



EMPOWERING SCHOOL STAFF: STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRUG USE

School staff play a crucial role in preventing underage drinking and drug use. By collaborating with families, they can consistently communicate the dangers of alcohol and drugs, which can harm students' academic success and life goals. Let's work together to support and keep our students healthy and safe!

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Educators can identify at-risk students and work with families to prevent substance abuse. Signs of alcohol or drug use may include:

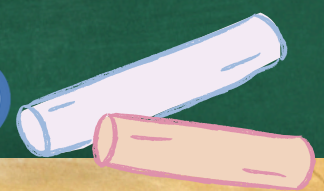
- Mood changes (e.g., temper, irritability, defensiveness)
- Poor class attendance, low grades, behavior problems
- Disregard for school rules
- Memory lapses, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination, slurred speech
- Switching friends, reluctance to introduce new friends to parents

TALK WITH STUDENTS

If you suspect a student is using alcohol or drugs, start by talking to them. Here are some tips:



- **Be a Good Source of Information:** Provide facts about the harmful effects of underage drinking and drug use.
- **Show Them You Care:** Let students know you care about their health, wellness, and success, and explain how substances can impede these.
- **Use Personal Stories:** Share relatable stories about making smart decisions and the consequences of risky behavior.
- **Help Them Build an Exit Plan:** Teach students that it's okay to say no and help them develop a strategy for handling peer pressure.



COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES

Building strong partnerships with families is essential in preventing underage drinking and drug use. Here are some ways to engage and collaborate with parents and guardians:

- **Open Lines of Communication:** Encourage regular communication between school staff and families to share concerns and observations about students.
- **Educational Workshops:** Host workshops and informational sessions for parents on the dangers of substance abuse and how to talk to their children about it.
- **Provide Resources:** Offer resources and support services to families, such as counseling and community programs.
- **Encourage Involvement:** Involve parents in school activities and prevention programs to foster a supportive community.



CREATE A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

Fostering a positive school culture is vital in preventing underage drinking and drug use. Here are some strategies to cultivate a supportive and healthy environment:

- **Promote Inclusivity:** Encourage a culture of inclusivity where every student feels valued and respected.
- **Celebrate Success:** Recognize and celebrate students' achievements and positive behaviors.
- **Encourage Student Leadership:** Provide opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and promote healthy choices among their peers.
- **Build Strong Relationships:** Encourage strong relationships between students and staff to create a supportive network.
- **Promote Mental Health:** Implement programs and activities that promote mental well-being and stress management.

REFERENCES:

[1] Partnership to End Addiction. *Alcohol What School Professionals Need to Know to Help Protect Young People*.

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[2] Parents Lead. *Signs & Symptoms in the Classroom*.

<https://prevention.nd.gov/files/pdf/parentslead/SignsSymptomsClassroom.pdf>

[3] SAMHSA. *What Educators Can Do to Help Prevent Underage Drinking and Other Drug Use*.

https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma18-5072_0.pdf

