



2012 IOWA YOUTH SURVEY DATA

- ✓ 2% of Iowa 6th grade students 7% of Iowa 8th graders have used alcohol in the past month. Half of these 8th grade students report binge drinking (5 or more drinks at one time) in the past 30 days.
- ✓ 26% of Iowa 11th grade students have used alcohol in the past month. Three quarters of these students report binge drinking in the past 30 days. About half report driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ✓ 36% of Iowa 8th grade students and 69% of 11th grade students say it is easy or very easy for them to get alcohol.

www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov

Learn facts and new research about underage drinking by exploring internet sites with your mentee:

www.camy.org

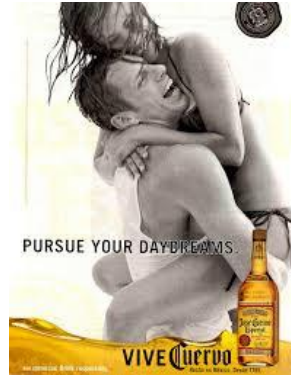
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov

www.madd.org

ONE ON ONE MENTOR BRIEF: Facts and Approaches to Talking About Alcohol With Your Mentee

The Issue



Alcohol is legal for those over 21 in our society, leading many adults to have a different perspective on youth alcohol use than illegal drug use. The alcohol industry markets their product with images that are appealing to youth including social activities with attractive people, risk-taking activities- such as sports, and humorous aspects-including animal characters as leading actors. According to the Center for Disease Control, young people ages 12-20 drink 11% of all alcohol consumed each year.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services administration reports youth who start drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21 years. According to the Center for Disease Control, youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- ✓ School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades.
- ✓ Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.
- ✓ Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.
- ✓ Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.
- ✓ Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.
- ✓ Disruption of normal growth and sexual development.
- ✓ Physical and sexual assault.
- ✓ Higher risk for suicide and homicide.
- ✓ Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning.
- ✓ Memory problems.
- ✓ Abuse of other drugs.
- ✓ Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.
- ✓ Death from alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol and the Adolescent Brain

There are dramatic changes to the brain's structure, neuron connectivity (i.e., "wiring"), and physiology up until a person reaches their mid-twenties.



These changes in the brain affect everything from emerging sexuality to emotionality and judgment. Alcohol can cause alterations in the structure and function of the developing brain and it may have consequences into adulthood.

FRONTAL LOBES—The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

HIPPOCAMPUS—The hippocampus is the part of the brain where memories are made. If alcohol damages the hippocampus, a person may find it hard to learn and to hold on to knowledge.

Alcohol also affects the **CEREBELLUM**, **HYPOTHALAMUS**, **MEDULLA**, **CEREBRAL CORTEX**, and **CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM**. For more information on how alcohol impacts the brain see:

<http://www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov/families/facts/brain.aspx>

Tips for Starting the Alcohol Conversation

- Advertising in the media as well as in retail outlets can provide fertile ground for opening dialogue about alcohol. Dissect the message an ad is sending with your mentee. Point out "point of sale" displays or the amount of cooler /shelf space taken up by alcohol in retail stores.
- The majority of teens are not solo drinkers. They drink at parties and with small groups of friends. Talk about what you do with your friends. Ask your mentee what they do with their friends for fun. This may provide an opening to talk about peer pressure and alcohol use.
- The Iowa Dept. of Public Health reports a significant decrease in current alcohol use among teens over the past seven years. Share this information with your mentee and ask them why they think fewer teens are drinking.

What Your Mentee Needs to Hear From You

- Your belief that drinking alcohol is not good for kids and why you believe this.
- Ideas on how to handle peer pressure.
- People who buy alcohol for youth or allow underage drinking parties at their home are breaking the law.
- Your mentee can talk to you with any questions or concerns about underage drinking without fear of judgment or shaming.

THE INVINCIBLE TEEN

Young people often approach the extreme consequences of alcohol abuse, such as alcohol poisoning and motor vehicle crashes, with the attitude that *"it will never happen to me"*. When someone passes out from alcohol use or has alcohol-related "black outs" it is a symptom of alcohol poisoning. Whether or not the person regains consciousness and survives is a direct functioning of the severity of this poisoning. People under the influence are not able to accurately judge how alcohol is affecting them.



Teens binge drink at a much higher rate than adults. This type of drinking puts them at a higher risk of alcohol poisoning.

Drivers ages 16-20 are 17 times more likely to die in a crash when they have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent than when they have not been drinking.

Contact

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