Alcohol and Drug Education Programs

One of the greatest challenges many students face in college is the pressure they may encounter regarding alcohol. New students are particularly vulnerable to these pressures because they are still learning how to adjust to the campus environment and balance their lives effectively. In an effort to support our students, Texas A&M University takes various steps to ensure that students are knowledgeable concerning the impact of alcohol and other drugs on a college student’s life. The Offices of the Dean of Student Life’s Alcohol and Drug Education Programs offers many resources and services to students and parents. These services include educational presentations in academic classes and organization meetings, Alcohol Education Workshops, distribution of factual information regarding alcohol and other drugs and referrals to professional counselors who can assess the potential for ongoing issues.

As Aggie Parents - the most influential people in our Aggies lives – it is important for you to discuss this important topic with your student. For many parents, bringing up the subject of alcohol or other drugs is not easy. You may be unsure of when or how to begin, and your student may dodge the conversation. Before you have that conversation, it is important for you to be aware of the risks and consequences associated with alcohol so you can help your student be aware. Research done across the country, including at Texas A&M University, clearly indicates that impaired judgment from drinking can lead to risky behavior causing academic, legal, and personal problems. It is important for our students to understand all of the risks associated with drinking.

By having this conversation before students arrive on campus, you help educate them so they can make responsible decisions. While parents may not be able to actively monitor students away from home, they can be available to talk and listen, and that is just as important. It can do more than help shape lives; it can save lives. To help start the conversation, Alcohol and Drug Education Programs has provided you with a list of eight discussion topics compiled by College Parents of America* (CPA) in addition to a list of signs of alcohol poisoning.

Set clear and realistic expectations regarding academic performance. National studies have demonstrated that partying may contribute as much to students’ decline in grades as the difficulty of their academic work. If students know their parents expect sound academic work, they are more likely to be devoted to their studies and have less time to make poor choices as they relate to alcohol.

Stress to students that alcohol is toxic and excessive consumption can be fatally poisonous. This is not a scare tactic. Students die every year from alcohol poisoning; it has even happened at Texas A&M. Discourage dangerous drinking such as drinking games. Encourage students to have the courage to intervene when they see others putting their life at risk through participation in dangerous drinking.

Tell students to intervene when classmates are in trouble with alcohol. Nothing is more tragic than an unconscious student being left to die while others either fail to recognize that the student is in jeopardy or fail to call for help due to fear of getting the student in trouble.

Tell students to stand up for their right to a safe academic environment. Students who do not drink can be affected by the behavior of those who do, ranging from interrupted study time to assault or unwanted sexual
advances. Students can confront these problems directly by discussing them with the offender. If that fails, they should notify the Residence Hall Director, Resident Advisor, and the Director of the Offices of the Dean of Student Life, another University staff member or the University Police.

Know the alcohol scene on campus and talk to students about it. Students grossly exaggerate the use of alcohol and other drugs by their peers. A survey found that Texas A&M students believed 92 percent of their peers drink alcohol at least once a week, when the actual rate was 56 percent. Students are highly influenced by peers and try to “keep up” with what they perceive as the norm. Confronting misperceptions about alcohol use is vital.

Avoid tales of drinking exploits from your own college years. Entertaining students with stories of drinking in “the good old days” normalizes abnormal behavior. It also appears to give parental approval to dangerous alcohol consumption and gives students an automatic excuse for poor decisions.

Encourage your student to become involved in student organizations and to do volunteer work in the community. In addition to structuring free time, involvement provides students with opportunities to develop leadership and job-related skills and to gain valuable experience. Helping others also gives students a broader outlook and healthy perspective on the activities they enjoy. Involvement on campus helps students further connect to their school, increasing the likelihood of staying in college. The Department of Student Activities, located in Room 125 of the John J. Koldus Student Services Building, can help students become involved. Students can also visit http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/online/search/.

Make it clear – Underage alcohol consumption, drinking to excess and driving after drinking are against the law. Parents who reinforce the law and make it clear that they do not condone breaking the law can also help reduce the potential for harm related to alcohol. Parents of college students should openly and clearly express disapproval of If parents themselves drink, demonstrating responsible alcohol use can also positively impact their students' drinking behaviors.

Signs of Alcohol Poisoning: Encourage your student to call 911 if they see any one of these signs associated with alcohol consumption!

- Fever or Chill
- Difficulty Standing or Walking
- Unconscious or Semiconscious
- Poorly Aware of Surroundings
- Vomiting while Unconscious or Semiconscious
- Fingernail Beds or Gums are Bluish
- Respiratory Difficulties

http://studentlife.tamu.edu/adep
(979) 845-0280