

What is your Prevention Plan at Home?

Submitted by Richland County **STAND**

When parents wonder how they can talk to their kids or teens about underage drinking, don't worry! MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) shares five steps that they can take.

1-Think of this as **COACHING!** Parents need to teach this skill as any other skill. Share information and help your teen learn how to anticipate and handle any situation that may challenge them. Discuss choices, consequences and monitor their behavior. Cheer them onto making smart and healthy choices. This can be the best support!

2-Get busy **COMMUNICATING!!** Begin talking early to your kids daily about feelings, expectations, and their stresses and successes. Be proactive in talking to your teens about underage drinking by sharing how alcohol is a drug and a dangerous sedative and the side effects it

has. Health changes and dangerous risks increase when young people drink. Drinking alcohol is also illegal if you are not 21, and let them know you want your teen to be safe and to respect the law. Have your teens plan ways to resist peer pressure.

3-**KEEP TRACK** of your teen!!! Know what they are doing and with whom. Know their friends and those parents, making sure everyone understands expectations of each other. Try to agree on rules, limits and consequences. Monitor your teen's interactions in person and online and give them positive feedback or let them know when they are not following your rules. Know their schedule and make sure they have your permission for activities and always enforce the consequences consistently so there are no questions or feeling they can "get out of it".

4-Show **RESPECT** and **CARING!!!!** Your teen will respond better to you in all situations if you listen to their ideas

and concerns in a respectable manner. Explain that rules, limits, and consequences are all in place to protect them and to help them logically make smart choices. Take this time to remind them how much you love them and care about their well-being.

5-Be a **POSITIVE ROLE MODEL!!!!** Your teen will be more receptive to your guidance if you lead by example and act responsibly. If you are being irresponsible with alcohol, laws and driving, you can bet that they will also. Having a healthy respect for them and the laws will teach them to do the same.

If you need more information on how to talk to your teens regarding underage drinking, please contact Missy, Vicky or Melissa at 433-4097. We are also on Facebook with tips and information at Richland County **STAND**, **Stand4youth**, and Richland County Family Resource Center.

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