

College Drinking Has Consequences

What Parents Need To Know

College is an exciting time for most young people. They experience a new-found freedom, developing new friends and interests. With these new experiences come many new pressures, including the pressure to drink. The consequences of college drinking are more significant and destructive than most people realize and affect all college students whether or not they choose to drink.

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), 599,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol. Of these students, 1,700 die each year from these unintentional injuries. Another student who has been drinking and 2.8 million students in this age group report driving under the influence of alcohol assault more than 696,000 students in this age group. Of all college students, about 25 percent report academic consequences of their drinking, including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.

The negative consequences of underage drinking are widespread. According to the 2010 Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment, underage alcohol use is a serious problem in Glen Cove. A research tool designed to measure the risks faced by youth and teens in our community, this survey was administered to students grades 6,8,10 and 12. The results revealed that most high school Seniors report that it is very easy for them to obtain alcohol and drinking and driving rates are as high as 20 percent among this grade level.

With many of these Glen Cove High School graduates now entering college, SAFE Inc. is calling parents to action to make sure they remain a primary influence in their college student's life. Though college students may be living away from home, parents can still be effective in staying involved in their son/daughter's life. According to NIAAA, the following tips can help parents stay involved in their college student's life:

- Pay special attention to your son/daughter's experiences and activities during their first 6 weeks on campus. This is a crucial time in your student's campus life, as many students initiate heavy drinking during these early days of college, which can be detrimental to their well-being and interfere with their successful adaptation to campus life.

- Find out if there is an orientation program that will educate your son/daughter on campus policies related to alcohol abuse. If so, attend with your student and be familiar with the name of the contact person who administers the college's counseling programs.

- Inquire about the college's "parental notification" policy. Make sure you understand the policy regarding the college notifying you or underage alcohol use and other high-risk behaviors.

- Don't lose touch. Even though your child may be away, they are still a part of your family. Make the effort to stay active in their life through phone calls, emails, and visits.

- Make sure your son/daughter understands the consequences. Make sure they clearly understand the penalties of underage drinking, public drunkenness, using a fake ID, driving under the influence and assault.

- If your son/daughter is showing signs of underage alcohol use, abuse, or dependence, don't wait to get them help. Do not blame them – help them find treatment. Assist them in contacting campus health services, locating counseling services, and remain up-to-date on their treatment status.

SAFE Inc. is committed to eliminating underage alcohol use in Glen Cove. Through a combination of prevention, education, and law enforcement efforts, SAFE Inc. combats the devastating effects that can result from underage drinking and drug use in order to build a safer Glen Cove.

For a copy of "What Parents Need to Know About College Drinking" (NIAAA) or additional anti-drug or parent resources, contact the SAFE office at 676-2008. For more information regarding SAFE, Inc and the PRIDE Coalition, community resources or to view SAFE Inc.'s Public Service Announcement, visit www.safeglencove.org.