

Fall Semester - A Time For Parents To Discuss The Risks Of College Drinking

BETHESDA, Md., Aug. 31, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- As college students arrive on campus this fall, it's a time of new experiences, new friendships, and making memories that will last a lifetime. Unfortunately for many, it is also a time of excessive drinking and dealing with its aftermath—vandalism, violence, sexual aggression, and even death.

According to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 59.4 percent of full-time college students ages 18 to 22 drank alcohol in the past month; 39.0 percent engaged in binge drinking (5 or more drinks on an occasion); and 12.7 percent engaged in heavy drinking (5 or more drinks on an occasion on 5 or more occasions per month). These rates are higher than those for their non-college attending peers.

The consequences of excessive drinking by college students are more significant, more destructive, and more costly than many parents realize. And these consequences affect students whether or not they drink. Statistics from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) indicate that drinking by college students ages 18 to 24 contributes to an estimated 1,825 student deaths, 696,000 assaults by another student who has been drinking, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault or date rape each year.

Early Weeks Are Critical

As the fall semester begins, parents can use this time to help prepare their college-age sons and daughters by talking with them about the consequences of excessive drinking.

Some first-year students who live on campus may be at particular risk. Overall, heavy drinking rates of college students surpass those of their non-college peers. In addition, on arriving at school, many students significantly increase their heavy drinking over a relatively short period of time which can contribute to difficulties with alcohol and the college transition in general.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the first 6 weeks of the first semester are critical to academic success. Because many students initiate heavy drinking during this time, the potential exists for excessive alcohol consumption to interfere with successful adaptation to campus life. The transition to college is often difficult and about one-third of first-year students fail to enroll for their second year.

Parents Can Help

During these crucial early weeks, parents can do a number of things to stay involved. They can inquire about campus alcohol policies, keep in touch with their sons and daughters, and ask about roommates and living arrangements.

They should also discuss the penalties for underage drinking, and how alcohol use can lead to date rape, violence, and academic failure.

Resources Are Available

For parents who want to discuss the consequences of college drinking with their sons and daughters, a variety of helpful resources are available from NIAAA at www.CollegeDrinkingPrevention.gov.

These resources include a parents' guide that offers research-based information plus helpful advice on choosing the right college, staying involved during the freshman year, and getting assistance if faced with an alcohol-related crisis.

The website also provides links to alcohol policies at colleges across the country, an interactive diagram of how alcohol affects the human body, and an interactive alcohol cost calculator.

Copies of all materials from the NIAAA Task Force on College Drinking, including the parents' guide, may be downloaded from www.CollegeDrinkingPrevention.gov, or ordered through the NIAAA Publications Distribution Center, P.O. Box 10686, Rockville, MD 20849-0686.

Photo - <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20150828/262006>

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/fall-semester--a-time-for-parents-to-discuss-the-risks-of-college-drinking-300134947.html>

SOURCE National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health

For further information: NIAAA Press Office, John Bowersox, 301-443-3860, NIAAAPressOffice@mail.nih.gov

<https://icf.mediaroom.com/2015-08-31-Fall-Semester-A-Time-For-Parents-To-Discuss-The-Risks-Of-College-Drinking>