

Shrewsbury Community Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Parents play a major role in their children's choices about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In a recent national survey of parents and teens by Columbia University, one-third of teen partygoers have been to parties where teens were drinking, smoking pot or using other illicit drugs while a parent was present. By age 17, 46% of teens have been at such parties where parents were present.

Parents Who Host, Lose the Most is a public awareness campaign used to provide accurate information to our parents and teens about the legal consequences of underage drinking and providing alcohol to our youth. Parents can protect themselves and their teens by following the guidelines outlined in the leaflet sent home in our latest Community Directory (copies on our webpage). We encourage you to send a unified message that teen alcohol consumption is not acceptable. It is illegal, unsafe and unhealthy.

Research shows that many parents are just as ambivalent about their teen's use of **marijuana**. Some consider it risk free and are more concerned about other illicit drugs. Please keep in mind the following:

- The THC level in today's pot, due to the way it is grown, is 10x stronger than 40 yrs ago
- One joint can be 4x toxic than one cigarette.
- Drugged driving is just as dangerous as drunk driving

Tips and strategies to help ensure our children remain healthy and drug free:

- Establish rules with clear consequences.** Kids look to parents for guidance, goals and expectations. Teens say their parents' disapproval is the top reason they don't try drugs and alcohol.
- Communicate with parents of your child's friends.** Make sure they are going to be home and they are supervising...especially during sleep-overs. Call to see if your child can bring something as a way to start the conversation.
- Ask questions and know their friends.**
- Lock up your prescription drugs, OTC cold medicines and alcohol.**
- When you are hosting a gathering with teens protect yourself and the teens by observing what is coming into your home.** Ask that large backpacks/purses be left in a common area.
- Be a good role model.** In the latest survey, kids who say they have seen their parents drunk are more likely to experiment.

Being a parent of a teen in this environment is tough. We suffer from peer pressure from other more liberal parents to turn a blind's eye. Stand up to what you believe is right for your child. There are other parents who do believe as you do. Starting to drink and experiment with drugs at the age of 14 is not a good omen for their health in later years. Please remember that what you do matters, what you say matters, what you expect matters to your children.

Current Projects

-Update of our Resource Guide to Drug, Alcohol Abuse and other Health Services in Monmouth County. This guide has been invaluable to many of our residents. We expect this to be completed by next quarter. Check our Boro webpage for updates. A number we wish to highlight for our residents is the 24/7 Mobile Response number (1-877-652-7624). Funded by the State, this is a 24 hr service providing emergency response care for children and adolescents through 18 yrs of age who are experiencing emotional or behavioral crisis'. (Please continue to dial 9-1-1 for medical emergencies).