

Community Challenge

River Resource



December 2009
Volume 21, No. 2

Board of Directors

Raymond J. Marvar *President*
Tracey Collins
Tim Cornelius
Sam Gifford
Noble Jones
Jim Mayer
Suzanne Miller
Eric Pempus
Jean Rounds
Ray Turk
Dave Wolfe

Staff Members

Debbie Rodriguez
*Recovery Resources
President & CEO*

Megan Kleidon
Prevention Manager

Jeanne Campanella,
*Community Challenge
Coordinator*

Melissa Liberatore,
School Social Worker, RRHS

Brynn Jollay,
School Social Worker, RRMS



Upcoming Events:

**New Year's Eve
Family Skate**

**Thursday, 12/31/2009
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Hamilton Ice Arena
21018 Hilliard Boulevard
Rocky River**

**Entertainment! Prizes!
Refreshments!**

For more information about this and
other Community Challenge events visit
our website:

www.community-challenge.org

Feedback received from recent Community Challenge parenting programs and from surveys taken throughout the Rocky River Community told us that you want more information on the topic of Developing Self Esteem in Children. Below is an excerpt from an article provided by Kidshealth.org.

Developing Your Child's Self-Esteem

Kids with healthy self-esteem tend to enjoy interacting with others. They're comfortable in social settings and enjoy group activities as well as independent pursuits. When challenges arise, they can work toward finding solutions and voice discontent without belittling themselves or others. For example, rather than saying, "I'm an idiot," a child with healthy self-esteem says, "I don't understand this." They know their strengths and weaknesses, and accept them. A sense of optimism prevails.

How Parents Can Help

How can a parent help to foster healthy self-esteem in a child? These tips can make a big difference:

Watch what you say. Kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying something like, "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.

Be a positive role model. If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitations, your child may eventually mirror you. Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.

Identify and redirect your child's inaccurate beliefs. It's important for parents to identify kids' irrational beliefs about themselves, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept. Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a false generalization, it's also a belief that will set the child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in its true light. A helpful response might be: "You are a good student. You do great in school. Math is just a subject that you need to spend more time on. We'll work on it together."

Be spontaneous and affectionate. Your love will go a long way to boost your child's self-esteem. Give hugs and tell kids you're proud of them. Pop a note in your child's lunchbox that reads, "I think you're terrific!" Give praise frequently and honestly, without overdoing it. Kids can tell whether something comes from the heart.

Article continued on page three

Tis the Season

Allowing Holiday Drinking by Teens Sets Dangerous Precedent

by Stephen Wallace, M.S.Ed.

December 12, 2005

Dancing and prancing through Jingle Bell Square, more than a few seasonal revelers mistake alcohol consumption for holiday celebration – teens included. Following the lead of influential adults, many young people are tempted, even encouraged, to finish up the old and ring in the new by, well, downing a few.

According to a new *Teens Today* study from SADD and Liberty Mutual Group, nearly half of high school teens (45 percent) say their parents allow them to drink at home, including almost one in three who say they are allowed to do so to mark special occasions, such as holidays.

Where's the harm in that? Let's make a list.

- The younger a child is when he starts to drink, the higher the chances he will have alcohol-related problems later in life.
- Alcohol use by teens affects still-developing cognitive abilities and impairs memory and learning.
- Teens who drink are more likely to commit or be the victim of violence (including sexual assault) and to experience stress, depression, and suicidal thoughts

So, why the inaction on the part of otherwise caring adults? Among the likely reasons is a longstanding myth that allowing teens to drink at home will make it less likely they will drink elsewhere.

It is also widely believed that "teaching teens to drink responsibly" to celebrate a holiday or other important event will demystify alcohol and lead to more thoughtful, less destructive behavior.

Wishful thinking, through and through.

In truth, teens who are allowed to drink alcohol at home are significantly more likely to drink with their friends. "Even if only on special occasions?" asked an incredulous mother during a recent presentation of the new research results. Yes, even if only on special occasions.

Here's what the data say:

- Among high school teens, those who tend to avoid alcohol are more than twice as likely than those who repeatedly use alcohol to say their parents never let them drink at home (84 percent vs. 40 percent).
- More than half (57 percent) of high school teens who report their parents allow them to drink at home, even once in a while, say they drink with their friends, as compared to just 14 percent of teens who say their parents don't let them drink.

This carry-over effect can be explained by a simple tendency to bring attitudes in line with behaviors so as to reduce the psychological discomfort caused by conflicting information: *It's okay to drink with my friends since I drink at home!*

Also common among teens is seeing things in black and white, particularly when it comes to justifying personal behavior: *If adults drink to celebrate the holidays, why shouldn't I?*



Rationalizing or not, young people use alcohol more frequently, and more heavily, than all other drugs combined. *Teens Today* research reveals that drinking increases significantly between the sixth and seventh grades; that the average age for teens to start drinking is 13 years old; and that by 12th grade, more than four in five teens are drinking.

That constitutes an epidemic – one likely only to grow during this celebratory season.

The silver lining in this holiday cloud can be found in widespread agreement among teens that their parents are significant forces when it comes to decisions about alcohol. According to *Teens Today*, almost seven in ten high school teens (66 percent) rate mom and dad as most influential in their decisions not to drink.

But influence cuts two ways. By allowing underage drinking during the holidays, adults deprive teens of the unambiguous, common sense guidelines they need to make good choices all year long.

It is clear that parents who talk with their teens about underage drinking, set expectations for behavior, and enforce consequences for violating the rules are significantly less likely to have children who use alcohol.

But there are other important reasons many teens say they choose not to drink, including deference to the law, chance of injury to themselves or others, loss of control, impact on academic and/or athletic performance, setting an example for siblings, and fitting in with friends who don't drink. Each of these is fodder for important parent-teen dialogue – both during the holidays and into the New Year – about the appropriate role of alcohol in society and the dangers it poses to young lives.

After all, 'tis the season.

Give positive, accurate feedback. Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again next time.

Create a safe, loving home environment. Kids who don't feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem. A child who is exposed to parents who fight and argue repeatedly may become depressed and withdrawn. Also watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other factors that may affect kids' self-esteem. Deal with these issues sensitively but swiftly. And always remember to respect your kids.

Help kids become involved in constructive experiences. Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

© 1995- 2009. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. Reprinted with permission. To read the entire article, use the following link: http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/self_esteem.html

Some Holiday Gift Ideas:

Books that Help Build Self-Confidence in Children-all are available at Rocky River Public Library:

Preschool to 8 yrs

Don't Feed the Monster on Tuesdays!: The Children's Self-Esteem Book by Adolf Moser

The Lovables in the Kingdom of Self-Esteem by Diane Loomans

I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem by Jamie Lee Curtis

Incredible Me! by Kathi Appelt

I Like Myself! by Karen Beaumont

I Like Me! by Nancy Carlson

You Can Be Anything! by Gary Craig



9 to 12 yrs +

Stick Up for Yourself: Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power & Positive Self-Esteem by Gershen Kaufman

The Girls' Book of Success: Winning Wisdom, Stars' Secrets, Tales of Triumph, and More by Catherine Dee

The Feelings Book: The Care & Keeping of Your Emotions by Norm Bendell

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Teens by Richard Carlson, Ph.D

Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul by Jack Canfield

The Gift of Time

The holiday season is often associated with frenzied activity, but it is also a time when parents have the opportunity to spend more quality time with their children. This year, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign would like to encourage parents to give their teens the priceless gift of time by remaining involved in their lives and scheduling meaningful family time throughout the holidays.

Here are some ideas of ways you can do that and create opportunities to talk about risky behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use:

Schedule one-on-one time with your child.

Teach your son or daughter how to make a family recipe.

Catch a movie after some holiday shopping.

Grab your tennis shoes and go for a walk together.

Start a dialogue.

Eat together as often as you can so you get the day-to-day stuff.

Listen carefully . . .for all that is said and unsaid.

Resurrect your high school yearbook and share it with your teen.

Pay attention to your teen's activities.

Are they heading to a holiday party? Verify.

If you've set a curfew, be sure to enforce it.

Restrict driving in bad weather.

For more ideas, visit theantidrug.com

Set Rules for Free Time

Did you know that teens are less likely to use drugs, alcohol, and tobacco if their parents set clear rules about such risky behaviors? According to recent research, when a young person decides whether or not to use drugs, a crucial consideration is: What will my parents think?

If you make your position on drug use clear and set rules and consequences for breaking them in advance, your teen is less likely to step over that line:

Don't make empty threats or let the rule-breaker off the hook. But be careful not to impose harsh or unexpected new punishments either. Stick to your original plan and show your teen there will be fair consequences for their actions. After discussing the rules, you may even want to write them down to avoid discrepancy over what was said.

Reprimands should involve mild, not severe, negative consequences. Taking away privileges or grounding teens for a weekend typically fit the bill. Overly severe punishments can undermine the parent-child relationship and lead to rebellious behavior.

Set a curfew and enforce it strictly. Be consistent on this rule, whether it's to be home in time for dinner on a school night or to be home by midnight on a Saturday night. Be prepared to negotiate for special occasions like prom and holidays.

Have teens check in at regular times. If your teen has a cell phone, establish clear rules for using it (such as, "When I call you, I expect a call or text back within 10 minutes").

Check in with the party host. If your teen tells you he or she will be at a party or at a friend's house, do not be afraid to call those parents to make sure adult supervision is in place.

Make it easy to leave a party or hangout where drugs are being used. Discuss in advance how to signal you or another adult who will pick your teen up when he or she feels uncomfortable. Be prepared to talk about what happened once you get home.

Establish house rules. If your teen is at home alone for long periods of time, set clear rules about who else is allowed in the house – and who is not. Also be sure to set clear rules about what is off limits – such as the car, liquor cabinet, or medicine cabinet.

Recognize good behavior. If your teen is respecting your rules, compliment him or her for behaving admirably instead of focusing on what's wrong. When you are quicker to praise than to criticize, young people learn to feel good about themselves and develop the self-confidence to trust their own judgment as they grow into adulthood.

Get more tips on setting and enforcing rules at home. Visit theantidrug.com



COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

a division of Recovery Resources

P.O. Box 16757

Rocky River, OH 44116

440-241-2608(phone)

216-923-4008 (fax)

email: communitychallenge@recres.org

www.community-challenge.org

**Community Challenge is a contract
provider of the City of Rocky River
and the Rocky River City Schools**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION US Postage PAID CLEVELAND OH PERMIT NO 4373
