

Preparing Your Child for the College Scene



It's such a proud moment, but certainly there are mixed feelings....You've helped them with the application and selection process and probably feel they are reasonably ready to embrace this next phase in their life. But are they ready for the social aspects of college? Are they really prepared for the sex, drug and alcohol scene they are about to be faced with?

Remember: Parents can be the MOST influential VOICE in their child's life

Sex, drugs and alcohol on college campuses are certainly nothing new, however the dramatic increase in prescription drug abuse combined with the spike in binge drinking, creates reason for concern.

The "face of drug addiction" has changed dramatically. At Teen Esteem we reiterate over and over to parents: ***Do not think your child is immune.*** Prescription drug abuse has crept its way into the lives of many kids, including the so called "good kids", those whom you previously may never have thought would be impacted by addiction. It has taken the loss of Cory Monteith, actor from the popular TV show "Glee", to bring more awareness to the rapidly growing problem of prescription drug abuse. This problem is leading to heroin use, which was the cause of death for Monteith. Thankfully the word is getting out, as you can see from this episode of [The Today Show with Matt Lauer](#).



Teen Esteem partners with The National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse (NCAPDA), founded by April Rovero, a local mother who began the organization after her son, while attending ASU, died from a lethal combination of prescription drugs and alcohol, a combination that is killing youth at alarming rates.

Some things you want to be aware of:

- 49% of college students abuse drugs, engage in binge drinking, or both.
- Almost a quarter of those students meet the medical definition for alcohol or drug abuse or dependence.¹
- Drugs referred to as "Study Drugs", such as Adderall, are prevalent.
- 1 in 5 college students admit to using Adderall for non-medical purposes.⁴

- Pain medicine such as OxyContin is also prevalent and can have serious consequences including death.
- Each year an estimated 1,825 college students die from alcohol related unintentional injuries, including car accidents.²
- 1 in 5 students report three or more binge drinking episodes in the prior two weeks.³

Risks associated with alcohol on college campuses:



- As a result of one night of excessive drinking, approximately 13 percent of college students reported having unprotected sex
- Every year, 690,000 students ages 18 to 24 are assaulted by another student who is under the influence of alcohol
- Each year, 97,000 college students are victims of alcohol related date rape or sexual abuse⁵
- Young people aged 13-29 accounted for 39% of all new HIV infections in 2009³

Sexual assault and rape are becoming far too common on college campuses. Talk to your child about how they can lose the ability to be in control of what happens when they choose to drink or engage in drugs, many times leaving them with regrets. Communicate to your child that they are valuable and should be treated with respect and that they in return should treat others with respect. An article from the [NY Times titled "Sex On Campus: She Can Play That Game Too"](#), shows how things are changing culturally.

Some suggestions you may find helpful:

- Ask your child what he or she is expecting regarding the college social scene. Students often think binge drinking and drug use are even more prevalent than they really are, causing them to feel more pressure to participate. Everyone is not doing it.
- Discuss your hopes and expectations prior to your child leaving for college.
- Check out the school's website to help your child consider possible clubs or organizations they can join.
- Talk to parents of students who have attended the same school.
- Find out what resources are available through the school, especially if your child has had previous problems with drugs or alcohol. Many colleges have drug and alcohol prevention/support programs, including counseling services that are available.
- Discuss attendance, and be sure they realize that while it's not mandatory as it was in high school, there's a direct correlation between showing up and getting good grades!
- Encourage your son or daughter to find a good study partner and friends with similar values.
- Be sure they know you are ALWAYS there for them, even if they make poor choices.



"Emerging research suggests that **even brief discussions** between parents and their children about parental expectations and dangers of use and abuse prior to students entering college can make a difference in whether and how much a student engages in substance use once in college."¹

REMEMBER: Parents can be the MOST influential VOICE in their child's life!

¹The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), *Wasting the Best and the Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities*; ² National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; ³ Center for Disease Control (CDC); ⁴ National Institute on Drug Abuse; ⁵ National Institute of Health