

Making Sure Prom Season is Memorable for Both Teens and Parents

Many parents get almost as excited as their teens when it comes to prom. The dresses, tuxes, limos and all the planning that goes into that special night. It can also be a time of worry for parents about their teen's safety — for things like peer pressure to drink and driving safety. Parents who establish guidelines and discuss expectations for prom with their teen can literally save lives.



Sadly, some adults have a relaxed attitude around underage drinking and sometimes even allow it in their homes, especially around special events like prom. Some parents feel they have little to worry about as long as their kids aren't driving.

Communicate Expectations Prom and graduation are opportunities to reinforce alcohol and drug use expectations. As students might be feeling more independent with college looming, it is important to help them successfully navigate prom-related temptations and potential peer pressures. Talk to your teens honestly about what you fear could happen if they or friends use alcohol and drugs. Share your feelings. It's all about letting them see and feel how much you care.

Agree on Your Teen's Plans for the Night Communicate curfews and meet your child when they arrive home. Don't allow for large unaccountable time frames as that can foster dangerous situations. If there is a private family-hosted after-party, connect with the host parents about supervision and confirm alcohol will not be available.

Support Plans for Safety It's a good idea to meet your child's prom date before the event. Encourage driving arrangements of a limo or older sibling to reduce the possibility

of distracted driving. Create a plan with your child that can be used if a pick-up is needed some time during the night. Use cell phones and schedule "quick" check-in calls or texts throughout the evening. Make sure they're having fun — and feeling safe. Research has proven that parents and teens discussions about possible scenarios at prom increases safe decision-making.

Monitor Pre-Prom and Post-Prom Activities Consider hosting a pre-prom reception where no alcohol is served. Don't approve after-prom plans at the beach or distant location. Late night driving exponentially increases the likelihood of accidents.

Encourage School-Sponsored Post-Prom Events Schools that host after-prom parties have dramatically decreased post-prom accidents and issues. Consider providing transportation to the prom and back to after-prom to ensure a safe and fun night. **With simple guidelines and a reminder of expectations, prom can be memorable for all.**

Community RESOURCES

East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)
100 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, RI (401) 437-1000

East Bay Center 2 Old County Rd., Barrington, RI
(401) 246-1195

East Bay Recovery Center 31 Railroad Ave., Warren, RI
(401) 302-6231 or 401-289-2055

BH Link Hotline — (401) 414-LINK (414-5465)
24/7 – help with a behavioral healthcare crisis.

St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry
645 Main St., Warren RI (401) 245-7000 ext 19

Warren Health Equity Zone (HEZ)
790 Main St., Warren RI (401) 486-5195

For information, contact Ann Marie Roy at ARoy@townofwarren-ri.gov or Maria Ursini at Mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov.

Funding for this newsletter from SAMHSA's Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) and Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act (STOP) grants.

warrenprevention.com

CommunityNEWS

Promoting Health & Wellness through prevention in our Community.

Helping Your Teen Stay Healthy and Safe Over the Summer Months

Summer should provide lifelong memories for teens, and parents can make the difference by staying active in their teen's life. Building open communication, trust and support along with a plan for summer helps with the navigation to adulthood and enjoyment of the celebrations along the way.

The summer months for many teens are typically about going to the beach, hanging out with friends, going to the mall or sharing a family vacation — just getting the most fun out of a relatively short summer season.

For high school seniors, it's about having one last "fun summer" before going off to college or joining the 'real world' with getting a job. This may be the first time in a couple of years that teens will actually get to celebrate "in-person" for prom, graduation and other activities due to the pandemic. All great reasons to celebrate, however, summer can also be full of idle time which may lead to risky behavior such as underage drinking and drug misuse.

Teenagers are always looking for adventure and new ways to have fun. So when they are pressured to explore drinking alcohol or drug use, they may be tempted to try a new form of entertainment for the summer. Many researchers have discovered that a main predictor to whether teenagers will begin drinking/using drugs at an early age is if their best friends do and have access to it. While a family history of alcohol or drug abuse can play a role, gaining acceptance from friends and access to drugs and alcohol is a key factor.



Adolescents who get their first drink/drug from friends are more likely to begin using earlier in life compared to those who get it from other sources. Researchers have discovered that adolescents' brains function differently than adults with decision-making and problem solving. These studies show that teens are more likely to act on impulse, misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions and less likely to pause to consider the potential consequences of their actions or modify their dangerous or inappropriate behaviors.

While there is not one specific secret to keep your child away from risky behaviors, according to several sources, some simple steps parents can take are:

- *Keep them busy with productive activities to reduce boredom and help them to set a goal within the activities that has value in the eyes of your teenager.*
- *If your child is spending a lot of time at a friend's house, be sure to know what their rules are for supervision. Not all adults are equal in their level of responsibility or what is acceptable for their children.*
- *Your teen may tell you that they know alcohol and drugs are bad for them and they don't need to talk about it but taking a few minutes to sit and answer any questions they may have is well worth the time invested.*

Sober Boating is Safe Boating

Boating Under the Influence (BUI)
is Not Only Dangerous, It's Illegal!



If you boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol you are endangering your life and the lives of others. Alcohol use is the leading contributor to recreational boating fatalities.

Alcohol can impair a boater's balance, judgement, vision and coordination. Alcohol use is dangerous for passengers too. Intoxication can cause slips, falls over board and other dangerous accidents out on the water.

BUI Enforcement The U.S. Coast Guard standard for determining if a boat operator is intoxicated is when the person's manner, disposition, speech, movement, appearance or behavior appears impaired by observation and/or through the administration of a chemical test.

If you operate a boat under the influence, the vessel may be impounded, the operator may be arrested, face fines or jail time or lose their boating privileges.

Boating Responsibly As we kick off the summer boating season, many will be participating in recreational boating here in Rhode Island. While time out on the water may be full of fun and leisure, the number one priority for every boater should be safety. Make sure you are prepared for any possible situation while out on the water.

Before You Go

- Complete a Boating Safety Course
- Do a Vessel Safety Check
- Prepare a Pre-Departure Checklist
- Check the weather before sailing
- File a Float Plan with at least one person on land

Boat Smart. Boat Safe. Boat Sober.

See RI's Alcohol Boating Safety Act at <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes/title46/46-22.2/index.htm>

Rhode Island's Social Host Law Helps Protect Teens and Our Community

During these months we look forward to celebrations like prom, graduation parties and outdoor activities like boating, camping and concerts.

Many times there is alcohol present so adults are reminded to never to serve alcohol to minors or allow underage drinking. It's unsafe and illegal.

Rhode Island law states that any host serving alcohol to minors at a party or social function will be held responsible for those minors — even if they leave your property. If a minor consumes alcohol, even without your knowledge or consent, you can still be held accountable.

RI Social Host Law

It is against the law in Rhode Island, for a host to "permit" an underage person to consume alcohol. "Permit" is defined as to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage by any form of conduct, that would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given.

The Consequences:

- First offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$350 and a maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed six months.
- Second offense is a misdemeanor punishable by a minimum fine of \$750 and maximum fine of \$1,000, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed one year.
- Third and subsequent offenses are a felony punishable by minimum fine of \$1,000 and maximum fine of \$2,500, and/or a prison sentence not to exceed 3 years.
- For 18- to 21-year-olds, a civil penalty of up to \$500 may be applied and required attendance at an educational program to recognize the dangers of underage drinking, and completion of up to 30 hours of community service.



Join Us in August for a
Gathering to Celebrate
Life & Hope



**International
Overdose Awareness
Day**

**Candlelight Vigil & Walk
August 31, 2022**
More details to come!

It's Here
When You
Need It! **tip 411**



**With the Warren Police Department
smartphone tool you can get updates,
view alerts and submit anonymous tips.**

Text "warrenpd" to 847411 or submit message through the department's website. TIP411 is not intended for reporting emergencies. **Always call 9-1-1 in an emergency.**

Download free on Google Play Store, iTunes App, or by visiting the Warren Police Department website.

More information available on the WPD website at <https://www.warrenpolice.com/tip-411>

The Benefits of Family Dinners



When parents with college-aged kids or older talk about the connections and wonderful conversations they have, we know it doesn't happen magically. It's the result of daily family time together. Commitment to open communication — and truly listening — creates honest dialogue and keeps parents as a key influence and confidante in their lives.

The pace of our lives, especially during these active summer months, makes it challenging to have a seated meal, but this is the stage when it's truly important. Find a way to make dinner time together a priority as often as possible, even if it's takeout or a backyard barbecue. Another way to all get together is to have teens or adult children share in cooking responsibilities or help out in the kitchen. Just being together, sharing conversation, has been proven to have real upsides.

- Talk about your day, positives and challenges, and roll into the happenings of your child's day. Don't force the conversation, make it fun and pressure-free.
- Ask open-ended questions for expanded dialogue and listen for topics that might be better discussed privately.
- Notice any changes in your teen, and allow for it to be a time to talk about important issues, such as substance use and your shared values as a family.
- Keep it simple. Take-out in moderation or light meals can be helpful when time is limited.
- Be fully engaged. Electronically disconnect from screens (including TV) during this time together. Music can be a positive mood enhancer to relax and have fun.

Numerous studies show that families that eat together have stronger communication, providing immeasurable dividends. Remind your family that this is one of the most important periods of the day for support, connections, trust and love. The groundwork you set will allow your dinner table to be a place they can look forward to coming home to for acceptance, openness and understanding.