



Governor's Office for  
**Children and Families**



## RESOURCE GUIDE

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

- Underage Drinking Fact Sheet
  - Parent Tip Sheet
  - Discussion Questions
- Grades 3-5 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-8 Lesson Plan
- Grades 9-12 Lesson Plan
- Grades 6-12 Lesson Plan



Connect with Kids

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All



Underage drinking is reaching epidemic proportions. Can this trend be stopped or is underage drinking simply a teenage rite of passage? More importantly, is this behavior reinforced when kids see their parents and media “role models” having such a good time and socializing with an alcoholic beverage in hand?

The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, with funding from the Governor’s Office for Children and Families under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, is committed to help the children and families of Georgia become more aware of the problems related to underage drinking.

This Resource Guide is designed to accompany the video entitled: **The Worst Drug of All**. These materials, designed to help get the conversation started among teens, families and educators in classroom, home and community group settings throughout the State of Georgia, include:

- Underage Drinking Fact Sheet
- Parent Tip Sheet
- Discussion Questions
- Lesson Plan for Grades 3-5
- Lesson Plan for Grades 6-8
- Lesson Plan for Grades 9-12
- Lesson Plan for Grades 6-12

This project was supported in part by the **Council on Alcohol and Drugs** with funding from the **Governor’s Office for Children and Families** under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Block Grant Program, CFDA 16.727. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Council on Alcohol and Drugs, the Governor’s Office for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Underage Drinking

### Fact Sheet



#### WHAT WE KNOW

Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among persons under the age of 21 in the United States, with tragic health, social and economic consequences.

Despite the fact that drinking before age 21 is an illegal act, 20% of all alcohol consumed in the United States is attributed to people between ages 12 and 20. Unfortunately, most of that drinking is binge drinking, having more than five drinks on one occasion. The amount a person has had to drink is measured by BAC, blood/breath alcohol content. BAC is the amount of alcohol in a person's blood. It can be measured by testing blood, or estimated when testing breath or urine. One average drink may raise the BAC of a 140 to 180 pound person by .02 grams, and for a lighter person, the BAC may be higher; for a heavier person, it may be lower. Note that even one drink can put a person over the legal BAC limit.

Approximately 382,000 underage youth in Georgia drink each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System study, self-reports by Georgia students in grades 9-12 indicated that :

- 74% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more days during their life.
- 24% had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, before age 13.
- 38% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more occasion in the past 30 days.
- 19% had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row (i.e., binge drinking) in the past 30 days.
- 4% had at least one drink of alcohol on school property on one or more of the past 30 days.

Underage drinking cost the citizens of Georgia \$1.7 billion in 2007. Underage drinking impacts youth violence, traffic crashes, high-risk sexual activity, youth property crime, injury, poisoning and psychoses, fetal alcohol syndrome (the largest preventable cause of mental retardation) among mothers ages 15-20, and youth alcohol treatment.

Consider these national statistics:

- Teenage girls who binge drink are up to 63% more likely to become teen mothers than those who do not.
- 10% of high school teenagers have driven after drinking alcohol.
- 33% have ridden with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.
- In 2005, over 145,000 teenagers between 12 and 20 years old visited American emergency rooms with injuries related to drinking alcohol.
- Every day, approximately three teens die from drinking and driving accidents.
- Every day in the U.S., at least six teens die of non-driving alcohol-related causes such as homicide, suicide, and drowning.
- Two out of three teenagers said it was easy to get alcohol from their homes without their parents' knowledge, while one out of three teenagers said they were able to get alcohol from their own consenting parents.

#### RESOURCES

American Medical Association Survey, 2005, [www.jama.ama-assn.org](http://www.jama.ama-assn.org)  
CDC 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm)  
CDC Quick Stats: Underage Drinking, 2006, [www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/quickstats/underage\\_drinking.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/quickstats/underage_drinking.htm)  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)  
National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2004, [www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH.htm](http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH.htm)  
The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org)  
Parents: The Anti-Drug, <http://www.theantidrug.com/>  
PIRE: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, [www.udetc.org/factsheets/Georgia.pdf](http://www.udetc.org/factsheets/Georgia.pdf)  
U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2004, [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Parent Tip Sheet



### WHAT WE CAN DO

A study by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine outlines several strategies that can have a strong impact on reducing drinking among young people. These include the following:

- Action must be taken on all levels: national, state and local. Minimum drinking age laws must be enforced in drinking establishments as well as in private homes.
- Media campaigns that target youth and adult desire to drink should be held to stricter guidelines, so as to reduce their exposure to alcohol advertising.

Adults must be good role models, setting a day-to-day example of their value system. Show the compassion, honesty, generosity and openness we want our children and students to have. Parents, if you abuse alcohol, your kids are going to pick up on it.

**Know what kids are doing – and with whom – during their free time.** Children spend less than 20 percent of their waking hours in school. Unsupervised teens are more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as underage drinking, sexual activity, and cigarette smoking than other teens. Setting clear rules and monitoring your children's activities (through technology, friends, neighbors and appointed check-in times) can help you keep your teens safe.

**Keep the lines of communication open.** Be absolutely clear about your expectations and rules concerning underage drinking and talk often about the dangers and consequences of alcohol abuse. Be a good listener and encourage children to ask questions – and provide honest answers. Don't make up what you don't know; offer to find out. Showing your willingness to listen will make your teen feel more comfortable about opening up to you. Don't react in a way that will cut off further discussion. If your teen makes statements that challenge or shock you, turn them into a calm discussion with the following tips:

- There is no "safe" level of alcohol use when it comes to teenagers. To keep your kids safe, adopt a "no use" policy. Make sure your kids know they are not allowed to drink at other people's homes as well.
- As parents or caregivers, present a united front whenever possible, especially when it comes to issues regarding your teen's safety and protection.
- Forget about being the "cool" parent. Parents who are overly permissive put their kids at higher risk of getting into trouble, including car accidents, engaging in violence, risky sexual behavior and substance abuse. Saying no to underage drinking – in your own home and anywhere else – does not make a parent less "cool."
- Don't send mixed messages by trying to "bargain" with your teen about drinking and other risky behaviors. Drinking is *always* dangerous for teens, even if it happens in a "safe place" and the teen will not be driving.
- Monitor and address sources of alcohol and tobacco for teens in your community. Talk to school or city officials or other parents to learn more about where teens are getting these substances, including social sources (e.g. young adults) and commercial establishments.

### RESOURCES

American Medical Association Survey, 2005, [www.jama.ama-assn.org](http://www.jama.ama-assn.org)  
CDC 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm)  
CDC Quick Stats: Underage Drinking, 2006, [www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/quickstats/underage\\_drinking.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/quickstats/underage_drinking.htm)  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)  
National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2004, [www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH.htm](http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH.htm)  
The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org)  
Parents: The Anti-Drug, <http://www.theantidrug.com/>  
PIRE: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, [www.udetc.org/factsheets/Georgia.pdf](http://www.udetc.org/factsheets/Georgia.pdf)  
U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2004, [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Discussion Questions



**Students, educators and families can discuss underage drinking after viewing the documentary. Use these questions as a guide.**

1. Why do experts say alcohol is the worst drug of all?
2. Why do you think so many teens choose to drink alcohol when they know it is illegal?
3. If a teen starts drinking alcohol, what are some other risky behaviors in which he or she might engage?
4. What are negative health effects of drinking alcohol? Do any positive effects exist? Explain.
5. Have your parents ever talked to you about the use of drugs and alcohol? If so, what did they say? If not, why not?
6. Have you ever experimented with alcohol? If so, who served you alcohol? What were the consequences of drinking alcohol? If not, why not?
7. What are your parents' rules regarding yourself and alcohol consumption? What are the consequences for breaking the rules?
8. What are some signs indicating that a teen is experimenting with alcohol and may have a problem with addiction?
9. Many teens start drinking alcohol as a way to escape their problems. What are some positive ways in which you can cope with your problems instead of turning to alcohol?
10. As a teen, what could you say to someone who has offered you alcohol? How can you deal with the situation?
11. What can you and your classmates do to discourage others in your school from participating in underage drinking?
12. Can a party be fun for teens without any alcohol? What do you and your friends "hang out," what do you like to do that does not involve drinking? How could the presence of alcohol actually mess up your plans?

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Lesson Plan Grades 3-5

### Substitute Fun



#### PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Students will brainstorm a list of fun alternatives to drinking and create a commercial for one activity from the list.

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify dangers of drinking
- Identify alternatives to drinking
- Create original advertisement/commercial for one activity
- Present commercials/advertisements to class

#### MATERIALS

- Black/white board or overhead projector
- Paper
- Writing Implements

#### PROCEDURE

1. After viewing the documentary, ask students, What do you do for fun? Does it need to include drinking?
2. Ask the class about the negatives of drinking: What are the dangers of drinking? What can it do to your health? How can it harm others?
3. As a class, brainstorm a list of activities that they do to have fun that do not include drinking. Strive to collect a minimum of 25 activities.
4. Ask students, why wouldn't you want to include drinking as part of these activities?
5. Break students into pairs or trios, but no more than three, and ask each group to select one of the activities on the board. Their job is to create a commercial or an advertisement for this activity that would show other kids how much fun this activity is and how it is a great alternative to drinking alcohol.
6. They may create a still advertisement, as one would see in a magazine or a newspaper, or they may create a radio or television advertisement. The ad should contain references to show how to participate in the activity, who can do it, what supplies are needed, where to participate, and why it is better than drinking.
7. Assign an appropriate amount of time to work on the advertisement, and then have each group present its ad to the class.
8. As each group presents, ask the rest of the class if the ad meets the criteria requested and how this ad would appeal to people their age. Ask, does this activity seem more appealing than getting drunk? Why or why not?
9. Have students write a response to the following questions: Why would somebody think getting drunk is more fun than the activity you selected? What would you say to somebody who tried to get you to drink instead of participate in your favorite activity?

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Lesson Plan Grades 6-8

### Messages Everywhere



#### PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Students will first identify the messages they receive about drugs and alcohol from the media, then they will discuss the messages they get from families and peers in order to understand what influence their attitudes.

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will complete the *Messages Everywhere* sheet individually. In small groups they will share their response and identify commonalities and differences.

#### MATERIALS

*Note: Before the class begins, the leader will need to research Internet sites and advertising to find appropriate, current materials to use in the class. If Internet service is available in the classroom and can be projected on a large screen for the class to see, pre-select at least one site with videos that show teen alcohol consumption.*

Messages Everywhere Worksheet

#### PROCEDURE

1. Say: In the documentary, we hear how a lot of kids feel about cigarettes and alcohol and how they deal with pressure from their friends. However, the messages teens get from the media, from their family, as well as the messages we give ourselves influence our decisions to smoke or drink. First we are going to analyze the messages directed at you every day on billboards, in newspapers and magazines, on television, in movies, on the Internet: anywhere there is media, you receive messages about drinking and smoking.

2. Give each student the Messages Everywhere worksheet. Explain that we are first going to focus on the media message. Ask them to write down messages they see or get from the media. (*NOTE: If possible, show the class an example of how one of the Internet sites presents teens involved in binge drinking. If this is not available, ask students how they have seen teen drinking presented on Internet sites such as YouTube or on television or in the movies.*)

3. Break students up in to five or six small groups have them select a recorder and a reporter, answering the following questions:

- What seems to be the message the media portrays about alcohol use?
- What is the media trying to say with their message?
- How is it trying to influence you?

4. Come back together as group. Ask the group reporter to reveal its key findings about the alcohol-related messages conveyed by the media, by family members and by friends. Ask each student to write a response to this question: My personal message about underage drinking is:



# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Messages Everywhere Worksheet

The Media	The Messages
<i>Example: Beer commercial on TV</i>	<i>Example: College students have to drink to have fun. Men who drink are more likely to receive positive attention from very attractive women.</i>
Family	The Messages
Friends	The Messages



# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Lesson Grades 9-12

### Making the Scene



#### **PROJECT AND PURPOSE**

Students will explore a scenario about drinking and driving, look at it from a variety of different people's perspectives and then apply the same process to explore their own perspectives and attitudes.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will analyze a situation in which alcohol was involved from a variety of perspectives; react to the situation from an assigned perspective; discuss their own personal perspectives and attitudes toward underage drinking.

#### **MATERIALS**

Copies of scenario, "Michael's Ride"; small pieces of paper with roles they will assume written on them; paper; pens/pencils, copies of Perspectives on Underage Drinking Worksheet; List of Roles: Michael; Carlos; Sharona; Don; Michael's mom; the police officer; the driver of the SUV.

#### **PROCEDURE**

Break the class into eight groups. Provide give each group one (or more) copies of the scenario "Michael's Ride." Instruct them to read the scenario and discuss the events in the story in their group. In any way you wish, assign each group one of the roles listed.

Say: You are going to take on another person's perspective in regards to this scenario. Your job right now is to get into the shoes of the role you have been assigned and think about how that person would react to Michael's situation at the end of the scenario. How would that person feel? What would your person say to Michael the next time they saw him? What would be their reasons for saying these things? You may write down your responses on a piece of paper.

Give the groups about 10 minutes to prepare their answers. When they are done, gather them back as a group and either discuss their answers or have volunteers role play their responses. Say: Each of these characters had a very particular attitude and perspective on Michael's experience. What do you think shaped their attitudes and perspectives?

Ask the students to write a response to the following: What is your attitude and perspective on this scenario? What is your attitude and perspective toward underage drinking in general? How has that attitude or perspective been developed?

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Making the Scene: Michael's Ride



It is July, just before senior year of high school, and Michael drives Carlos to a party at Lana's. When they get there, the first thing that hits them is an all-too-familiar smell of beer. Sharona bumps into them on her way out. "Hi, guys, I'd leave now if I were you. Everybody's drunk. I'm going home."

Michael says, "Aw, c'mon, Sharona. Stay a while. It'll be fun."

She just stares him down with that look she has when she does not approve. Michael shrugs, laughs his goofy laugh and heads inside. He greets everyone, slumps in a chair and asks, "Where's mine? Who's sharing with Michael?" Don hands him a red cup and Michael responds, "Thank you, Don, you are a true friend."

Carlos remains at the door with Sharona. "How are you going to get home?" he asks her. "I'm taking the bus home, same way I got here. No way am I getting in a car with any of those guys." Sharona starts walking toward the bus stop. Carlos hesitates, looks inside at the party, then says, "Hey, wait up, I'll go with you," as he digs in his pockets for bus fare. "Don't you want to tell Michael you're leaving him?" Sharona asks.

"Nah. He won't even notice I'm gone. You want to get something to eat?"

"Yeah. I do. You paying?" jokes Sharona.

"Hey, I'm loaded tonight. Bus fare and anything you can eat off the dollar menu!" Carlos laughs as he and Sharona head to the nearest diner.

Hours later, Michael emerges from Lana's basement, strewn with red cups and ping pong balls. Tripping over the door jamb and catching himself on the bushes planted near Lana's door. "Dude, are you okay?" Don giggles uncontrollably as he watches Michael pick himself off the bushes.

"I'm okay! I'm okay! Are you okay, little plant? Ha! Hey, where's Carlos? Yoo hoo, Carlossssss! Come out, come out, wherever you are? Man, looks like he ditched me. Fine, dude. One less stop on the way home. See ya, Don," he calls to his friend who does not even hear him. Michael climbs into his car, tries three times to insert the seat belt into the lock, and finally drives off with the strap over one shoulder. "No problem, no problem, I'll just drive slowly and in control. Yeah, in control," Michael says to himself, turning on the music and lowering his windows. Reaching for a CD from the passenger side sun visor, he doesn't even see the light turn red and goes right through it. He snaps to attention as a car comes at him from the right side, horn blowing, swerving to miss him. Michael jerks his steering wheel to the left, narrowly avoiding an oncoming SUV.

"Dude!! Look where you're going!" He shouts out the window to the other drivers. It is at that point Michael realizes he might be a little bit lost. "Whoa. Where is this? What's that street sign say? No way! Not Fourth Street! Wait, I gotta turn around. Anybody coming? I'll just pull a U-ey."

As he attempts a U-turn, he does not see the flashing lights of the police car approaching. When he finally does, he panics and instead of hitting the brakes, he hits the gas. "No!! Wait!" Michael shouts as his car slams into a telephone pole, causing the airbags to suddenly inflate, crushing Michael's nose and pressing him into the seat.

Hours later, Michael's parents bail him out of the jail cell, complete with a broken nose and bloodied clothing. His driver's license suspended, Michael will be riding more often with them than without them in the months to come.

"This happens way too often. We all got really lucky this time that no one was hurt," says the police officer on duty as Michael and his parents leave the station, with a citation and court date in hand.

# Alcohol: The Worst Drug of All

## Lesson Plan Grades 6-12

### Distressed or De-Stressed?



#### PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Class will assemble multiple lists of things they do that cause teenagers stress and how they manage stress.

#### OBJECTIVES

Students brainstorm lists of things that cause stress in a teenager's life and to identify ways to cope without turning to substances like alcohol.

#### MATERIALS

Large pieces of paper mounted around the classroom; packs of sticky notes; pencils and papers.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Mount a large piece of paper on the wall and write the title, "Stress in the Lives of Teenagers," and draw the outline of a gingerbread person.
2. Mount the papers on the wall where the class can see.
3. Give each member of the class at least four pieces of sticky note paper, and ask each person to get out a pencil or pen.
4. Begin by saying: Sometimes kids drink alcohol to feel better when they are stressed. What causes teens stress? On their sticky note papers, they should write down some things that cause them stress. Say: Think of all the things that cause you or other teens stress such as a fight with a friend, the stress of going to a party, the stress of practicing for sports each day. Whenever you are ready, come up and stick your papers on our Stress Sheet. You can post yours on the figure's body to demonstrate where you feel this stress.
5. Take a few minutes and review their contributions.
6. Mount a second large piece of paper on the wall and title it, "Ways to Relieve Stress" and draw the same outline of a gingerbread man. Next ask them to write on new sticky notes as many things as they can think of to do to relieve stress and feel normal and to feel better. Have students place them on the appropriate place on the outline.
7. Read several of the sticky notes out loud and compare and contrast the contributions to the sheet. Discuss as a group the different ways they relieve stress without turning to alcohol. Ask, are your stress relievers good or bad for your future? Explain.
8. Place one more, big sheet of paper titled, "People" on the wall and give the students more sticky notes. Now ask them to think of the people in their lives who can support them, and help them relieve stress or resist the temptation of underage drinking in their lives. Ask each of them to write the name of at least two people on a sticky note and add it to the piece of paper.
9. Ask students to reflect on their responses, either in discussion or in a journal entry.