

TEEN TALK TO PREVENT TRAGEDY

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As the parent of a senior in high school, this article touches on a subject that is near and dear to my heart. It is my hopes that this article will get the lines of communication opened between teens and their parents. If you have a child, grandchild or other loved one that is in college, or will soon be attending college, please take the time to review the following information.

A large number of teens, while at college or in high school, overindulge in alcohol. According to the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, "many high school and college students drink with one goal in mind—to get drunk." Also, many kids go off to college with the mindset, "now I will be able to party all that I want." A lot of parents reading this right now may be thinking, maybe the kid down the street, but not my child. But, I am sure that the parent of the child who has just been injured or killed due to excess drinking thought the same thing before tragedy struck.

We have all seen the ads on television to ask your child questions and be involved in your child's life. Some of these questions may include:

1. What will you do if your roommate just wants to party?
2. What is the party scene really like?
3. Is there someone you can call if you get into a situation where you, or the person you rode with, cannot safely drive?
5. How are you doing in your classes?
6. Are you managing your time, so that you have enough time set aside to study?
7. Are you attending your classes?
8. Is there anything I can do to help?

Also remember the following pointers when opening up those lines of communication:

1. Be honest about your own drinking experiences, both positive and negative.
2. Be clear about what it is you expect from your child.
3. Remember it is never too early, or too late, to speak with your child about alcohol and the effects it could have on your child's life.
4. Just because your child is off at college doesn't mean you should stop talking to them. You should make plans to speak with your child at least once a week, either by phone or e-mail.
5. Be prepared for the things your child may confide in you once you get those communication lines open. Although you may not like everything your child has to say to you, LISTEN!
6. Do not nag your child, or they will tune you out and come to dread those weekly calls.
7. Let your child know that they can come to you in any situation.

For more tips to help you and your child cope with alcohol use, visit www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov. Research for this article was obtained with the assistance of Humana Insurance.

