

A Message To Parents About College Students And Alcohol

First-year college students are presented with incredible opportunities for intellectual, social and personal growth.

However, college life may also lead students to make potentially risky decisions, particularly with respect to alcohol, due to

- Peer pressure,
- Availability of alcohol and
- Being away from home for the first time



Parents remain a powerful influence. Set time to talk about these risks. High-risk drinking, in particular, can lead to personal, academic and legal issues that can compromise future goals. According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), a quarter of college students in the U.S. reported some type academic consequence (e.g., missed class, lower grades) due to alcohol. Harvard University professor Henry Wechsler reported that 159,000 first-year students in the United States drop out annually due to heavy drinking behaviors.

Some tips when talking to your freshman....

- Be factual and straightforward.
- Set clear expectations about attending class, staying in touch and “partying” safely.
- Discuss how your child can protect his/her right to stay safe when away from home.
- Reinforce good citizen responsibilities... obeying the law, respecting university policies and reflecting on how personal actions affect the health and safety of others.
- Emphasize that choices leading to violation of these laws and policies may result in legal or university sanctions.
- Discuss the use of fake IDs. Often students tell us a fake ID is only used to avoid being ‘left out’ of social groups with new found friends. Talk about these concerns and offer alternative choices.
- Remind your son or daughter that the only doors that a fake ID will open are those that involve steep fines, court fees, community services and the potential for a criminal record which is public record.
- Dismantle the alcohol myth that “everybody’s doing it,” and reinforce that today’s students are, in fact, more concerned about their grades and staying healthy.



We want your child to be successful.

Decisions made during college years can affect opportunities for participating in study abroad programs, joining campus organizations, and could limit choices for life goals such as obtaining a job or entrance into graduate schools, law schools, and medical schools.

Interested in more information on alcohol use, including ways to talk to your son or daughter about college drinking? The Web sites listed below are a great place to start.

www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

>National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism, “College Drinking—Changing the Culture”

www.madd.org/underage-drinking/the-power-of-parents/

>MADD -- Power of Parents

<http://www.collegeparentsmatter.org/index.html>

College Parents Matter

www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/studentalcoholanddrugpolicy.asp

> Towson University Student Alcohol and Drug Policy

The **Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education** understands that sending your student to an institution of higher education is as much of a transition for you as it is for him or her. Students are expected to make decisions on their own, learn to resolve conflict independently, and take responsibility for their actions. At the same time they seek your love, respect, your opinion, and generally operate on the values that you instilled in them.

So, what should you do if your student becomes involved in the campus conduct system? This link can serve as a resource for gaining knowledge about our conduct policies and provide you with recommendations if you discover that your student is involved in the campus conduct process.

<http://www.towson.edu/studentconduct/>