MESSAGE FROM THE PACT TEAM

In this newsletter the PACT team has taken a multi-faceted approach to the challenge of dealing with the complex issue of teenagers, parenting, and alcohol.

First, is education. As parents, we need to know how alcohol is being consumed in our broad contemporary American culture and what kind of alcohol is being consumed. Our definitions in this newsletter are meant to make parents more aware of the types of activities in which some teens and college students are engaging.

Second, is strategy. While we have our PACT guidelines on the back page which give basic information about SAR expectations regarding substance use, and how to host a gathering responsibly, we have also worked hard to present some different angles on how to address this issue in our homes, school and society. Whether it is a conversation about college visits, or the messages that we send to our kids, one of our goals is to challenge each parent to explore the more rarely focused upon approaches to alcohol use.

Finally, we present food for thought about the changing dynamic of alcohol use in our day schools’ culture.

We are happy to share that our brand new parent forum, “Wake Up with PACT” was a real hit. Rabbi Aaron Frank and Mr. Michael Courtney will lead another discussion on March 14th at 8am at the high school. Feel free to join us! RSVP by clicking here.

In the meantime, please keep on asking questions and communicate with us and your children, as we continue our mission of PACT. We would love to hear your thoughts about this newsletter or any other PACT related issue. Feel free to email us at pact@sarhighschool.org with any comments, questions or suggestions.
- The PACT Team
There are days when I think that I have been a high school principal for a long time; at other times, it feels like a thirteen-year-old high school is still a young institution. I would certainly assume that it is not a long enough swath of time to see much significant change in the behaviors of yeshiva teens. And yet, I have the strong sense that the level of alcohol use among yeshiva teens in high school - and then in college and as young adults - has notably increased over the past 15-20 years. I do not have formal data on alcohol use in our own or the broader day school community. So I share my impressions, for what they are worth...

Let me begin with the data that we do have - American teens nationally. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is a division of the NIH, the National Institute of Health, which is the primary agency for biomedical and health related research in the United States. NIDA funds the ‘Monitoring the Future’ survey, which is conducted by the University of Michigan. Since 1975, the MTF survey has measured drug, alcohol, and cigarette use and related attitudes among adolescent students nationwide. Survey participants report their drug use behaviors across three time periods: lifetime, past year, and past month. The results of the surveys can be found online. To give a sense of the scope of the research, overall, 44,892 students from 382 public and private schools participated in the 2015 Monitoring the Future survey. You can find much more information about the surveys and the work of the organization here.

I would like to focus on the trends. Take a look at this infographic, in particular, the first graph that lays out the patterns of alcohol, cigarette and drug use of 8th, 10th and 12th graders over the last two decades in the U.S. Here are the points that I would like to highlight:

1. Alcohol use is in steady decline since the early 1990’s among American teens. For 12th graders, for example, that means "use in the last month" has declined from over 50% to just over 35%.
2. Marijuana use (not shown here) has declined from 35% "last month use" in 12th graders in 1991 to 21% in 2015.
3. Overall drug use has remained steady for 12th graders at mid 20%.

The data suggests that things have been moving in the right direction over the last twenty years in the U.S. In fact, when NIDA reports on the survey, they describe the results as ‘good news’. I find that striking for two reasons. First, the numbers are sobering (pardon the pun). It is remarkable that the numbers were so high in the mid-90’s and it is striking, therefore, that 35% ‘last month’ use is the good news. (Remember that ‘last month’ use is different than ‘use’. Almost sixty percent of high school seniors consume alcohol in some measure). These numbers do not reflect where we, as yeshiva parents, would hope to be. This should, in no way serve as our standard. It highlights the degree to which we need to be consciously counter-cultural when it comes to the issue of alcohol use and abuse.

But there is something else. In my admittedly anecdotal and networked view, things feel as though they have been moving in the wrong direction in our day school world. Kids drink in high school. And the college campus is worse. We ignore this at our peril. But we must take note of the trend. Alcohol use is down nationally but I believe it may be up in the Orthodox community.

How can we explain increased alcohol consumption among our youth? Three factors come to mind:

1. Acculturation - with each passing generation, the Modern Orthodox community becomes increasingly acculturated as Americans; we (too often) do what Americans do. Through media saturation, we absorb the culture of America. And the affluence of our community is most certainly a factor here as well. In so many ways, this is a sign of the growth and success of our community. In this instance, it is not. We need to consider how to respond to that. In this - as in many other - instances, it is important to consciously articulate, to teach our children, that we are and should be ‘set apart from the other nations’.

(continued on pg. 9)
Sending your child off to college, whether for a prospective Shabbaton or for their freshman year, can be daunting. If you’re worried about your teen, the most important thing you can do is open up a dialogue about drugs and alcohol. We know that many kids want to try alcohol before they’re 21. As parents, your goal is to postpone that day as long as possible. At the same time, it’s vital to openly communicate with your child so that if she or he does choose to drink you will know about it and they will know how to stay safe.

According to The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIH), factors affecting student drinking at college include the widespread availability of alcohol, inconsistent enforcement of underage drinking laws, unstructured time, and limited interactions with parents. The beginning of freshman year is an especially vulnerable time. Students feel academic and social pressure, and often struggle to find their place in this new environment. It’s not surprising that alcohol consumption is highest among students living in fraternities and sororities and lowest among commuting students who live with their families.

It’s especially important for parents to talk to their teens about drinking before they start college.

An often overlooked preventative factor involves the continuing influence of parents. According to the Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs, “students whose parents talked to them about drinking before they left for school were 20 times more likely to have healthier drinking patterns, including not drinking at all.” Research shows that students who choose not to drink often do so because their parents discussed alcohol use and its adverse consequences with them. According to the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, “Parents who discuss drinking with their teens before they start college can influence their children’s drinking behavior once they are at school.” (Read: “Parents: Talk to Your Teens About Drinking Before They Start College”)

Tips on how to talk to your kids about drinking:

1. **Make it a conversation, not a lecture.** Encourage your teen to share his/her thoughts and feelings about drinking.

2. **Set clear expectations.** Be your child’s coach. Let them know that you trust them to honor the values they have learned and to use good judgment.

3. **Keep communication lines open.** Remember that active listening can help to keep the conversation going.

4. **Ask open ended questions.** Showing respect for your son or daughter’s viewpoint will make it more likely that your viewpoint will be heard as well.

Questions to help get the conversation started:

- I can see that you’re curious about drinking, but you don’t know how your body will react. What would you do to be sure you’re safe?
- Why do you think alcohol is illegal for people under 21?
- What would you do if you were offered a drink?
- Why do you think some teens drink and others don’t?
- I’ve heard about binge drinking – what would you do if someone passed out?

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**Wake Up with PACT: A New Parent Forum at SAR**

**February 29 & March 14**

8:00AM - 9:00AM in the High School Library

Join Rabbi Frank, Mr. Courtney and fellow SAR parents for coffee and conversation as we discuss the bestselling book, *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescent and Young Adults* by Frances E. Jensen.

Together, we will explore new avenues of understanding teenage behavior as we focus on the chapters entitled, “Risk Taking,” “Sleep,” and “Being Teen.”
BROADENING OUR LENSES TO CREATE A THOUGHTFUL PARENTING PHILOSOPHY REGARDING ALCOHOL AND OUR CHILDREN
By: Rabbi Aaron Frank, Associate Principal

When we address the issue of teen alcohol, all adults agree that we need to communicate clearly and forcefully that the risks and dangers of teen alcohol use are real.

However, as we all know, the serious challenge lies in the fact that, there is no magic bullet that will quickly, clearly and easily have teens internalize this message.

We need to address the challenge of communicating in as broad a way as possible. While one-on-one conversations with our teens are critical, they are only a fraction of how we, consciously or unconsciously, convey lessons to our children.

Social Drinking, Religious Drinking and “Alcohol Related Memory Associations”

Think about the first childhood memories you have of alcohol and adult use of alcohol. It may have been at a parents’ dinner party, a simcha or a sports event. You can probably remember a comment that an adult made or something a relative did. All minds, and especially young minds, create powerful associations. These associations are known as “alcohol-related memory associations.”

Adolescents who have memories of their parents drinking alcohol are at an increased risk for starting to drink alcohol earlier than those who do not, research shows.

The researchers advise that parents should be made aware of the fact they influence their child’s memories and later alcohol involvement by drinking in their children’s presence, even before their children are considering drinking alcohol.” (Pirya Mahendra, Parental drinking habits influence those of their children) With this in mind, we are challenged to ask ourselves about the messages we give our children about how we relate to alcohol in our adult lives. While the conclusions will be as different as each one of us is, I would like to suggest some areas for further thought or consideration as we examine elements that could lead to both positive and negative alcohol related memory associations.

Firstly, how much alcohol we drink matters to kids. Numbers of beers consumed at a ball game, at a family dinner outing, at a Shabbat or kiddush – at family friendly spaces, all lead to these powerful memory associations. Also, while the presence of wine or liquor at the Purim or Seder table is part of our mesorah, the centrality we might put upon alcohol should make us think.

How much is the drinking part of the chag experience? How much has alcohol been a part of the conversation in the planning for the chag? These questions should make us consider the types of messages our relationship to alcohol are displayed outwardly in both our religious and secular spaces.

It is not only what we do in relation to drinking or serving alcohol, it is what we spend. While we are entitled to enjoy good wine or liquor and treat ourselves, having our children watch us consistently enjoy bottles that cost in the hundreds of dollars also says something about our priorities and our relationship to alcohol.

And finally, it is also what we say. Whether we think it is damaging or not, frequent comments like, “boy I really need a drink, it’s been a hard week” or “here comes the good stuff” make a difference. These comments can create powerful memory alcohol related memory associations for our children.

Certainly, there has been much controversy about kiddush clubs and the modelling of drinking in shul. While there are many perspectives on this issue, the topic demands our
A SENSITIVE SUBJECT: TALKING ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ALCOHOL & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

By: Dr. Russell Hoffman, School Psychologist

One of the social issues spotlighted by popular media in recent months is the disturbing reality of sexual violence on college campuses. As researchers investigate this cultural trend and colleges search for ways to understand and curtail it, one unequivocal finding emerges: there is a robust correlation between alcohol consumption and sexual assault. Sexual encounters that occur when one or both of the participants have been drinking are far more likely to end in victimization or exploitation. One reason for this is the disinhibiting effect of alcohol. Alcohol impairs one’s judgment, and people are more likely to do things while under the influence that they normally would not do, like engage in a risky sexual encounter. Additionally, consensual sex is practically unachievable when alcohol is involved, since it nullifies one’s personal agency and the capacity to give or receive consent. Because of the prevalence of alcohol at high school parties and in the college lifestyle, it is important that we educate teenagers about this connection and empower them to protect themselves and each other.

One way that we engage with students about this sensitive subject is through the 10th grade Health class. In Health, we talk with students about what constitutes healthy sexual behavior. We first discuss the core values (i.e., safety, honesty, consent, kedusha, etc.) and the halakhic considerations that underlie this topic. We delineate for students how these values and halakhot dictate the kind of relationship in which sexual intimacy brings two people closer emotionally and elevates them both spiritually. Students are sometimes surprised to learn that, consistent with Judaism’s position that sexual intimacy is a powerful force that must be cherished and protectively reserved for an appropriate relationship, scientific findings also indicate that people who delay their “sexual debut” until they are older tend to have significantly better outcomes and healthier sexual relationships. We also explore in more depth the concept of consent, how it is a crucial aspect of any sexual encounter, and how it and most, if not all, of the other core values are undermined when people engage in sexual activity while under the influence of alcohol. We examine and debunk the distorted societal and cultural messages that teenagers get about mixing sex and alcohol. And, when the Health curriculum turns its focus to alcohol and drugs later in the semester, we revisit this discussion and reinforce the message: mixing alcohol and sex is a dangerous and destructive venture.

Recently, we had another opportunity to educate students about this important issue. Dr. Michelle Greenberg-Kobrin, Dean of Students at Columbia Law School (and SAR parent), spoke to the 12th graders about sexual assault on college campuses. Over the course of an hour, Dean Greenberg-Kobrin elucidated the undeniable correlation between alcohol and sexual assaults in college. She explained how sexual assaults are adjudicated in the college environment, and she described the devastating impact that sexual violence has on the emotional health of all involved. Dean Greenberg-Kobrin facilitated discussion and answered questions posed by students, and she put forth the clear and simple strategy given to college students for avoiding the heartbreaking and upheaval that can come from combining alcohol and sex: don’t do it - don’t engage in sexual behavior if you or your partner have been drinking. Colleges are beginning to recognize the systemic problem and to promote this message to students. Dean Greenberg-Kobrin reminded the 12th graders of the Jewish values and halakhot that govern sexual intimacy, reminding them that integrating these ideals into their own behavior and their attitudes toward sex not only protects their well being, but also offers a meaningful antidote to the toxic sexual culture on college campuses. By actualizing Jewish sexual ethics and by endorsing the sober sex strategy, students can protect themselves and the people they care about. And, just as importantly, they can contribute to the culture change that must happen in the college and Jewish communities of which they will soon be members.
By: Dr. Michelle Humi, School Psychologist

Alcohol research in human adolescents is limited due to the legal and ethical constraints. Much of the research on alcohol's effects on the developing brain has been conducted in animals. That being said, findings do suggest that the adolescent brain may be especially sensitive to the effects of alcohol because many changes in brain structure and function occur during this developmental period. Exposure to alcohol during adolescence can have long-lasting effects that may affect brain functioning during adulthood.

During adolescence and into young adulthood, new connections among neurons are being formed and many existing connections are lost. The process of plasticity allows each brain to be individually sculpted based on a person's individual experiences and interactions. One particular area of the brain that is not yet developed in the adolescent is the frontal lobe, more specifically the prefrontal cortex. This area is involved in working memory, voluntary motor behavior, planning, and impulse control. The frontal lobes are also part of the brain that process decisions about right and wrong, as well as cause and effect relationships. This area in adolescents is often found to have lower activity, which could lead to poor behavior. In contrast, the amygdala - the integrative center for emotions, is overactive in adolescents and is associated with high levels of emotional arousal and reactionary decision-making.

Furthermore, research has indicated that the anatomical differences between adolescent and adult brains have functional implications. Much of this evidence has been documented by investigators using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques to observe patterns of brain activity while individuals are engaged in specific decision-making and problem-solving tasks. For instance, when adults are processing information about emotionally loaded situations, they tend to show heightened activity in their frontal lobes and lower activation in their amygdalas. This is in contrast to the pattern of brain activation seen when adolescents are engaged in the same type of task, which shows greater involvement of the amygdala and, hence, more emotionally driven decision-making. This is due, in large part, to the developmental reality of the adolescent brain. Because the adolescent brain has a physically mature emotion processing center but a not-yet-fully developed prefrontal cortex, adolescent brains are simply not yet equipped to weigh options and think rationally when facing emotional decisions. One researcher drives this point home with the very real example of whether or not to ride in a car driven by a friend who has been drinking. In such a scenario, an adult can typically put aside the need/desire to conform and is more likely to make the rational decision not to accept the ride. However, the adolescent's immature (i.e., less developed and less experienced) frontal lobes are a liability in such a situation, and the emotional drive for affiliation, and the anxiety about being out of alignment with peers, may predominate. It is important to note that brain development is not destiny, and these researchers are not suggesting that teenagers always make irrational, emotionally-driven decisions. It is quite evident, however, that teenagers need thoughtful and developmentally appropriate guidance in the art of controlling emotional impulses in order to make rational decisions.

There are several other brain structures and neurotransmitters that undergo profound changes in brain functioning during adolescence, but are beyond the scope of this article. Research in laboratory animals continues to show that the adolescent brain is particularly vulnerable to the disrupting effects of alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant that affects the brain by causing it to slow down. Some of the immediate impacts of alcohol on the body include slurred speech, poor muscle control and judgment, confusion, slower reaction time, poor vision, and lack of coordination. Some of the short-term effects included memory impairment, and motor impairment. Data about the long-term effects show that heavy and extended use of alcohol is associated with a smaller hippocampus, which leads to long term cognitive deficits such as learning and memory impairments. In addition, the prefrontal lobes have been shown to be smaller in heavy drinking adolescents. Furthermore, changes in brain wiring during adolescence as a result of alcohol consumption can result in adolescents finding alcohol more rewarding when they are adults which may lead to increased risk of alcohol related problems in adulthood. In conclusion, alcohol consumption during adolescence can affect your child's brain, which continues to develop until their early twenties. Alcohol can negatively impact an adolescent's problem solving skills, school performance, mood, and mental health, as well as potentially have long terms effects on their brain and body.
This article was originally published on the website of the Freedom Institute, an outpatient treatment facility for substance abuse that offers prevention workshops and counseling for teenagers, parents, and faculty in the independent schools in New York City.

Alcohol poisoning is when the quantity of alcohol in the blood is so high that it threatens respiration. Teens are at a much higher risk of alcohol poisoning than adults because they metabolize alcohol less efficiently. Teens get drunker faster and stay drunk longer on less alcohol.

Binge drinking (defined as 4-5 drinks in a single sitting) and playing drinking games, both common among teens, cause blood alcohol content to rise to dangerous levels in a short amount of time. The liver has no time to catch up, which creates a backlog of alcohol in the blood stream. It is also important to note that drinking after the use of any kind of drug, prescribed or illicit, can increase the risks of alcohol poisoning.

**Warning signs of alcohol poisoning:** Everyone should be aware of warning signs that indicate someone is suffering from alcohol poisoning. The first symptom of alcohol poisoning is usually vomiting. This is the body’s attempt to protect itself by preventing any alcohol that remains in the stomach from being absorbed into the bloodstream. Additional signs are as follows:

- Unable to stand up or remain standing without assistance.
- Not responsive to talking or shouting.
- Clammy or cool skin, or bluish to purplish skin that appears very flushed.
- Not responsive to any physical contact, i.e., shaking, poking, pinching.
- Passed out, especially if unresponsive to any attempt to wake.
- Vomiting while passed out and not waking up is an additional red flag.
- Slow irregular breathing, irregular pulse or a pulse rate slower than 40 beats per minute.

We stress to teens that these symptoms should not be taken lightly. The only solution to alcohol poisoning is to call 911 and remain with the person in need until EMS has arrived. Furthermore, teens should not wait until someone is passed out and is unresponsive—it could be too late.

**Legal Repercussions:** Teens often ask whether there will be any legal repercussions if they call 911. In our experience, there has never been a case of an underage drinking arrest under these circumstances. We also point out that in a medical emergency, saving someone’s life trumps any legal action that may be taken, and that any potential legal consequences could be much worse if the alcohol poisoning ultimately resulted in death.

Often the next concern is, “But what about my parents? I’ll get in so much trouble!” This is where parent involvement in prevention is so important. We, as Freedom Institute counselors, encourage parents to communicate with their children, especially as they enter middle and upper school about their expectations regarding alcohol and drug use, and also about their expectations regarding calling for help.

**Share your expectations:** For example: “I expect you not to drink. But, I always want you to call me if you are in a risky situation. If you are in circumstances involving alcohol and someone needs help, you should call 911, me or any other trusted adult. I would much rather you call for help than worry about being punished by me. There may indeed be a consequence if you personally have made some unhealthy choices, but my first concern is your safety. In the end, my response to the situation will be much tougher if you don’t call for help when it is needed.” We also recommend that parents review warning signs of alcohol poisoning with their teens.

Time and time again, teens have shared with Independent School Program counselors their struggles to act responsibly in a time of crisis. As caring adults, it is imperative to send to our teens a clear message that promotes healthy behavior, prepares them to respond appropriately in a dangerous situation, and simultaneously conveys support.
AN EXCERPT FROM STAY CONNECTED: HELPING YOUR TEEN NAVIGATE TOUGH CHOICES
The Independent School Program published by The Freedom Institute

PREGAMING

This form of socializing involves imbibing large amounts of alcohol and/or other drugs with the goal of becoming intoxicated quickly and intensely, so that the "high" can be sustained over several hours. Teens often "pre-game" before school-sanctioned events, family functions, or other social situations where access to substances will be restricted or limited. Often pre-gaming occurs in the taxi or limo on the way to the event, or on the street corner outside the event. It may also take place at the home of the child whose parents are out, unaware, or permissive. Alcohol may be hidden in water bottles, soda cans, or other harmless looking containers and taken along on the way to the event.

WHAT TO DO

Talk to your child about the dangers of pre-gaming and your prohibition of it in your house. If you know your child is going to a school dance or to a private party, remind him that your non-negotiable rule is NO drinking before he goes. Know your child’s plan for the time leading up to the event. Plan to spend that time with your child (i.e., dinner, movie, theater or concert) or have your child’s friends over for dinner and a movie at your house before the event, and then escort them to the location. If teens come over to your house to get ready together, make sure you are present and involved.

OUR PARENTS SPEAK:

Dear PACT Team,

My youngest son and I attended the PACT program about teenage drug abuse, at which Bernie Horowitz told his inspiring and powerful "Jonathan's story". This was the second year in a row I heard Bernie tell this story as my middle son was in the 11th grade last year and even though I knew where the story was ending I was still captivated to hear how Jonathan’s problems spiraled out of control and how his parents had tried to help him, tragically in vain. Both my children were reluctant to go to the program, but after Bernie started speaking they were both equally engrossed and found the story to be a powerful lesson and introduction to some of the challenges they will face in the coming years.

This year we divided into groups to discuss the issues Jonathan’s parents faced and discussed what we would have done as kids and parents in the same situations. I found the group discussion very useful and informative and think it was good for the kids to hear their parents’ thoughts in an intimate, yet open environment.

In both years, the discussion continued in the car ride home and beyond. There are many more conversations needed with our teenage kids but this was a great start. I thank PACT for this crucial program and encourage all parents to go with their children and listen to "Jonathan's story".

Dear PACT Team,

I am sure a lot of energy went into preparing the PACT meeting and I found it very worthwhile. I was struck by the focus and commitment you and the PACT team have devoted to our children’s emotional well being. Keep in mind that our child, and perhaps other boys, do not share very much about their day and their school day experience. So for example, knowing that the GLCs are available and hearing about their approach is very helpful. Another example are the messages from you and college guidance about managing the college application and acceptance process. The PACT newsletter is chock full of useful information and references - it isn’t light reading.

My son is working on knowing himself better, understanding others and knowing more about how others perceive him. My family is grateful he is attending a school that supports and embraces him and that offers solid programming for parents.
2. The college experience - yeshiva day school graduates attend a wider range of colleges than ever before. In our competitive world, it is important to create more opportunities for Orthodox students, and to strengthen Orthodox life on new campuses. The opportunities available to frum men and women are unprecedented. But this is a double edged sword. Along with that, our students look for a ‘real’ college experience. They often talk about “getting out of the bubble” and “into the real world”. The real world of college campuses includes a very disturbing level of alcohol consumption. And high school students see and hear what college life is like and they come to expect the same - too many parties and too much drinking. Not, by any means, for all; but it is this way for too many.

3. Stress - Although 41% of students surveyed say that they drink because it is fun, 29% say that stress is a factor that causes them to reach for alcohol. That is on us, as educators and as parents, in addition to being on the kids. It is very difficult to strike the balance between helping our kids succeed in a competitive world and creating a pressure cooker that is difficult for kids to endure. The most important factor here is being present for and in communication with our children. Talking, sharing, supporting, commiserating, just being there, helps create an environment where students feel the support and guidance of their parents and teachers in navigating a complex world.

I conclude with one bottom line that I have come to understand from many conversations with students. Teenagers only know their own world. They can only assume that what is familiar to them is how it has always been. Each and every time that I ask, students tell me that they assume that they are doing what teenagers have always done. They drink because teenagers have always done so. There are many ways for teenagers to get into trouble and they did then as they do now. But alcohol is a dangerous business. We need to do what we can to shift that culture - for the physical, mental, spiritual and intellectual health of our kids.
THOUGHTFUL PARENTING REGARDING ALCOHOL & OUR CHILDREN  (continued from pg. 4)

attention and our consideration. According to Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb, former pulpit rabbi, psychotherapist and the Executive Vice President Emeritus of the Orthodox Union, the messages of kiddush clubs is detrimental to teens and to shul environments.


Another opportunity for us to reflect on our relationship to alcohol and the message it sends our children, is the entertainment culture all around us. Even sitting and watching a game at home or going to the movies exposes our beer-drinking and hard liquor culture to our children. What we say during or after those commercials matters. These moments provide us with opportunities to share our feelings and attitudes regarding drinking with our children as these cultural perspectives often contradict what we as educators and parents tell our kids about alcohol.

(For further discussion on this, see “Three Crucial Steps to Prevent Young People from Smoking, Drinking and Taking Drugs”, by Reuter Engels http://childandfamilyblog.com/young-people-smoking-drinking-drugs-3/)

While the answers are not simple, there is no doubt that in order to tackle the challenge of parenting our children surrounding issues of substance abuse, we must ask tough questions, look at ourselves in the mirror and contemplate our own relationship to drinking and the perspectives that our actions send to the children we are raising.

In that way we can all move closer to a multi faceted, robust type of communication, one that includes modelling, one that can lead toward a most impactful, clear message about substance use.

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SAR HIGH SCHOOL PACT EXPECTATIONS REGARDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

As adolescents, SAR High School students must navigate the boundaries between their public in-school lives and their private lives outside of school hours. SAR High School policy must balance respect for students’ privacy and self-determination with a responsibility to positively shape SAR High School culture and ensure students’ safety and welfare. SAR High School collaborates with parents to provide proper education, guidance and oversight to help adolescents make thoughtful, positive and healthy decisions around this issue.

Parents, please take the time to:

1. **TALK WITH YOUR CHILD** about the risks and potential consequences of substance use and abuse and encourage healthy, responsible choices. This should not be an isolated discussion - rather, it must be an ongoing conversation throughout your child’s adolescence.

2. **ASK YOUR CHILD** about his/her social activities. This includes where they will be and with whom. This also includes communicating openly with other parents to verify plans, curfews, and travel arrangements, and to ensure that there will be adequate adult supervision.

3. **CALL HOST PARENTS** when appropriate to verify that there will be adequate adult supervision.

4. **PROVIDE VIGILANT AND AUTHORITATIVE SUPERVISION** when your child hosts a social gathering. (See guidelines on back of page.)

5. **ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD IS APPROPRIATELY SUPERVISED** on weekends, during vacations, and when you are away from home for extended periods of time.

6. **PARTNER WITH SAR HIGH SCHOOL** by sharing any questions, concerns and insights about substance use in the SAR community. Likewise, SAR High School will share with parents any concerns about students’ unsupervised, high-risk behavior and will actively collaborate with parents to implement and adhere to these guidelines.
WHEN HOSTING A GATHERING:

- The host parent(s) should communicate in advance a specific time for the beginning and end of a party so that other parents can know when to expect their children to leave and return home.
- The host parent(s) should be present throughout the entire gathering and should make their attentive presence felt. Effective adult supervision has been proven to be a critical component to ensuring responsible and safe behavior.
- No drugs or alcohol should be allowed at any party. Guests should not be allowed to bring any drugs or alcohol into your home. Those who do should be asked to leave. The host parent(s) should have a door check or some other method of ensuring that guests do not bring illicit substances into their home.
- The host parent(s) will call the parents of any student who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and work out arrangements for that student to get home safely.
- Please note that in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, hosting parent(s) can be held legally responsible for the welfare of minors who are congregating in their home and are potentially implicated in underage alcohol or drug abuse that occurs in their home.