

Better Things to Do!

Public Service Announcement Contest 7th-12th Grades Fact Sheet

Here are some facts you may use for your PSA. Feel free to find other facts on your own.

- **Alcohol has social consequences.**
 - Underage drinking kills more young people than all illegal drugs combined.
 - *Drinking and Driving*: The rate of fatal crashes among intoxicated drivers between 16 and 20 is more than twice that of drivers 21 and older.
 - *Suicide*: Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 14-25. One study found that 37% of female 8th graders who drank heavily reported attempting suicide.
 - *High Risk Sex*: This includes multiple partners and failing to use a condom resulting in teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (60% of all STIs are alcohol related).
- **Alcohol affects the development of the adolescent brain.**
 - Research from the American Medical Association shows alcohol can cause severe and possible long lasting brain damage in people under 21.
 - This research has shown brains of 14-21 year olds who drink alcohol have a smaller hippocampi (memory and learning) and damage to the cerebral cortex, the prefrontal cortex (decision and reasoning).
 - Research has also found teens who used alcohol scored worse than their non drinking peers on vocabulary, visual- spatial tests (the ability to think in pictures and images), and memory tests.
 - Youth who drink alcohol were more likely to perform poorly in school and suffer from social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts, and violence.
- **Alcohol kills our youth.**
 - Annually, about 5,000, people under 21 die from alcohol related injuries involving under age drinking. (38% were motor vehicle accidents, 32% result from homicide and 6% from suicide)
- **Underage drinking affects everyone.**
 - Costs to society of underage drinking in New Jersey in 2005 totaled \$1.5 BILLION
 - Youth Violence: \$659.5 million
 - Youth traffic crashes: \$441.9 million
 - High risk sex, ages 14-20: \$154.8 million
 - Youth property crime: \$73.4 million
 - Youth injury: \$47.6 million
 - Youth alcohol treatment: \$ 36.9 million
 - FAS among Mothers age 15-20 \$25.2 million
 - Poisoning and psychoses: \$21.1 million

SOURCES

Alcohol Alert No. 59, Underage Drinking: A Major Public Health Challenge, NIAAA, April 2003

AMA. Underage Drinkers at Higher Risk of Brain Damage, last referenced 3/6/04

Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2004; Hingson and Kenkel 2004; Levy et al. 1999; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 2003; Smith 1999

The International Institute for Alcohol Awareness (IIAA), a project of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation