as you're not hurting anyone" is the emerging philosophy.

Did you know?

- In a survey of teen drinkers, 65 percent said they got alcohol from family members or friends.
- Since laws established 21 as the minimum drinking age, the likelihood that a 15 to 20-year-old driver will be involved in a fatal crash has dropped by more than half.

Source: Federal Trade Commission

Thanks for the Feedback...

I wanted to pass on a thank you for your website. I have been a member of your listserv for about 6 months. The information that I have received has been very useful in my work. I think that parents are too often overlooked in drug abuse prevention and I really appreciate the work that you are doing.

Chris Cruise, PhD.
Psychologist

Zero to Three Leaders for the 21st Century Fellow 2007-08
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