

Choices Topic: Alcohol Awareness & Binge Drinking

The Choices topic for March is **alcohol awareness and binge drinking**. So, good news: everybody ISN'T doing it. A poll of high school teens found the majority are NOT drinking. A few reasons why they said they choose not to: it is illegal, health effects, effects on their grades and their parents don't approve.

Even though this statistic is promising, underage drinking is still a widespread issue especially when it comes to binge drinking, alcohol poisoning and drunk driving.

90%
OF ALL ALCOHOL CONSUMED BY MINORS ARE BINGE DRINKS

EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION CONTRIBUTES TO MORE THAN 4,700 DEATHS AMONG PERSONS LESS THAN 21 YEARS OF AGE IN THE UNITED STATES EACH YEAR.

Facts about addiction and more:

- Teens who *wait* to use drugs or alcohol until age 21 are likely *never* to have problems with addiction during their lifetime
- Teens who have a genetic predisposition to addiction and *wait* to use until age 21 are 40% less likely to have problems with addiction
- What is the lesson here? Delay, delay, delay use!



Alcohol harms the developing brain and affects learning.⁴

“PEOPLE WHO START DRINKING BEFORE AGE 15 YEARS ARE 5X MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE OR ABUSE LATER IN LIFE.”



Nearly 1 million youth under age 15 start drinking each year.⁵

Discussion Questions & Information: When One Drink Turns Into ...

Students:

- Do you drink? If so, why?
- If all of your friends were drinking, how would you say no?
- How might you as a teenager who doesn't drink encourage your peers to do the same?
- Do you know what drinking does to your developing brain?
- Do you talk to you parents about drinking?
- Does your family have rules about drinking?

'What's the Worst that Could Happen?'

- School problems, aka failing
- Lose friendships and relationships
- Get in trouble with the law
- Feeling hungover and getting sick more often
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Disruption of normal sexual development and growth
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide
- Alcohol-related car crashes
- Sexual and Physical assault
- Lose your memory
- Change your brain development (a life-long issue)
- LOSE your life—death from alcohol poisoning

WHAT IS BINGE DRINKING?

A pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration levels to 0.08 grams per deciliter.

FOR WOMEN:  four drinks in two hours

FOR MEN:  five drinks in two hours

Parents, Faculty and Staff:

- What are your family rules regarding drinking?
- Do you talk to your teen/students about the dangers of underage drinking?
- Do you drink? If so, do you model healthy drinking behavior for your teen?
- Do you talk to your teen/students about what drinking can do to their developing brains?