

# Alcohol Discussion Guide: Age-Based

## High School



Alcohol is the number one most abused substance by adolescents. In high school, parents need to be proactive and assertive about alcohol use due to the amount of underage drinking that occurs during this sensitive stage of brain development. Use this age-based alcohol discussion guide when talking with upper school-age teens.

### HIGH SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN:

- ☐ Let your teen know that you will be collaborating with their friends' parents to ensure all recreational activities occur in environments free from alcohol.
- ☐ Set expectations for alcohol-free behavior at parties.

**ALCOHOL-FREE PARTIES SCRIPT:** *'You have earned peer privileges to attend the party this weekend. Remember what our Family Code says about alcohol. We trust that you will follow the code, say no to alcohol, and find friends who know how to have fun naturally, without alcohol.'*

- ☐ Teach and role-play refusal skills.

**REFUSAL SKILLS SCRIPT:** *'I trust the part of your brain that is grown but don't trust the part that hasn't developed yet. So, when you get home, I will give you an alcohol test. If there is drinking at the party, you can let people know that you get tested. Have a great time, make good decisions, and protect your brain!'*

**ROLE-PLAY:** *'If that cute guy is there and offers you a beer, what will you say? What if your best friend starts playing a drinking game, what will you do? If people give you a hard time for not drinking, what will you say?'*

- ☐ Discuss your child's school policy and your state's laws regarding underage drinking, drunk driving, and underage alcohol possession.

**ACTIVITY:** Ask your teen to look up their school's policy and their state's laws about underage drinking and discuss with you before attending their first party.

- ☐ Describe the relationship between alcohol and other risky behavior such as:

- ☒ Teens who drink alcohol are more likely to be the victims of dating violence and date rape.
- ☒ Teens who drink alcohol are more likely to engage in violence and suffer academic problems.
- ☒ Teens who drink alcohol are more likely to suffer from depression and other mental health illnesses.
- ☒ Teenage drinking and driving is the #1 cause of death in teens.
- ☒ A large percentage of teens who drink underage go on to try illicit drugs.

**ACTIVITY:** Read the list above and ask your teen why they think alcohol and other risky behavior, or mental health issues go hand-in-hand?

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Create consequences for engagement in underage alcohol use that increase if the behavior continues, including undergoing an alcohol use assessment by a qualified clinician. Typically, if a teen engages in underage alcohol use, the consequences could include:

- 🌐 Grounding or loss of freedom for 2-4 weeks, double for a second offense
- 🌐 Loss of peer privileges for 2-4 weeks, double for a second offense
- 🌐 An act of restitution (example: writing a paper about the harms of underage drinking; apologizing to a friend's parents for their behavior while drinking during a sleepover; helping clean up damage from a party)
- 🌐 Re-payment of fees for any damaged property, tickets, attorneys' fees, or court costs
- 🌐 Loss of vehicle for 2-4 weeks, longer if they engaged in drinking and driving
- 🌐 Increase of alcohol testing to weekly or bi-weekly

**CONSEQUENCES SCRIPT:** 'I trust that you will represent our Family Code when you are away from home. What does our Family Code say about underage alcohol use? Yes, thank you for remembering and upholding the code! If you ever make a different decision and drink alcohol, your consequence will be\_\_\_\_\_. If you engage more than once, we will go to a clinician who will conduct an alcohol use assessment and follow their treatment recommendations.'

**DRIVING CONSEQUENCES SCRIPT:** 'I understand that you have been driving yourself to and from school for a year. However, you were drinking and driving last weekend. It is NEVER okay to drink and drive. You will need to earn our trust back before we allow you to get behind the wheel again. I'll drive you to school every morning and you can ride the bus after school for at least the next two months.'