

There is influence
from their peers.
teenagers in



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There are many social problems that teenagers go through. I think the two most recognized problems are Teenage Drinking and Driving, and Teen Suicide. These two social behaviors teenagers go through are two of the leading causes of teenage death in the state of New Mexico. Alcohol, the most widely used and abused drug among youth, causes serious and potentially life-threatening problems for this population. "New Mexico holds one of the nation's highest DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) rates" (Ulibarri, 1999). Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers in New Mexico. Society must now face several questions, why do teens drink, what are the results of teen drinking and driving, and how can society change this pattern.

Every year hundreds of teens die in the state New Mexico. Teen suicide is the fastest growing killer of youth in America and if left unaddressed it will affect future generations. Why do teenagers drink alcohol? Peers play the major role in shaping attitudes about alcohol use. Prior to this time, television and movies played the most influential role. The attitudes of parents toward alcohol correlated strongly with the attitudes of their children. There are several reasons why teenagers give to drinking alcohol which include recreation, rebellion, relieve depression, fatigue, and boredom. Also because they have personal problems at home that make them turn to alcohol.

Other reasons are a loved one passing away, fighting with parents, divorce, and separation of family. The main factor of teenage drinking is influence from their peers. Teenagers in our society are pressured into trying out alcohol for the first time to see how it tastes like.

If they give in to their peers they become part of the group, but if they do not they are not accepted into the group. As a result of teens being under the influence of alcohol, they are not aware that once they get behind the wheel they are risking their lives and the lives of other innocent people on the road. Teenagers think its cool to drink and drive. They feel nothing will happen to them. A survey concluded, " Males having higher rates of daily drinking and binge drinking than females, but these difference are diminishing. While white students report the highest levels of drinking, Blacks report the lowest, and Hispanics fall between the two" (Alcohol Alert, 1999).

The causes that lead them to automobile accidents are driver inexperience, driving late at night, having consumed alcohol, speeding, youthful risk, and driving during emotional stress. Many programs are being offered to educate teenagers and people on how to prevent alcohol-related accidents. The gentleman that came to talk to us on DWI related accidents had very interesting facts on Rio Arriba County. I found it vary informative. In Rio Arriba County there is a DWI course being offered to anyone interested in developing strategies to prevent DWI from occurring by informing teens the DWI penalties, and laws in New Mexico, what happens in a DWI arrest and trial, and what the blood alcohol concentration level is.

Education can help teens become aware of the consequences of drinking and driving. Yet effective ways of dealing with teen drinking and driving are formal treatment. Teens can be taken to visit a Rehabilitation center, which is a process of putting the treatment plan into action.

It consist of (1) education, (2) Group therapy, (3) life story, (4) individual therapy, (5) peer assessment, (6) recreational therapy, (7) coping skills and relaxation therapy, (8) support group attendance, and (9) spiritually. Rio Arriba County is one of six communities across the nation to participate in the Rapid Responses Team Pilot Project, which is designed to study whether a team of experts can work with community members to develop effective ways of reducing underage drinking. The teams are comprised of one expert from each of the following profession: law enforcement, education, prevention, public policy, and strategic planning.

Every year thousands of teens die in the United States, not from cancer or car accidents, but by their own hand; they make the choice that they want to die, and they take their life. Suicide is the fastest growing killer of youth in America ([HYPERLINK http://www. yellowribbon. org](http://www.yellowribbon.org))www. yellowribbon. org)