

*April is Alcohol Awareness Month**

While communities are faced with a number of substance abuse issues, **underage drinking** continues to be among the most pervasive ones for America's youth. There is no such thing as safe underage drinking.

Age matters... *although drinking at any age can lead to addiction, **the earlier that drinking begins, the more likely it will progress to more serious abuse.***

Did You Know... *Teens who start drinking before age 15 are more than five times as likely to develop alcohol problems than those who start at age 21. Research shows that young people's brains keep developing well into their 20s. Alcohol can alter this development, potentially affecting both brain structure and function. This may cause cognitive or learning problems and/or make the brain more prone to alcohol dependence. This is especially a risk when people start drinking young and drink heavily.*

Did You Know... *Most teens who drink get their alcohol from "social" sources – parties, older friends and family, or by taking it from a home. In Cape May County, 41% of 11th graders surveyed reported that it is 'fairly easy – very easy' to obtain alcohol. 2019 Pride Survey*

Did You Know... *Teens drink less often than adults, but drink more per occasion. Drinking can impair their judgment and put them and others at risk of physical harm and dangerous behavior, including academic failure, accidents, depression, sexual behavior, and aggressive or violent behavior.*



What We Can Do ... *Monitor the alcohol supply in the home. Parents can reduce youth access to alcohol by keeping alcohol out of the home or making it inaccessible to their children.*

What We Can Do ... *Talk early and often, in developmentally appropriate ways, with children and teens about your concerns—and theirs—regarding alcohol. Adolescents who know their parents' opinions about youth drinking are more likely to fall in line with their expectations.*

What We Can Do ... *Talk with other parents. Work with other parents to monitor where kids are gathering and what they are doing. Being involved in the lives of adolescents is key to keeping them safe.*

What We Can Do ... *Adults can serve as positive role models in general; and if adults choose to drink, to do so responsibly. Be aware of the laws about providing alcohol to your own children; and never provide alcohol to someone else's child.*

What We Can Do ... *Encourage community members to talk about underage drinking and the steps to prevent it. Attend school and community presentations about underage drinking. Check out underage drinking websites such as the ones listed below.*

National Institute of Drug Use for TEENS
<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/>

Partnership for Drug Free Kids
<https://drugfree.org/>

NJ Addictions Hotline: 1-844-276-2777

Thanks for not providing alcohol to our youth

**Alcohol Awareness Month* was founded by National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
Message brought to you by the Cape May County Municipal Alliances