

# PARENTS, YOU'RE NOT DONE YET.

Talk with your student about substance use and college

## While they're still at Home:

It's helpful to be realistic when sharing your own drinking experiences, both positive and negative. Be clear in what you expect from your student regarding:

- Attending class
- Drinking and driving
- Financial responsibility
- Life's choices including substance use
- Study time vs. social time
- Staying in touch

..... *Here are some conversation starters you may want to use:*

- How will you decide whether or not to drink at college?
- What will you do if you find yourself at a party with only alcohol to drink?
- What will you do if your roommate only wants to drink or smoke marijuana and party?
- What will you do if you find a student passed out in the bathroom?
- How will you handle it if you are asked to baby-sit someone who is very drunk?

## Once they're at College:

Since the first 6 weeks of college are a very high-risk time for first year students, you may want to communicate frequently and be supportive.

Ask questions such as:

- How are you doing?
- How do you like your classes?
- How is your social life going?
- How are you spending your down time?
- What do you like about residence hall life?
- Do you see others making friends or just drinking buddies?
- How are you getting along with your roommate?
- What feels overwhelming?
- What can we do to help you?

### **DON'T FORGET THESE VERY IMPORTANT TOPICS:**

- Family beliefs and values regarding substance use
- How to refuse a drink
- Where to get help on campus

Most college students make responsible decisions about alcohol consumption. However, we also know that:  
Availability of Alcohol + Absence of Parents + Desire to fit in = Potentially risky drinking decisions

## HARM-REDUCTION strategies:

- Have a plan... WHETHER you will drink and WHAT you will drink, before the party
- Eating a complete meal before drinking
- Always knowing WHAT you are drinking
- Alternating alcohol-free drinks throughout the evening
- Have a plan to get home safely
- Making sure you and your friends have each other's back
- Abstaining is the safest choice

Dangerous consumption of alcohol by college students continues to be a health and safety issue in spite of laws, campus policies and college programs.

We encourage you to have ongoing and meaningful conversations with your student about their choices with regards to alcohol.

You may want to discuss the differences between low-risk and high-risk drinking.

## HIGH RISK drinking is:

- Chugging, drinking games, pre-gaming, (drinking anything out of a punch bowl, trough, hose or funnel)
- Drinking to get drunk (intoxicated)
- Driving after drinking or riding with someone under the influence
- Drinking too much too fast
- Going to parties where people drink too much
- Not knowing what is in your glass or leaving it unattended
- Mixing alcohol with medications or illegal drugs