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V I E W I N G G U I D E

ON THE ROCKS

Topic: Underage Drinking

The Facts

- 50% of high school teenagers drink some amount of alcohol. (CDC, 2004)
- Every day, at least six teens die of non-driving, alcohol-related causes such as homicide, suicide, and drowning. (CDC, 2006)
- Two out of three teenagers said it was easy to get alcohol from their homes without their parents' knowledge, while one out of three teenagers said they were able to get alcohol from their own consenting parents. (Underage Drinking in the United States: A Status Report, 2005)
- Every day, approximately three teens die from drinking and driving accidents. (CDC, 2006)

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

1. Ask your child, "Why do kids your age drink alcohol? What do they say about drinking and their drinking habits? Do you ever feel pressure to drink from your peers? How do you respond?"
2. Ask, "What kind of example do you think we set for you with regards to drinking? Can you compare us to other parents? What do your friends' parents say about kids and drinking?"
3. Help your child practice saying, "No," to people who offer him/her alcohol or other drugs. Be sure to include yourself as a scapegoat: i.e., "My parents would kill me if I drank."

Advice From the Experts

Talk with your child about the dangers of alcohol, but try to avoid scare tactics.

- Find discussion points, not lecture topics. Find out what your child knows about alcohol and how he/she feels about teen drinking. Ask why his/her peers drink and listen without interrupting.
- Share facts about alcohol, dispelling myths and misinformation. Make sure he/she knows alcohol is a drug, and that people are very bad at judging how alcohol affects them, especially when under its influence.
- State your expectations with regards to avoiding alcohol and clearly establish consequences for any infraction of rules.
- Talk about how alcohol can compromise self-respect. People who drink often do things they regret later, and this can affect their own self-respect as well as damage relationships with others.
- Remind them that drinking before age 21 is illegal, and there will be legal ramifications for breaking this law.
- Offer statistics of the dangers associated with drinking, especially with regards to drinking and driving, risky sexual behaviors, sexual assault and other hazardous activities.

