

Talk with Your Son or Daughter!

Campus climate is important, but ultimately it is up to your son or daughter to make responsible choices. Studies show that parents remain a key influence on college students. Your opinions and guidance can make a difference!

Listen. You won't get far by lecturing. Ask your child to talk about alcohol and other drugs. Find out what concerns he or she has.

Make your expectations clear. College is a huge investment of time and money. Set clear expectations that your son or daughter will focus on academic work and personal development. Underage alcohol consumption and alcohol-impaired driving are illegal. Make it clear that you do not condone breaking the law.

Offer information. Alcohol is toxic. Far too many students die every year from alcohol poisoning. Discourage dangerous drinking such as drinking games or fraternity or athletics hazing. Encourage your son or daughter to have the courage to intervene when someone else is engaging in dangerous drinking.

Help them take a stand. Every student has the right to a safe academic and living environment. Discuss ways to handle situations ranging from interrupted study time to assault or unwanted sexual advances. Help your son or daughter think about whether to approach the offender directly or whether to notify residence hall staff or other college or law enforcement officials.

Get and share the facts. Students grossly overestimate the use of alcohol and other drugs by their peers. Young adults are highly influenced by peers and tend to drink in amounts they perceive to be the norm. You can play a vital role in providing accurate information.

Encourage community service. Students who volunteer are less likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs. Point out the benefits of volunteer work—forming friendships, developing job-related skills, and knowing the satisfaction of helping others.

Be a good role model. Evaluate your own use of alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines, and even over-the-counter drugs. Consider how your attitudes and actions may be shaping your son or daughter's choice about whether or not to use alcohol or other drugs.