

Celebrate Safely: Graduation and Prom Season

Each year in response to numerous requests, we send out a version of this particular LECSAGRAM topic article. Once again as the summer approaches and the school year draws to an end let us remain vigilant when it comes to the celebrations associated with Prom and Graduation, both significant milestones and rites of passage for young people.

According to the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) 75% of high school seniors have used alcohol even though the legal drinking age is 21. One in four high school juniors and seniors engaged in binge drinking within the two week period prior to a survey by OASAS in 2015. 52% of those surveyed reported they got the alcohol from their parents or a friends. >28. % of students have driven in a car with a drunk driver once or more. Alcohol is responsible for 6000 teen deaths annually, more than all illicit drugs combined (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

According to AAA, 87% of teens reported their friends would be more likely to drive after drinking than to call home for a ride (especially if they thought they would get in trouble). Also alarming is that approximately 19% of teens said they have ridden with someone who had been drinking rather than calling their parents to come and get them. 30% of teens know other peers who have gotten DUIs for impaired driving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that approximately 1000 children, less than 21 years old, die every year in preventable tragedies while celebrating high school prom or graduation. Please help to keep our children safe and pitch in to do your part in your local district and community.

The following reminders can help keep teens safe during prom and graduation season:

- (1) Outline rules and expectations; no alcohol/drug use! Emphasize consequences.
- (2) Explain how a poor choice can impact their future plans and dreams.
- (3) Talk to your children about the consequences of alcohol/drug use.
- (3) Highlight that bad decisions can have permanent, life altering effects.
- (4) Set a good example, be a role model. Work together to provide safe alternative fun.
- (5) Support the alcohol free prom events being hosted by school districts in your area.
- (6) Encourage your district administration to host an event and reward participation.

Make a pact with your children asking them to agree to never get in a vehicle if they or any other driver is under the influence of alcohol or any other drug. Tell them they can call you anytime from anywhere for a ride home and you will pick them up without any questions to help avoid a dangerous situation. Praise this behavior if and when it occurs. We must continue to help prevent senseless alcohol/drug related motor vehicle deaths.

Resources for parents and the community are available at: www.TheAntiDrug.com
For help with an alcohol/other drug problem call:

LECSA EAP at 631-851-1295

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