



## Hello There!

Motor vehicle deaths are the number one killer of teens in the United States – and nearly one-third are alcohol related. That is the first in a series of talking points to teens about DWI. This quietly stunning statement is the reason why this newsletter is being written and, we hope, a reason for you to read it and consider ways to incorporate anti-DWI messages in your curriculum. The information provided here is part of a campaign called *Parents Who Host Lose the Most*, funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the parent federal agency of the New Mexico Department of Transportation. It is a challenge to make these messages clear to teens. They are very interested in spending time together, having fun and some see alcohol as a desirable part of that fun. Keeping the fun from turning deadly for the teen age-group is a concern for all who work and live with teens. A second talking point is “young drivers between 15 and 20 years old are more often involved in alcohol related crashes than any other comparable age group.” The combination of alcohol and driver inexperience is truly deadly. These fact sheets can be accessed on line at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/>

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## Graduation and Prom are Very Dangerous Times for Teens

Not only is prom night one of the most exciting events in a teen's life, on the road, it's one of the deadliest.

More than one-third of youth under the age of 21 killed in alcohol related fatalities die during the months of April, May and June - prom and graduation season - according to NHTSA.

These celebrations also highlight the fact that New Mexico teenagers often drink and drive. Last year, there were 52 teen fatalities on New Mexico roads and 21 of those were alcohol related.

In addition to setting good examples and providing our children with positive role models, it is our responsibility as parents and teachers to get involved to insure a safe prom night and graduation for teens. Here's what some New Mexico communities are doing:

To combat the problem of underage drinking on prom night in Rio Arriba County, their DWI Program visits high schools and tells students the things they need to hear - that their lives are precious, that poor decisions made at this time can impact their lives and the lives of their families and community, that you can have fun without drinking alcohol. Don't drink and drive and don't ride with someone who has been drinking. They follow up their message on prom night by stationing an

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[alcohol/StopImpaired/planners/2311\\_ParentYouthPlanner/images/downloads/ParentsTeensFS.pdf](http://alcohol/StopImpaired/planners/2311_ParentYouthPlanner/images/downloads/ParentsTeensFS.pdf).

Another web source for alcohol information is [www.stopimpaireddriving.org](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org). This site has monthly planners with downloadable materials in a number of formats, including posters and bookmarks. Teachers can use these materials in classes or they can be a source for teens doing research online. A musically oriented source for positive messages about road safety is Recording Artists, Actors and Athletes Against Drunk Driving (RADD). Rock stars young and old have joined RADD, including Justin Timberlake, Paul McCartney, Destiny's Child and ZZ Top – more than 500 stars have banded together in this internationally recognized organization. "RADD's goal is to reduce fatalities and injuries across all age groups by promoting safe, sober driving and awareness of road safety." They call what they do edu-tainment and they have created a number of slogans and donated their talents to public service announcements that air on radio and television. As they say "your lifestyle is your business. Don't take it on the road." RADD's website with music and campaign information can be found at <http://www.radd.org/>.



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adult at every entrance and exit to the prom with Alcoblowers or intoximeters to guarantee that no one enters the prom who has been drinking alcohol. If a student has been drinking, law enforcement is available to detain the individual and call his/her parents.

SAFETEEN sponsors mock car crashes at schools throughout the year that involve students, law enforcement and emergency personnel. In their scenario, despite all their efforts, students die at the crash scene. Teachers, friends and family then present a video memorial to the students during an all-school assembly that features footage of the staged crash and reflections by the victims' parents on the loss of their children. This moving presentation drives home the point that our students are treasures and we don't want to lose them in a car crash, especially an alcohol fueled one.

THINK.Prom is part of the THINK. year-round, alcohol-use prevention program sponsored by Mother's Against Drunk Driving and Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. It encourages students to sign a pledge stating that they will remain sober and will not ride with a driver who has been drinking during prom.

A coalition of the entire Valencia County community joined forces in April 2006 to provide a safe prom night for students. Over 400 students, more than half of all the students that attended prom, took part in post-prom sober activities that included movies, popcorn and drinks at the Starlight Theater and free pancakes and coffee at Harla Mays restaurant.

Other things you can do to prevent teen drinking at prom are: have a school bus take teens to the prom if its not held at the school, discourage parents from renting motel rooms or limousines, and make sure your students know what the school policy on alcohol is and that it will be enforced.

Teens will always remember prom and graduation. Let's make them memorable for all the right reasons.

## Talk to your Students About Alcohol Poisoning

Before the celebrations begin, take a few minutes to talk with your students about the very real dangers of alcohol poisoning.

An estimated 4,000 deaths occur each year in the US from acute alcohol intoxication (alcohol poisoning) by drinking too much alcohol and drinking it too fast. New Mexico has had many alcohol poisoning deaths. It is tragically common on our college campuses and even among our younger students: Albuquerque freshman Felisha Holguin, died of alcohol poisoning at age 14 in 2002 and 16-year-old Aztec High School student Ashley Harmon died after drinking heavily during a camping trip on April 1, 2007.

**What Is It?** Alcohol depresses nerves that control involuntary actions such as breathing and the gag reflex, which prevents choking. Someone who drinks a fatal dose of alcohol will eventually stop breathing. Even if a drinker survives an alcohol overdose, he /she may still suffer irreversible brain damage. Rapid binge drinking (which often happens on a bet or a dare) is especially dangerous because the victim can drink a fatal dose of alcohol **before** losing consciousness.

A person's blood alcohol concentration can continue to rise while he or she is passed out. Even after someone stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. A person who appears to be sleeping it off may be in a coma and in danger of dying.

**What Should I Look For?** Critical signs of alcohol poisoning include mental confusion, stupor, coma, or the person cannot be roused; vomiting; seizures; slow (fewer than eight breaths per minute) or irregular (8 seconds or more between breaths) breathing; and hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, and paleness.

**What Should I Do?** Know the danger signals. If you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning, don't wait for all the critical signs to be present. If you suspect an alcohol overdose, call 911 immediately for help.

## This Card Might Help You Sleep Better

**People die from Alcohol Poisoning by drinking too much alcohol.**

**Signs:**

1. **Unconscious or semiconscious and cannot be awakened.**
2. **No response to pinching skin or shaking.**
3. **Vomits while passed out without waking.**
4. **Seizures.**
5. **Less than 8 breaths per minute, 8 seconds without a breath or irregular breathing.**
6. **Cold, clammy, bluish skin, esp. lips & nose.**

1. Cut it out.
2. Make copies.
3. Have your students read it to you.
4. Ask them to put it in their wallets as a reminder - just in case.

## Alcohol Lesson Plan for the Younger Grades

**Name of Activity:** Tongue Talk

**Purpose of Activity:** To teach students that alcohol causes slurred speech

**Materials Needed:** None

### Description of Idea

Ask students to say the following statement out loud, "ALCOHOL DOES NOT AFFECT MY SPEECH." Instruct the students to do the same again, but this time, tell them to hold their tongue with their pointer finger and thumb.

You may want to tape it and play it back for them to hear how it sounded. Explain that drinking too much alcohol causes people to sound like that (slurred speech) even when they are not holding their tongue.

From TeAchnology, see page four.

People who “pass out” after drinking too much alcohol can die.

#### What You Can Do to Help:

1. **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!**
2. **Don't wait for all the signs to appear.**
3. **Don't leave the person alone or in the care of another drunk person.**
4. **Place the person on his/her side.**
5. **If vomiting occurs, clear the airway with your finger to get vomit out of mouth.**
6. **Monitor breathing and heart rate; if breathing and heart rate stop, begin CPR.**
7. **Do not give the drunk person hot coffee, a cold shower or exercise.**

Binge drinking is a reality for many high school students. Because of their inexperience, they are most likely to become the victims of alcohol poisoning by playing drinking games.

When teens drink too much, they're often put to bed by friends or parents to “sleep it off,” only to be found dead in the morning. The parents or friends don't realize that if a person drinks too much alcohol too quickly before “passing out,” the alcohol continues to be absorbed into the blood stream and can cause death within a few hours when breathing and heart functions cease.

## Web Resources

### Alcohol Abuse Lesson Plans



TeAchnology provides terrific online resources for teachers from rubrics and work sheets to weekly tips and an advice line to get help from other teachers. They also offer 27,000 lesson plans. This link will take you to eighteen free alcohol abuse lesson plans for all grades: [http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson\\_plans/health/alcohol/](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/health/alcohol/).

Lessons vary from a simple experiment to show how alcohol can cross the placenta and cause fetal alcohol syndrome to Alcohol-Separating Fact from Fiction for teachers with web access and uses video clips showing mouse activity.

Another search engine for teachers, Lesson Planet, offers a large variety of lesson plans on alcohol abuse. Log in to it at: <http://www.lessonplanet.com/search/search?keywords=alcohol&rating=&grade=9-12&media=lesson>.

This is not a lesson plan but it is interesting. See the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking at: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking>.

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