

Underage Drinking and Teen Drug Use: Practical Solutions
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Problem: The Blame Game

Effective prevention and reduction of underage drinking most likely occurs with a comprehensive approach. Groups that work together and link prevention strategies will have greater success. Community-based prevention (Coalitions) is very effective in managing community norms, availability, and enforcement; key risk factors contributing to underage drinking and teen drug use.

Why Focus on This Problem?

Alcohol misuse and drug use are linked in the four leading causes of death among adolescents:

1. Motor vehicle crashes and accidents
2. Homicide
3. Suicide
4. Accidental injury; poisonings, falls, drowning, etc...

Underage Drinking

1. Kills four times more children than all other drugs combined
2. Abstinence is achievable throughout the teen years.
3. 5 deadly signs of potential overdose are:
 - i. Not responding to verbal stimulation
 - ii. Cold clammy skin, blue lips
 - iii. Difficulty breathing
 - iv. Vomiting without returning to consciousness
 - v. Not responding to pinching or shaking
4. Alcohol has a greater damaging effect on developing teen brains than alcohol on adult brains. For more information see our website.
5. Adolescents can learn social and responsible alcohol use without drinking. We teach civics long before they are able to vote.
6. Gender matters when it comes to alcohol misuse and consequences.

Teens and Drugs

1. There is no such thing as a typical adolescent alcoholic or drug addict.
2. There is no such thing as a hard drug or a soft drug. Adolescents can and do develop unhealthy relationship with a number of chemicals including but not limited to: sugar, caffeine, alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, etc...

Parenting a child to be drug-free and harm-free does not happen by accident

- Requires time, energy, courage, and clarity
- Supervision means presence or showing up
- Making calls
- Role modeling and teaching

What kids need to succeed – See Robert Evan’s book Family Matters

- Nurture – large amounts of low-quality time
- Structure
- Latitude