

10 TIPS TO KEEP KIDS ALCOHOL & DRUG-FREE

bstrongtogether.org

1

DEVELOP A STRONG CONNECTION WITH YOUR CHILD. Encourage and foster healthy bonds with your child through daily positive interactions and bonding experiences. Encourage them to talk with you about the pressures they face, challenges with friends or their peer group, and their concerns and questions about life. Create a safe space for them to come to you for help and support. Youth are less likely to get involved with alcohol and drugs if they are closely connected to their parents and family.

2

TALK EARLY AND OFTEN ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUGS. It's never too early to talk with your children about alcohol and drugs. The sooner you begin the conversation - directly and honestly - the greater the influence you will have and the more likely they are to respect your rules and advice about alcohol and drug use. Remember, it's not one 60-minute conversation, but 60 one-minute conversations over time about the risks and consequences of underage drinking and illegal drug use that makes the difference. The BStrong Together website at bstrongtogether.org provides age-appropriate tips for talking with your kids about drugs and alcohol, myths and facts about alcohol and drugs, and ways to teach them to say no for role playing.

3

SET CLEAR FAMILY RULES. It is important that your teen knows your values, your position and your expectations when it comes to underage drinking and illegal drug use. Set clear boundaries and expectations about alcohol use and be consistent in enforcing your family rules. Research clearly shows strong parental disapproval is the number one reason teens choose not to drink alcohol. When teens were asked to rank the major influences in their lives, they place parents first and family second, before their friends and other influences.

4

EXPLAIN THE RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES. Learn about and explain the risks and consequences of underage drinking and using illegal drugs. Emphasize that drinking alcohol is not a "rite of passage", but rather a dangerous drug to the developing brain. Make sure they know to never drive if they have been drinking and to never get into a car with a driver who has consumed alcohol or used other drugs.

5

BE INVOLVED IN YOUR TEEN'S LIFE. Show interest and stay involved. Know where they are going, what they are doing and who their friends are. An effective way to head off peer pressure that your teenager may be feeling is to get to know your teenager's friends.

6

GIVE YOUR CHILD THE TOOLS AND CONFIDENCE TO SAY NO. It can be hard to say no to friends and peers. It takes courage. Practice refusal skill techniques that will help your teen to say "no" to drinking and drugs. Being prepared and knowing how to deal with the situation before it happens will make it easier. Check out our "Ways to Say No" webpage at bstrongtogether.org.

7

MAKE ALCOHOL AND PRESCRIPTION AND OTHER DRUGS UNAVAILABLE IN YOUR HOME. Ensure that alcohol and prescription and drugs are not readily available to your teen or their friends. Do not store alcohol in garage or basement refrigerators or other remote locations where there is easy access that might not be noticed.

8

BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL. Demonstrate positive decision-making and responsible, safe use of alcohol if you chose to drink.

9

HAVE A CODE WORD AND EXIT PLAN. Develop a code word, phrase, emoji or other signal which your teen can use via phone or text alerting you that they need help getting out of a difficult/dangerous situation. Establish the code word or signal in advance and make an agreement that no matter what, if they give you the code word, you will come to help - no questions asked.

10

BE HOME AND AWAKE WHEN YOU TEEN GETS HOME. The majority of Barrington High School teens report that their parents would probably not catch them if they were to go out drinking. Although it might not be easy, it's simple. Be home and awake when your teen gets home and make sure that your teen knows that you will interact with them when they arrive. A simple, "How was your evening?" or "Did you have fun?" can be sufficient to deter underage drinking.