

Do you know the messages you're sending?

There are certain attitudes and behaviors of adults that may make alcohol more appealing to a teen. These actions are ones that many parents do, and while it is never our intent to encourage underage drinking, some of these actions and behaviors may do just that. Here is a checklist of some messages and actions that may contribute to your teens use.

Check the appropriate box for each question:

- 1 Do you make lighthearted or joking comments about other people's heavy drinking?**
(i.e. "He's got a hollow leg." or "She holds her liquor well!")
 Often Sometimes Never
- 2 Do you tell funny or glorified stories about you or your friends' drinking antics when you were younger?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 3 Do you ask your child to get you an alcoholic drink from the fridge?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 4 Do you wear t-shirts, baseball caps, etc. that advertise or promote drinking and/or specific brands of alcohol?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 5 When watching television with your child, do you laugh at scenes where alcohol is being abused?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 6 Do you consider drinking to be a rite of passage for teenagers that can't be avoided?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 7 Do you host adult social gatherings at your home where alcoholic beverages are the only drinks served and/or where drinking is the central focus of the gathering?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 8 Do you assume that alcohol is a necessary part of any celebration or social gathering?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 9 Do you model using alcohol as a stress reduction tool? (i.e. comments like "I've had a long day, I need a drink!")**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 10 Do you offer alcohol to your teen as a "special treat" for celebrations, family gatherings, etc.?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 11 Do you host parties at your house where alcohol is served or available to teens?**
 Often Sometimes Never
- 12 Does your child observe you drinking more than 2 or 3 drinks on any one occasion?**
 Often Sometimes Never

If you answered "often" or "sometimes" two or more times, you might be unintentionally sending mixed messages to your child, and could be implying that it's OK for him or her to drink or experiment with alcohol. By "glorifying" alcohol use, you also send the message that it is a rite of passage and expected. Teens, and even young children, are quick to pick up on these messages even when that is not your intention. **Remaining clear and consistent, and avoiding messages that glorify or promote alcohol use, is a good way to provide your children with the role modeling that they need to keep them from underage use.**

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