



Roanoke Area Youth Substance Abuse Coalition
Promoting a Safe & Drug Free Roanoke Valley

www.raysac.org



April is Alcohol Awareness Month

While communities are faced with a number of substance abuse issues, underage drinking continues to be among the most pervasive ones, with nearly 11 million underage drinkers today. April is designated as ***Alcohol Awareness Month***, an annual public awareness campaign that encourages local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 51.6 percent of Americans age 12 and older had used alcohol at least once in the 30 days prior to being surveyed; 23.3 percent had binged (5+ drinks within 2 hours); and 23.3 percent reported drinking heavily (5+ drinks on 5+ occasions). In the 12-17 age range, 14.6 percent had consumed at least one drink in the 30 days prior to being surveyed; 8.8 percent had binged; and 2 percent drank heavily.

What Parents Can Do To Help Prevent Underage Alcohol Use

Work with schools, communities, and government to protect teens from underage alcohol use by ensuring that—

- ~Schools and the community support and reward young people's decisions not to drink.
- ~Rules about underage drinking are in place at home, at school, and in your community.
- ~Penalties for breaking the rules are well known. Rules are enforced the same way for everyone.
- ~All laws about underage alcohol use are well known and enforced.
- ~Parties and social events at home and elsewhere don't permit underage drinking.

Support your children and teens and give them space to grow.

- ~Be involved in your teens' lives. Be loving and caring.
- ~Encourage your teens' growing independence, but set appropriate limits.
- ~Make it easy for your teens to share information about their lives.
- ~Know where your teens are, what they're doing, who they're with, and who their friends are.
- ~Find ways for your teens to be involved in family life, such as by doing chores or caring for a younger brother or sister.
- ~Set clear rules, including rules about alcohol use. Enforce the rules you set.
- ~Help your teens find ways to have fun without alcohol.
- ~Don't let your teens attend parties where alcohol is served. Make sure alcohol isn't available at teen parties in your own home.
- ~Help your teens avoid dangerous situations such as riding in a car driven by someone who has been drinking.

Be aware of factors that may increase the risk of teen alcohol use.

- ~Significant social transitions such as graduating to middle or high school or getting a driver's license
- ~A history of conduct problems
- ~Depression and other serious emotional problems
- ~A family history of alcoholism

Parents! Talk to your child about the dangers of underage drinking.

Source: Too Smart to Start-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration