



The Prevention Council
36 Phila Street
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Safe spring 2005



Safe spring 2005



Guide for
families



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YOUTH SERVICES IN SARATOGA COUNTY

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	
PREVENTION COUNCIL	
Clinical Director, Patty Kilgore	581-1230
BALLSTON SPA	
Kim Taormina	884-7150 x 2371
Dawn Howk (<i>Homeless Teens</i>)	884-7150 X 2368
CORINTH	
Patty Kilgore	654-9005 x 3446
SOUTH GLENS FALLS, MIDDLE	
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SOUTH GLENS FALLS, SENIOR	
Jean Devlin	792-9987 x 3226
WATERFORD-HALFMOON	
Jean Devlin	237-0800 x 356
COUNSELING: FAMILY CRISIS	
Mental Health Clinic	584-9030
Catholic Charities	587-5000
Mechanicville Community Center	664-8322
Domestic Violence Services	584-8188
ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE	
The Prevention Council	581-1230
Alcoholism Services	587-8800
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT	
NYS Child Abuse Services	800-342-3720
Saratoga Center for the Family	587-8008
Child Protective Service	884-4151
TEEN SEXUALITY SUPPORT	
Planned Parenthood	584-0041
Gay/Lesbian Support	462-6138
RAPE CRISIS, STDs, PREGNANCY	
Rape Crisis Service	587-2336
AIDS Council of Northeastern NY	1-800-201-AIDS
Community Maternity Service	668-3167
Upper Hudson Prenatal Service	761-0300
Birthright of Saratoga County	885-4117
REFERRAL AND CRISIS LINES	
CAPTAIN	371-1185
CAPTAIN Youth Shelter	584-6042
CHS Youth Shelter Program	399-4624
Shelter of Saratoga	581-1097
Runaway Switchboard	800-621-4000
HOTLINES	
Teen Talk	383-4680
WE CARE Hotline	371-CARE

SAFE SPRING 2005



CHOICE
CHARACTER COMMITMENT

I want my daughter to have a great time in high school and make really good friends. Her friends go to parties almost every week. What's the harm in that?

Parties are really a much smaller part of high school than some teens would like their parents to believe. Most teens spend the bulk of their free time participating in school and community clubs, sports, and activities, hanging out with a few friends, and doing things with their families. If your daughter is always going to parties, it may signal a lack of interests and things to do, and "friends" who are really "drinking buddies."

My daughter's friend was killed after a party last year. She'll never drink again.

The truth is that after a tragedy young people who drink typically drink more, even when they are close to the victim, simply because that's how they've learned to deal with emotional pain. Adolescence is the developmental period when individuals build inner resources and a wide range of social skills to be used for the rest of their lives. When teens begin to drink regularly at parties in their early to mid teens they can become socially "frozen in adolescence," dependent on alcohol to be sociable and to mask feelings.



Helpful websites and links

National Institute of Drug Abuse – Want to know about a drug? This site will give you drug information at any level— elementary age kids to teens to parents to professionals. There are also links to interactive websites for children and teenagers. <http://www.drugabuse.gov>

Mothers Against Drunk Driving – Information on underage drinking and DWI prevention. Resources for parents and teenagers – together and separately. <http://www.madd.org>

Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Columbia University. This site contains research about strong, drug resistant families, underage drinking, alcohol and the media, etc. Go to "publications" then to "reports" to find a wealth of informative articles. <http://www.casacolumbia.org>

Parents the Anti-Drug – Good parenting information, an interactive program to help you know if your teenager has a drug problem, and stories from families who have *been there*. There is also an electronic newsletter parents can register to receive. <http://www.theantidrug.com>

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention – Free resources for parents; information about effective programs and what to look for in school and community prevention services. Links to state, regional, and national services. <http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/csap>



character, choice, commitment

We often ask parents "What do you hope for your children?" "What qualities and outcomes do you especially want for them as they grow and develop into young adults?" We invariably get responses like:

"I want them to ... be happy be kind
be responsible be financially secure
have a good work ethic be healthy
be caring have healthy relationships
act with integrity.....

In short, what we want is **C3!** We want our children to demonstrate good *character*, make good and healthy *choices*, and make and keep *commitments* to themselves and others that reflect a healthy self-regard and trustworthiness.

And as parents we need **C3** too! There is no greater or more important commitment than to our role as parent. The character we demonstrate in that role, and the choices that we make about what to say, what to do, what to approve, what to support, what to expect and what to require have everything to do with the kind of young adult they will become.

C is for *Character*.

C is for *Choice*.

C is for *Commitment*.

If *character* is what you do when no one else is looking, then to be of strong and good character requires a deep *commitment* to do what is right, to make *choices* that help one to achieve one's goals, and to

support others in doing the same. Making healthy *choices* is easier to do when we have the foundation of clear *commitments* to do what is right and to do what will most likely move us closer to achieving our goals. Our *character* is exercised and made stronger with every *healthy choice*, and with every *upheld and maintained commitment*.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are a very present and alluring part of the environment our children are growing up in. It will take all your strength of character and commitment as the parent of a teenager to buck what will, at times, feel like immense pressure to treat the use of substances as merely a rite of passage. Make the commitment and the choice to learn the facts about the effects of alcohol and other drugs on teenage brains. Make the commitment to join with other parents to give a clear message that enforcing the law is a priority, because it is the law and also because it is the right choice regarding your child's health and development. Make the commitment to support your child in taking positive risks that will help them build the strength of character they will need to make choices in their own best interest. Make the commitment to be the best parent you can be and to demonstrate the character to make the tough choices. Take heart. Research shows your child will love you all the more for it.

My teen is a good kid who works hard all week. Why not let him do what he wants on the weekend?

Your teen's hard work is helping him develop the skills, habits, character and reputation that will lead him to success.

Congratulations! The countless hours and dollars you've spent and the miles you've traveled to support your son's activities — homework, lessons, games, meetings, doctors, dentists, orthodontists — have helped him become the good kid he is. Don't abandon him now. As a teenager he needs your love AND your limits. Support decisions and activities that are consistent with the future he is working toward, and help him reject choices that will compromise his health and safety. As young people grow they need our guidance differently, not less!



PARENTING IS A TIGHTROPE ACT

Balance is key! Parents who have balance love their children enough to enforce clear standards for behavior with reasonable consequences, and at the same time support their teenager's positive actions, achievements and growth.

Pay attention.

Listen twice as much as you talk, and be attentive to your teen's moods and needs. A little positive attention goes a long way in relationship building.

Tell the Truth.

Sooner or later teens ask about their parent's drug use. Share your story in a way that conveys the message you want to leave with your teen. If you give your teen a no-use message they will be less likely to use. And if you're honest with, and in front of, them they are more likely to be honest with you and others.

Get support.

Both parents and teens need adult friends for conversation, support, advice, and caring. Connect with other parents, coaches, family members, neighbors... just don't try to go it alone.

Get a safety net!

Everybody makes mistakes. Give your teenager the gift of love and forgiveness — accompanied by reasonable consequences and the chance to rebuild trust. If the same issues keep coming up or the problems worry you, don't try to go it alone!

Have fun.

If you have fun with your children — even take some risks together — all the other parts of family life will be smoother, easier and more rewarding.



The high cost of dwt

Penalties for Drivers Under 21 as of November 1, 2003

VIOLATION	FINE	JAIL SENTENCE	LICENSE ACTION
ZERO TOLERANCE (.02 - .07% BAC)	\$125 + \$100	None	May be suspended for 6 months
ZERO TOLERANCE 2nd offense	\$125 + \$100	None	Lose for 1 year or until age 21, whichever is longer
DWAI (.05 - .079% BAC) 1st offense	\$ 300 - 500	Possible 15 days	Lose for 1 year
DWAI 2nd offense in 5 years	\$ 500 - 750	Possible 30 days	Lose for 1 year or until age 21, whichever is longer
DWI (over .08% BAC) 1st offense	\$ 500 - 1,000	Possible 1 year	Lose for minimum of 1 year
DWI 2nd offense in 10 years	\$ 1,000 - 5,000	Possible 4 years	Lose for 1 year or until age 21, whichever is longer

A Single Zero Tolerance Conviction...

- ▶ costs at least \$1,445 including insurance increases, fines, and possible evaluation/treatment for an alcohol problem.
- ▶ places the teenage driver in the assigned risk pool for 5-10 years, which means up to a 75% increase in insurance costs.
- ▶ can place the teenager's parents in the assigned risk pool for their own insurance as long as the teenager is a member of the household, which means up to a 75% increase in insurance costs!
- ▶ is listed on an individual's motor vehicle report for three years.

A Single DWAI or DWI Conviction...

- ▶ costs between \$2,217 and \$5,037 including insurance increases, legal fees, fines, and evaluation/treatment for an alcohol problem.
- ▶ places the teenage driver in the assigned risk pool for 5-10 years, which means up to a 75% increase in insurance costs.
- ▶ is listed on an individual's motor vehicle report for **ten years**. (Think of those job applications!)
- ▶ can place the teenager's parents in the assigned risk pool for their own insurance as long as the teenager is a member of the household which means up to a 75% increase in insurance costs!!

To those whose lives have been forever changed by a DWI crash, the cost of driving under the influence is beyond measure. Even if no crash occurs, the dollar cost is VERY HIGH!



Is marijuana really so bad for your teen?

The answer is an emphatic "Yes!"

Marijuana ...

- ◇ is up to 7 times stronger than the pot of the '60's.
- ◇ is much more cancer causing than tobacco (5 joints a week = 1 pack per day).
- ◇ users are exposed to more illegal drugs, more trouble in school, with the law, with family and non-using friends, and more sexual risk than non-users.
- ◇ is illegal.
- ◇ slows reaction and distorts perception, causing poorer performance in school and athletics, unsafe (and illegal) driving, and a decreased sense of danger.
- ◇ negatively affects memory, learning, and motivation when it's used regularly. Regular users tend to do worse in school and are more likely to drop out, or "get stuck" after graduation.

Is intervention needed? Warning signs

- ▶ Drop in grades; dropping out of activities without adding other positive interests.
- ▶ Change in friends, especially to known users or those who party a lot.
- ▶ No interest in activities or parties unless alcohol or other drugs are going to be available; drinking or using before attending drug-free events.
- ▶ Chronic lateness to school or work; missing school or work.
- ▶ Blaming others for problems which are consequences of their own behavior.
- ▶ Personality change; change in personal cleanliness or grooming.
- ▶ Wearing drug slogans, pictures, jewelry; decorating room with drug posters; admiration for stars who promote drug use.
- ▶ Blackouts – not knowing or remembering what happened when they were drinking even though they were conscious the entire time.

Concerned?

Call the Prevention Council

581-1230



Not all risk is equal

According to the *Teens Today 2004* report released by SADD and the Liberty Mutual Group, teens who take positive risks (**Risk Seekers**) in their lives, their schools, and their communities are 20 percent more likely than teens who do not take positive risks (**Risk Avoiders**) to avoid alcohol and other drugs and 42 percent more likely to avoid drinking because of concerns about academic performance. Risk Seekers are also more likely to describe themselves as responsible, confident, successful, and optimistic. They are also more likely to perceive the potential negative consequences of destructive behaviors.

While many adults associate risk-taking with negative behavior, the majority of young people believe risk-taking refers to positive activities. And **parental influence is key**. Both middle school (52 percent) and high school (42 percent) teens say their *parents do the most* to positively influence them to challenge themselves, followed closely by their friends.

Teens interviewed for the study identified three broad categories of positive risk-taking.

Life Risks

- Social – joining a club or group
- Emotional – asking someone on a date or sharing feelings with friends
- Physical – rock climbing

Community Risks

- Volunteering – helping the elderly or homeless
- Mentoring – working with younger children
- Leading – starting a business or charity

School Risks

- Academic – taking advanced placement courses
- Athletic – trying out for a sports team
- Extracurricular – running for student council, trying out for a play



PARENTS HELP TEENS TAKE POSITIVE RISKS BY:

- ◇ Modeling inclusive social behavior and coaching social skills.
- ◇ Identifying and discussing emotional reactions to issues or events.
- ◇ Encouraging focus on academics and pursuit of high level courses or course work of special interest.
- ◇ Supporting participation in clubs, extracurricular activities and/or athletics.
- ◇ Involving family and friends in community service projects.

Most importantly, teens who report regular, open communication with their parents about important issues say they are more likely to try to live up to their parents' expectations and less likely to drink, use drugs, or engage in early sexual behavior.



What is it with teens?

- They love you* AND... they want your love.
- They need/want to develop independence* AND... they want your respect.
- They want to know what you think* AND... they are expert “eye-rollers.”
- They are internalizing your values* AND... they will reject some and choose many.
- The “bored look” is universal* AND... they hear what you say, especially if you whisper.
- Their brains are still under construction*
 - So... they feel more strongly, both joy and pain.
 - So... they are far more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol, drugs, tobacco than an adult.
 - So... addictions of all kinds (drugs, gambling, food, etc.) happen more quickly to them.
 - So... they feel before they think, and don’t do both at the same time very well.
- They want peer approval* AND... they are unique individuals.

Remember, no one – parent or teen – is perfect. If mistakes are serious or the same problems happen over and over, there’s help for you and your teen. Call 581-1230 for referral and suggestions.

Peer influence is just too strong. My teen doesn’t care what I think!

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse reports that parents and siblings play a major role in whether teens get involved in alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Teens who thought their older sibling would be “very angry” to find out they were using marijuana were less likely to use alcohol or other drugs compared to those who said their siblings would not get angry. “Kids want boundaries; they want to hear what’s acceptable and what’s not,” said the study.



Things you can do as a parent

- ◆ Refuse to supply alcohol to anyone under 21.
- ◆ Store alcohol where your children do not have free access to it.
- ◆ Be at home when your teen has a party or gathering.
- ◆ Do not leave your teen for the weekend without adult supervision.
- ◆ Know where your teen is and whom they are with whenever they go out.
- ◆ Make sure that your teen’s friends do not bring alcohol into your home or property.
- ◆ Talk to other parents about not providing alcohol at events your child will be attending.
- ◆ Create alcohol-free opportunities and activities so teens will feel welcome.
- ◆ If you come home to discover a teen drinking party, call the police immediately.
- ◆ Report underage drinking or teen parties where alcohol is being used by calling 911 or the anonymous toll-free hotline at **1-866-UNDER21.**

Whenever I ask about a party my 15 year old is invited to – “Will parents be there? Will there be alcohol or drugs?” – he tells me that he doesn’t drink and he’s always saying, “Don’t you trust me?” I don’t want to undermine our relationship with my personal fears.

This is a typical teen/adult interaction. The adult is asking a **thought question** “Who will be supervising...?” and the

adolescent is giving a **feeling answer** “Don’t you trust me?” The teen is doing two things: **not** answering the question and changing the playing field.

A good response might begin, “First we’ll talk about the party and then we’ll talk about trust.” A statement like this moves the conversation back into the realm of thought and fact. The teen should give full information on the party, and since he has already avoided an answer, the parent should confirm the truth of what he says with a phone call before she gives permission for him to go.

What about trust? An honest, thoughtful answer is best. “I need to do everything I can to keep you safe; and unsupervised parties are not safe places to be. Whether I trust you or not is irrelevant. You just avoided answering my question, however, and that’s not encouraging me to trust you at the moment!”

This kind of interaction, rather than undermining your relationship, will build it. You have given your child the respect of taking him or her seriously and have answered in a way in which you would talk to another adult. You have also demonstrated that you have clear standards and are determined to live by them.



Don't be a party to underage drinking

Student drinking in Saratoga County's high schools is consistently above the national average. Seven school surveys have been done over the past 4 years. The survey with the LOWEST percentage of drinkers gives the following results:

I have drunk alcohol in the last 30 days:

- 30% of 9th graders
- 44% of 10th graders
- 51% of 11th graders
- 51% of 12th graders

I have engaged in binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks:

- 12 % of 9th graders
- 26% of 10th graders
- 34% of 11th graders
- 35% of 12th graders

Somewhere, a high number of young people are getting the message that it's OK to drink – and drink heavily – underage, in violation of the law. Or maybe they're NOT getting the message that it's NOT OK. Either way, parents play a BIG part. Do your kids know that you disapprove of underage drinking and will take steps to stop it? Do your consequences demonstrate the truth of your words?

Are you a parent who lets kids drink "as long as they don't drive?" You do it to keep them safe, right? Don't be fooled! They are far more likely to drink and drive, to be involved in violent fights, rape and vandalism, to have unwanted sexual encounters that result in pain, shame, STD's, and pregnancy, than are kids whose parents disapprove. Remember, too, a teen who starts drinking by age 14 is 4X more likely to be alcoholic in adulthood than those who wait until 21, and a fair percentage of high school binge drinkers are already on their way to addiction. AND you can be prosecuted and held civilly liable for any resulting injury.

These are facts, not scare tactics.

Please, for your children's sake and your own, don't be a party to underage drinking.

Be awake when your teen comes home, or know, from your own direct conversation, that another trusted parent will be awake when they come in. NEVER serve teens at a party. Your child's health and safety is on the line. That's too much to lose.



My teen is a senior in high school. I can't call about parties at her age. What can I do?

Have her call home at least once during the evening and any time plans change. Why?

Brain scans of teens – even those as old as 18 or 19 – demonstrate that experiences immediately "light up" the areas of the brain responsible for feeling and only later – sometimes a lot later or never – move to areas where thinking takes place. This isn't news to any adult who has tried to reason with an angry or ecstatic teen.

If the teen has to call a parent during the evening, she has to think – about time, about home, about responsibility. Once the thought center is engaged, she is more likely to **think** about what's going on and make a good decision. It's as simple as that – a call home can truly save her life.



WHAT'S UP WITH PARENTING??

You want kids to stay safe??

Set limits and keep track of *where* they are and *with whom* they're doing *what*.

You want kids to be healthy for the long haul??

Communicate clearly your concerns and expectations regarding alcohol use, smoking, sexual behavior, and even sleep and exercise.

You want your kids to respect you??

Show respect for them. Don't talk about them as if they aren't there, give reasons for your decisions, ask their opinions, and listen to their feelings, but change your mind only when you truly believe it is right.

You want kids to be responsible??

Give — and encourage them to take — responsibility. Make sure they have the skills and resources they need to succeed, and then let go.

You want your kids to be happy??

Enjoy them, don't sweat the small stuff, choose your battles, and do family and parent-teen activities they genuinely enjoy.

You want them to know you love them??

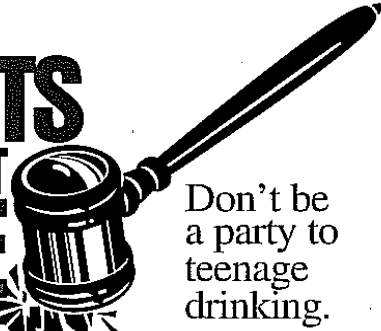
Treat mistakes as a learning experience, and be consistent, reasonable and respectful with consequences. Tell your kids you love them, and show them affection in ways they appreciate.

You want to be happy??

Find other supportive adults for yourself, and encourage your teen to do the same.

PARENTS WHO HOST LOSE THE MOST™

Used with permission of the Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth.



Don't be a party to teenage drinking.

It's against the law.



Parent pledge

Like young people, adults and parents sometimes make decisions based on what they perceive to be the norm among their friends and parents of their children's friends. You can join an effort that helps to reinforce what we know to be the true norm regarding parents' attitudes toward underage drinking: the **vast majority of parents** want their teen to wait until age 21. And the **majority of teens** report that they would like adults to be clearer with their expectations and limit-setting around underage drinking and use of substances.

Take a bold step now to communicate clearly to your teen that you are committed to their health and safety. Sign the Parent Pledge to enforce underage drinking laws. Please let us know of your commitment by returning the signed form to us at 36 Phila Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 or fax the form to 581-1240 or visit our website at www.preventioncouncil.org. Include your email address and we will keep you posted with resources, information and strategies to help support your parenting efforts.

Saratoga County is part of the 12-county Capital Region "Parents Who Host Lose the Most" Coalition, whose mission is to reduce the availability of alcohol to Capital Region minors by increasing awareness of parental responsibility through a comprehensive education and enforcement program.

Facts for parents

- ▶ It is illegal to host or allow teen drinking parties in your home or on your property.
- ▶ It is unhealthy and illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to drink.
- ▶ It is unsafe and illegal for teens to drink any alcohol and drive.
- ▶ Parents can be prosecuted under the law.

Parents should know...

- ▶ As a parent you cannot give alcohol to your teen's friends under the age of 21 under any circumstance, even in your own home, even with their parent's permission.
- ▶ You cannot knowingly allow a person under 21, other than your own child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.
- ▶ Even if you are not at home, you are responsible for what happens in your home and on your property with your underage child.

If you break the law

- ▶ You can face a maximum sentence of one year in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine.
- ▶ If the alcohol is a factor in an injury or death, you can be charged with unlawful dealing with a child, which is punishable by up to one year in jail.
- ▶ Others can sue you if you give or allow others in your home to give alcohol to anyone under 21 and if they, in turn, hurt someone, hurt themselves or damage property.

Parent Pledge

I pledge that all social events in my home for my teenagers and their friends will be chaperoned, and that I will neither serve nor permit the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

email _____

address: _____
