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WINTER 2017



Merry Christmas

Planning A Sober-Friendly
Event When You Have A
Loved One In Recovery

Creating Safe and Joyful
Holiday Celebrations

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Planning A Sober-Friendly Event When You Have A Loved One In Recovery

By: Adam Cook, Addiction Hub

Planning a party or event when you have a loved one who is in recovery can be tricky. You want your guests to have fun and feel welcome, but you also want to make a comfortable environment for your friend or family member. Creating a sober-friendly event takes a little work, but it will be worth it in the end if it helps your loved one.

When going through recovery, many people experience depression and other mood disorders and have a hard time being social. They may withdraw from friends and family because they feel like a burden or because they just don't have the energy or the right mindset to be around others. Going to parties can be a stressful ordeal because they know they'll have to answer uncomfortable questions or dodge temptation.

If you can create an environment where they feel relaxed and welcome, that's one step closer to their own healing. Here's how.

Remove temptation

While the word "party" is often associated with substances, you don't have to include them to have a good time. Give your event a fun theme and stress that it's kid-friendly, which will alert your guests that you won't be relying on alcohol to show everyone a good time.

Focus on the food

One of the best ways to help your guests have fun without substances is to focus on the food. Create several "stations" around the event area for desserts, appetizers, and finger-foods rather than having them all in one place or making it a formal dinner. This will allow your guests to mingle and mill around instead of crowding awkwardly around one table. For more tips on what type of food to serve, check out this article on keeping your guests safe and happy.

Mood lighting is key

Your loved one may feel anxious in a room with lots of people, so lower the lights and give the party a relaxed feel. Create different seating areas to encourage conversation and have a "quiet room" where anyone can go to simply sit and take a break.

Keep it safe

If your loved one is okay with you serving alcohol at your event, be sure you keep it up out of reach of little hands. Get familiar with how much alcohol you have on hand, what type it is, and how quickly it's being used up. Have a bar area that will be watched over at all times by a responsible adult so that young people don't have a chance to sneak a drink. It may seem like harmless fun to them, but many kids and teens develop harmful habits later in life if they are exposed to substances early on. In fact, Redfin.com published an eye-opening article about how much children can be affected by the things adults use.

Keep it low-key

It can be stressful for a person in recovery to attend a party during the holidays, as these are the months when temptation often rears its head. If you're entertaining during this time, keep things relaxed and low-key rather than forcing games or activities on everyone. Play soft music, set out lots of good food and non-alcoholic drink options, and have a separate area for kids who want to play and might become loud. Set out board games, video games, puzzles, and art supplies for little ones so they can entertain themselves.

Remember that your loved one may not stay for the duration of the party, and that's okay. The fact that they've shown up is a step in the right direction. Allow them to have fun at their own pace and decide when they've had enough so they will feel in control and confident.

Creating Safe and Joyful Holiday Celebrations

The winter holidays are a time to enjoy the company of family, friends and co-workers. Where does substance use fit into this picture?

The widespread availability of alcohol at holiday parties gives our youth many opportunities to sneak alcohol when no one is looking, or convince a relative to let them enjoy “just one” alcoholic beverage. And some parents may be more inclined to let their teenagers have an alcoholic drink to share in a family toast, or otherwise share in the “holiday spirits.”

So, you might ask, where is the harm in that? Let's make a list.

- The younger a child is when he/she starts to drink, the more likely there will be alcohol-related problems later in life.
- Alcohol use by teens affects still-developing brains 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.

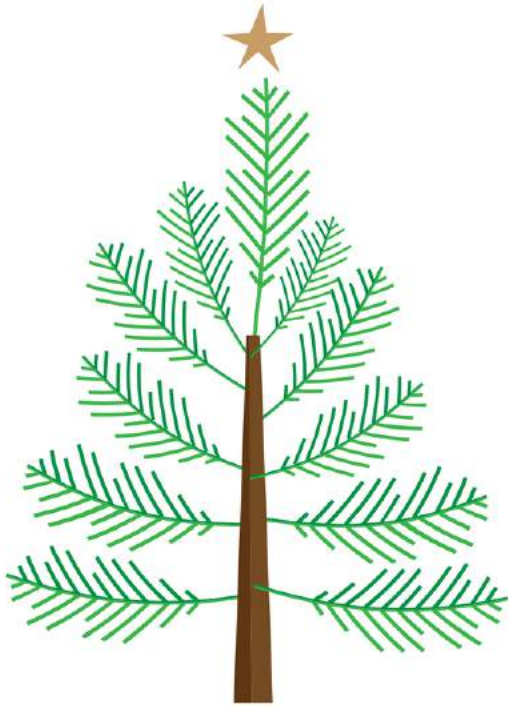
By allowing underage drinking during the holidays, adults deprive teens of clear, common sense and consistent guidelines they need to make good choices all year long. It is clear that parents who talk with their teens about underage drinking, set expectations for behavior, and enforce consequences for violating the rules are significantly less likely to have children who use alcohol. 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. Parent influence is a very powerful deterrent—according to Teens Today, almost seven in ten high school teens (66%) rate mom and dad as most influential in their decisions not to drink.

There are some simple things that you can do to lessen the exposure of your children to holiday substances. Consider these holiday celebration tips:

- At your holiday gatherings, offer plenty of non-alcoholic foods, drinks and activities.
- Model responsible behavior by making sure that guests who have been drinking do not drive.
- Let your child know what to expect. Tell your children that adults may be drinking alcohol during the holidays, but under no circumstances are they allowed to.
- To lower the risk of alcohol poisoning, be sure to empty partially-full alcoholic drinks. Children love to imitate adults; if they have access to leftover drinks they may be tempted. Children are much more sensitive to alcohol than adults. Alcohol is found in beer, wine and distilled liquor, such as vodka, whiskey, rum or bourbon. It is also in perfumes, aftershave lotions, and mouthwashes. Vanilla and almond extracts also have high alcohol content. Make sure to keep all of these products out of the reach of children.
- Parents, grandparents and babysitters should also be extra vigilant during the holidays. Visitors often leave medicines on a nightstand or in the bathroom, making them easily accessible to children. Medications given to senior citizens often do not have child-resistant closures, allowing children to open them with very little difficulty. Also, purses of visitors may contain medicines and other potentially dangerous items. Remember that the homes of friends and relatives may not be poison-proof, particularly if children do not live there.

Why not create some substance-free holiday traditions for your family? It's a great way to show your child that you can have fun during the holidays without alcohol or drugs. You can find a number of unique non-alcoholic recipes that can add flavor to your party by giving your guests healthy, tasty alternatives to alcoholic beverages.

The Shelby County Drug Free Coalition encourages more dialogue around underage drinking—especially before and during the holiday season. The conversation should not be whether the behavior is right or wrong, but rather the health effects to the developing brains and bodies of children and youth. We need to move beyond debates and focus on health risks and safety implications. Our messages should be consistent and clear: underage drinking is unhealthy, unsafe, and unacceptable. All of us at the Shelby County Drug Free Coalition/Drug Free Shelby County wish you a safe and joyful holiday season.



FAST FACT #1

Prescription stimulants such as Adderall® and Ritalin® are two of the drugs most frequently abused by high school seniors. (MTF, 2016)

FAST FACT #2

Marijuana was legalized in Washington State in 2014. Between 2013 and 2014, there was a 50.66 percent increase in fatal crashes involving marijuana-impaired drivers in the state of Washington. (Washington Traffic Safety Commission, 2015)

FAST FACT #3

Youth who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use other illicit drugs, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than young people who never drink. (NIDA)

FAST FACT #4

Youth who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use other illicit drugs, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than young people who never drink. (NIDA)

What Can Parents Do?

Parents influence whether and when adolescents begin drinking, as well as how their children drink. Family policies about adolescent drinking in the home and the way parents themselves drink are important. For instance, parents should always model responsible alcohol consumption. But what else can parents do to help minimize the likelihood that their adolescent will choose to drink and that such drinking, if it does occur, will become problematic? Studies have shown that it is important to:

- Talk early and often, in developmentally appropriate ways, with children and teens about your concerns—and theirs—regarding alcohol. Adolescents who know their parents' opinions about youth drinking are more likely to fall in line with their expectations.
- Establish policies early on, and be consistent in setting expectations and enforcing rules. Adolescents do feel that parents should have a say in decisions about drinking, and they maintain this deference to parental authority as long as they perceive the message to be legitimate. Consistency is central to legitimacy.
- Work with other parents to monitor where kids are gathering and what they are doing. Being involved in the lives of adolescents is key to keeping them safe.
- Work in and with the community to promote dialogue about underage drinking and the creation and implementation of action steps to address it.
- Be aware of your state's laws about providing alcohol to your own children.
- Never provide alcohol to someone else's child.

Children and adolescents often feel competing urges to comply with and resist parental influences. During childhood, the balance usually tilts toward compliance, but during adolescence, the balance often shifts toward resistance as teens prepare for the autonomy of adulthood.

With open, respectful communication and explanations of boundaries and expectations, parents can continue to influence their children's decisions well into adolescence and beyond. This is especially important in young people's decisions regarding whether and how to drink—decisions that can have lifelong consequences.

For more information on how to encourage drug-free behaviors and guide good choices, visit www.cadyinc.org. (Source: NIAAA)

Shelby County Youth Council Helps a Family in Need

On December 12, the Shelby County Youth Council, a program of the Shelby County Drug Free Coalition/Drug Free Shelby County, gathered to wrap presents for a family in need. Each year, members of the youth council (students at Shelby County High Schools) purchase presents via a group shopping trip and then wrap the presents prior to their delivery to a needy family.



The Shelby County Drug Free Coalition/Drug Free Shelby County was recently a sponsor of Turning Point Domestic Violence Services' Touchdown Tuesday.

The Drug Free Board and Staff greatly enjoyed the event. Thank you Turning Point!



Executive Director Lori Springer was named the 2017 Mission Partner by Turning Point Domestic Violence Services of Shelby County.



2017 Red Ribbon Breakfast: Thankful to be Drug Free

On November 3, the Shelby County Drug Free Coalition/Drug Free Shelby County held the annual Red Ribbon Breakfast. Due to conflicting events, this year's breakfast was held in November instead of December. The theme was Thankful to Be Drug Free.

Pastor Brandon Sutton of Blue Ridge Christian Union was the guest speaker. Pastor Bradon shared his testimony. He spoke of past drug and alcohol abuse. He discussed how he was thankful to God to be DRUG FREE.

The event was very well attended by over 100 attendees. Several local students were honored for essays they wrote about being thankful.

The event also featured a silent auction.

Thank you to everyone who attended.



RX DRUG MISUSE ISN'T EVERYONE DOING IT?

Rx Drug Misuse
ISN'T EVERYONE IS DOING IT?

This is False:

While it is true that prescription drug abuse has reached epidemic levels throughout our nation and drug overdoses now exceed car crashes as the leading cause of accidental death, it is FALSE that everyone is doing it. In fact, the majority of youth - close to 80% - are NOT abusing prescription medications.

Share this fact with your kids. It can be empowering for youth to know they are in the MAJORITY by making the positive choice to be Drug-Free!

While this statistic is positive and encouraging, don't ease up on your drug talks with your children. You want to ensure that your child is one of the 80% who are not abusing prescription drugs.

Because you are talking EARLY & OFTEN about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs — the odds are better that your child won't begin using in the first place.

SHATTER THE MYTHS WITH FACTS!

DID YOU KNOW?

AMERICA'S BIGGEST DRUG PROBLEM
ISN'T ON THE STREET-

IT'S IN OUR MEDICINE CABINETS.

KNOW THE FACTS:

- Three of the top five drugs abused by 12th graders are prescription or non-prescription medications (NIH).
- Every day approximately 2,500 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 abuse a prescription painkiller for the first time (ONDCP).
- Approximately 70% of those who abuse prescription medications get them from family members or friends, often from the medicine cabinet (SAMHSA).
- Unintentional drug poisoning is the second leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. (CDC).



Prescriptions: What Is the Difference Between Misuse and Abuse?

The number of emergency department visits due to misuse or abuse of prescription drugs has risen 98.4% since 2004. The terms misuse and abuse are often used interchangeably, but there is a distinct difference. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) explains that the difference between abuse and misuse has to do with the individual's intentions or motivations.

Prescription drug ABUSE is the use of a medication without a prescription, in a way other than as prescribed, or for the experience or feelings elicited, as defined by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. For example, when a person takes a prescription drug to get a pleasant or euphoric feeling (i.e. to "get high"), especially at higher doses than prescribed, that is an example of drug abuse. The abuse of certain prescription drugs – opioids, central nervous system depressants, and stimulants – can lead to a variety of adverse health effects, including addiction.

According to the FDA, prescription drug MISUSE may involve not following medical instructions, but the person taking the drug is not looking to "get high." For example, if a person isn't able to fall asleep after taking a single sleeping pill, they may take another pill an hour later, thinking, "That will do the job." Or a person may offer his headache medication to a friend who is in pain. Those are examples of drug misuse because, according to the FDA, the person is treating themselves, but not according to the directions of their health care providers. According to the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, prescription drug misuse can include: taking the incorrect dose; taking a dose at the wrong time; forgetting to take a dose; stopping medicine too soon.

The FDA stresses that both misuse and abuse of prescription drugs can be harmful and even life-threatening. This is because taking a drug other than the way it is prescribed can lead to dangerous outcomes the person may not anticipate.

Prescription medications have many beneficial effects. When used under proper medical supervision, they can help us live longer, healthier lives. But these same medications have the potential to produce dangerous side effects and deadly outcomes, especially when misused or abused. Because of this potential for harm, prescription medications should be used precisely as prescribed, and only by the person for whom they are intended.

What can you do to prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse? Educate yourself, your family, and friends. Safeguard prescription medications when they are brought into the home. Safely store your medications to prevent accidental exposure or to keep drugs from falling into the hands of those seeking to abuse them. Properly dispose of prescription drugs when outdated or no longer needed. If you suspect any friends or family members have a prescription drug abuse problem, have them seek immediate professional assistance.

People of all ages are affected by prescription drug misuse and abuse.

Source: FDA, NIDA

7 Facts About Teens and Drug Use

1. The United States represents 5% of the world's population and 75% of prescription drugs prescribed.
2. The majority of teens who abuse prescription drugs get them from friends and relatives.
3. More teens die from prescription drug misuse than heroin and cocaine combined.
4. Adderall misuse (often prescribed to treat ADHD) has increased among high school seniors from 5.4 % in 2009 to 7.5% in 2015.
5. By the 8th grade, 22.8% of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 9.8% have smoked cigarettes, and 12.8% have used marijuana.
6. Teens who consistently learn about the risks of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use drugs than those who don't.
7. About 50% of high school seniors do not think it's harmful to try crack or cocaine once or twice, and 36% believe it's not harmful to use heroin once or twice.

SOURCES: National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Monitoring the Future Survey (NIDA)

Talking regularly with your child about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces the risk of their using in the first place.



Prescription Fast Facts



FACT #1

Many teens who use abuse prescription drugs are not trying to get high, but are using them to help them deal with an underlying problem such as anxiety, a newly published survey suggests. The findings suggest the need for parents to understand physical or emotional problems their teen may be facing, which need to be addressed. The researchers found 20 percent of teens reported they had a friend that abused prescription drugs. They identified prescription drugs as a new tier of drug abuse after the traditional "starter drugs" such as beer/wine, cigarettes, liquor, and marijuana. (Partnership for a Drug-free Kids)

FACT #2

People who abuse pills may crush them to snort or inject which not only increases the euphoria but also increases the risk for serious medical complications, such as respiratory arrest, coma, and addiction. (NIDA)

FACT #3

Only 14% of teens indicate they have discussed the misuse or abuse of prescription drugs with their parents—compared to 81% who say they have discussed the risks of marijuana with their parents. (Partnership for Drug-Free Kids)

FACT #4

Mixing alcohol and medications puts you at risk for dangerous reactions. Protect yourself by avoiding alcohol if you are taking a medication. To learn more about a medicine and whether it will interact with alcohol, talk to your pharmacist or other health care provider. (NIAAA)

FACT #5

Among children under age 6, pharmaceuticals account for about 40% of all exposures reported to poison control centers. (CDC)

People who abuse pills may crush them to snort or inject which not only increases the euphoria but also increases the risk for serious medical complications, such as respiratory arrest, coma, and addiction. (NIDA)



Merry Christmas!

Please have a safe Christmas and a
Happy New Year!



Interesting in becoming part
of the Shelby County Drug Free
Coalition/Drug Free Shelby
County and supporting our
mission?

CALL (317) 398-3135 TODAY!