



Talking to Your Teen about Alcohol

Underage drinking is a serious public health problem in the United States. Alcohol is the most widely used substance among America's youth and drinking by young people poses enormous health and safety risks. The consequences of underage drinking can affect everyone—regardless of age or drinking status. Either directly or indirectly, we all feel the effects of the aggressive behavior, property damage, injuries, violence, and deaths that can result from underage drinking. This is not simply a problem for some families—it is a nationwide concern.

Young people often binge drink. People ages 12 to 20 drink 4.1 percent of all alcohol consumed in the United States. Although youth drink less often than adults do, when they do drink, they drink more. More than 90 percent of all alcoholic drinks consumed by young people are consumed through binge drinking. In addition, many teens have easy access to alcohol. In 2019, among 12- to 14-year-olds who reported that they drank alcohol in the past month, 96.5 percent reported that they got it for free the last time they drank. In many cases, adolescents have access to alcohol through family members or find it at home.

Why Do So Many Young People Drink?

- » Peer pressure
- » Increased independence, or the desire for it
- » Stress Preventing

The Role Parents Play

Parents and teachers can play a big role in shaping young people's attitudes toward drinking. Parents in particular can have either a positive or negative influence. Parents can help their children avoid alcohol problems by:

- » Talking about the dangers of drinking
- » Drinking responsibly, if they choose to drink
- » Serving as positive role models in general
- » Not making alcohol available
- » Getting to know their children's friends
- » Having regular conversations about life in general
- » Connecting with other parents about sending clear messages about the importance of youth not drinking alcohol
- » Supervising all parties to make sure there is no alcohol
- » Encouraging kids to participate in healthy and fun activities that do not involve alcohol. Research shows that children of actively involved parents are less likely to drink alcohol. On the other hand, research shows that a child with a parent who binge drinks is much more likely to binge drink than a child whose parents do not binge drink.

****If you have a teen that is struggling with alcohol abuse please contact Alpine County Behavioral Health**

530-694-1816