

As parents, we know the importance of our teenager's social life and that parties are a way to socialize and relax. But an unsupervised or poorly planned party can result in unwanted or even tragic consequences. Parent accountability is the key to the fight against underage drinking.

Today, many teenagers drink alcohol to "ease stress and help them forget their problems", while others use alcohol because they "enjoy the feeling of being drunk". As parents, one of the most important things we can do is to be a positive role model for our children.

Communication and honesty practiced in your home is a positive step to your child's safety. It cannot be stressed enough that

**teens whose parents talk to them regularly about drugs & alcohol are 42% less likely to use those substances than those students whose parents don't !**

## As parents of teenagers attending a party...

- Know where your teen will be and for how long he/she will be there.
- Contact the parent of the party-giver. Confirm that a parent/adult will be home and supervising the party. Make certain that no alcohol will be served. Offer assistance.
- Know how your teen will be getting to and from the party.
- Discuss how your teen would handle a situation where alcohol was available at a party.
- Make sure your teen knows what time he/she is expected home.
- If your teen is staying overnight at a friend's house after the party, verify with the friend's parents that your child will be staying over and that they will be home.

**The # 1 place adolescents say they get their alcohol from is their own homes and the #1 place they drink alcohol is at other people's homes**

Parent networking is the best prevention tool we have to combat underage drinking. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents. Make sure their parents share the same beliefs that you do as far as allowing their teen to drink alcohol.

## Guidelines if you are hosting a party for your teen...

- Set ground rules before the party. Tell your teen your expectations and why you are setting rules.
- You and your teen should understand local laws about alcohol and other drugs.
- Decide what part of the house will be used for the party. Choose an area where you can maintain supervision.
- Limit party attendance and times.
- Make it very clear that party crashing will not be permitted.
- Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
- Make sure at least one and preferably several parents-adults are present for the entire party.
- Do not allow party guests to come and go. This will discourage teens from leaving the party to drink.
- Avoid easy access to alcohol in your home. If necessary, lock up your liquor.
- Be prepared to ask guests to leave if they try to bring alcohol and refuse to cooperate with your rules.
- Notify the parent of any teen who arrives drunk.
- Do not allow anyone under the influence of alcohol to drive. If necessary, take away their car keys and call their parent/guardian.

For more information, go to:  
[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)

## What is a parent's liability for hosting a teenage party where alcohol is present?

**CRIMINAL:** If a parent hosting a party allows a teen to bring alcohol into their home or provides alcohol to a teen, that parent has committed the crime of unlawfully dealing with a child, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted, the sentence ranges from one year in county jail to a three-year probationary sentence or conditional release.

**CIVIL:** A criminal conviction can place restrictions on your freedom and give you a permanent record. But the consequences of your actions do not end there. Your civil liability of hosting an underage drinking party can be costly. Under civil law, you can be held liable for any damage caused by a teen who has become intoxicated at the party you are hosting, if you know alcohol is being served, or if you provide alcohol at the party. If an individual dies as a result of an intoxicated minor, you could face a wrongful death cause of action. **SIMPLY PUT, YOU COULD LOSE EVERYTHING.**



**A Message  
from  
JANET DiFIORE  
Westchester  
County  
District  
Attorney**

Like every other community throughout the nation, Westchester County is not immune to underage drinking. But we are working aggressively to address it.

As your District Attorney, I will conduct alcohol compliance checks at local stores, prosecute those who supply alcohol to our kids, and educate children and parents on the dangers of alcohol abuse.

As a parent, I know the importance of communicating with our children about this very important issue. We help to guarantee their safety when we know where they are and who they are with. Far too many lives have been lost or ruined as a result of underage drinking. It's time for a change.



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**TEENAGE PARTIES**

**Every Parent's  
Responsibility**



**OFFICE OF THE  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
JANET DiFIORE**