

Prom And Keeping Teens Safe

Manhasset CASA encourages parents to Talk2Prevent

Prom is a wonderful and memorable night for teens: they get dressed up, look their best and enjoy music and dancing with friends and classmates. There also can be unwelcome pressure to have the right look, keep up with the crowd, and engage in risky behaviors.

Manhasset Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA) new Talk2Prevent Campaign recommends parents talk with their teens about the dangers of underage drinking and drug use throughout the year and especially during prom season. With many of today's teens turning to alcohol or drugs to cope with the pressures of fitting in or being accepted by peers, parents are encouraged to

- Tell their teen that they love them and their primary concern is for their health and safety;
- Ask their teen what their plans are for post-prom celebrations;
- Share their thoughts on situations that might arise and discuss ways to handle them;
- Ask their teen to call or text to keep updated to where they are and, if there are concerns, to call or text

you immediately;

- Talk to their teen about after-prom events they are planning to attend. Tell your teen to contact you post-prom, and ask when you can expect them home;
- Stress that you will pick up your teen at any place and anytime if they want to come home, and agree on a call or a text alert with no questions asked. Leave money in case a taxi is needed.

In addition, parents and teens should discuss:

- Nassau County Social Host Law: You and anyone over the age of 18 are breaking the law if you give alcohol to your teen's friends who are under the age of 21, under any circumstance. A violation of the Social Host Law is a misdemeanor—a criminal conviction and punishable by progressive fines and penalties.
- New York State General Obligations Law: Any person who is injured by a minor (or adult) who is intoxicated, or whose ability is impaired may sue for the resulting damage against whoever knowingly provided the alcohol to the minor.



Manhasset CASA's new Talk2Prevent Campaign recommends parents talk with their teens about the dangers of underage drinking - especially during prom season.

- New York State 911/Good Samaritan Law: A person who in good faith seeks care for himself or someone experiencing a life threatening emergency will not be charged or prosecuted for a drug or alcohol related offense including possession of drug paraphernalia, with some exceptions.
- In New York state if you are under the age of 21, it is a violation of the law to possess alcohol with the intent to consume. Youth under 21 who drink and drive can lose their licenses for up to one year for small amounts

of alcohol and face jail time for larger amounts of alcohol found in their systems.

In Manhasset, teens report underage and binge drinking (having five or more drinks of alcohol in a row one or more times in the past two weeks) above national, state and county norms (2015 Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey). This may result in vomiting, passing out, other alcohol and drug related incidents, as well as damaged reputations, lowered self-esteem, and ruined relationships. In addition, many accidents occur at post prom parties as well as at the beach, hotel rooms, rented houses and other after-prom sites.

The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services estimates that 5,000 people under age 21 die every year in the United States from alcohol-related injuries from traffic fatalities, suicides and homicides. Underage drinking increases risky sexual behavior, including unwanted, unintended, and unprotected sexual activity. In addition, alcohol can damage the developing teenage brain.

If someone is experiencing a life-threatening emergency or there is underage drinking taking place, you or your teen can call 911 anonymously to seek help. For more information regarding substance abuse prevention go to www.talk2prevent.ny.gov or www.manhassetcasa.org

—Submitted by Manhasset CASA



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