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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

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Drug Free Action Alliance

LIFETIME PREVENTION | LIFETIME WELLNESS



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Know! To Discuss The Link Between Alcohol and Sexual Assault

"12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you." 1 Corinthians 5:12-13

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Drug Free Action Alliance encourages you to use this as another opportunity to talk to your tween/teen about the many dangers alcohol can pose, including an increased risk of sexual assault.

Twenty-five percent of girls and 10-20 percent of boys have been or will become victims of sexual assault during adolescence or some other point in their lives. In at least half of all these cases, alcohol will play a role; having been consumed by the perpetrator, the victim or both.

Does this mean alcohol causes a perpetrator to sexually assault a victim? NO. Sexual assault is a criminal act of violence and cannot be justified by alcohol or any other drug use.

What if a person becomes heavily intoxicated and does not try to stop another person from making sexual advances? An intoxicated individual cannot legally give sexual consent. Therefore, sexual contact with someone under the influence of alcohol is considered sexual assault and carries consequences punishable by law.

While alcohol and other substance use is never an excuse for such criminal behavior, is there a connection between the two? YES. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "Alcohol contributes to sexual assault through multiple pathways, often exacerbating existing risk factors," such as alcohol's effects on cognitive thinking and motor skills, societal beliefs about alcohol's effects on sexual and aggressive behavior and stereotypes about females who choose to drink heavily.

While this may be an uncomfortable topic to discuss with your daughters and sons, it is a critical conversation for their health, safety and well-being.

Here are some FACTS to share with your tween/teen regarding alcohol and sexual assault:

- Sexual assault includes verbal, visual or physical abuse that forces a person into sexual contact with another.
- Sexual assault can happen with a stranger in an isolated place, which is usually the situation portrayed in the media. Be aware however, stranger rape accounts for only 20% of all rape cases.



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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- The vast majority of rapes and other sexual assaults are committed on a date, at a party or in the home by someone the victim knows: a friend, classmate, date or other acquaintance.
- Even when consumed in small amounts, alcohol can reduce inhibitions, impair motor skills and cloud thinking and judgment (many times causing individuals to misinterpret their situation). When drunk heavily, it can incapacitate a person altogether. But in no situation does alcohol excuse or allow a person to sexually take advantage of another.
- Regardless of the circumstances (what the victim was wearing, where the victim was going, who the victim was with), a victim of sexual assault is not at fault for the attack, even if poor choices had been made by the victim along the way (like the choice to drink alcohol).
- Sexual assault is not about love, passion or pleasure. It is an act of violence, aggression, power and control.

Here are some key messages to discuss with your child (especially those of dating age):

- You always have the right to tell someone, “No. Stop. Get Away.”
- Do not assume you know what your date is thinking or feeling. Be clear with each other about what is acceptable and what is not.
- It is important to set boundaries and to not let someone pressure you into doing something you don’t want to do.
- True consent means both partners have equal power, and that one is not pressuring the other.
Forcing or pressuring someone into any type of sexual activity is never okay. This includes physical force or non-physical force such as deception, trickery, threats or verbal pressure. No one should ever say, “If you love me, you will _____ with me.”
- If you are forced into something, I want you to know that it is NOT your fault – even if you break a family rule, like underage drinking. I would also want you to tell me about it. I am always here for you and want to help you. But if you feel you cannot tell me, please tell another adult.

When talking to your child, make it a two-way dialogue (talk, but more importantly, listen). Build your child’s trust by allowing her/him to share openly with you about touchy subjects such as this one. Children need guidance in developing their own set of personal values, establishing boundaries for themselves and learning how to communicate it with others, and they will look to you in helping to build that foundation.

Visit starttalking.ohio.gov to get the conversation going !!!



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If you, your child or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault, help is available. Contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE or visit www.rain.org.

For more information on the dangers of alcohol and underage drinking, visit www.niaaa.nih.gov.

Other Verses to Consider:

Matthew 7:1-5
Philippians 2:4

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