

Teenage alcoholism



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BUSTER**

Teenagers today have no idea what alcoholism really is. They think that they can never become alcoholics. They think that it could never happen to them, but they are wrong. Stress, family problems and the desire to be popular are issues that cause teenage alcoholism. Signs that a teenager has a drinking problem and steps that parents can take to help their child are what I will discuss in this paper. The critical ingredient common to all alcoholic beverages is ethyl alcohol or ethanol. It is a clear, tasteless liquid formed through the fermentation of sugars by yeast spores.

The amount of alcohol produced depends on the type and amount of sugar in the original mixture, the type of yeast used and the temperature maintained during the fermentation process. American beers, which contain about 3 to 6 percent alcohol, are made from malted barley and hops (the ripened and dried cones of the hop plant). Most wines are made by fermenting grapes or berries, and normally reach a maximum of about 15% alcohol. Teenage years are filled with unsure time.

Intense pressure to perform and succeed are felt by many youths, according to Alliant Health Systems, Louisville, Ky. Perceived failure at home and or school can lead to the need for escape. Teenagers often see their parents react to stress by drinking, thus providing an example for them. They also see their favorite movie actors or actresses getting drunk when they go to a movie, so they think that it's OK for them to drink. But what they don't know is that drinking really hurts them in the long run. The desire to be accepted and popular among their friends encourages many to begin drinking. The ability to consume a lot of alcohol is associated with being a "real man or woman".

When teens see adults drink heavily and movie stars on screen getting drunk, the message that gets through is that “ it’s cool to drink” which is the wrong one to be sending. Almost one half (47. 9 %) of seniors drink alcohol at least once a month 19. 8 % drink at least once a week. Nearly one third (30. 7%) of ninth graders drink some kind of alcohol monthly or more often 12% drink at least once a week. Just over thirteen percent of seventh graders and six percent of sixth graders drink alcohol regularly. Regular use of alcohol has not changed significantly since the first survey in 1989.

Crime is commonly related to alcohol and other illegal drugs. More than 1. 1 million annual arrests for illicit drug violations, almost 1. 4 million arrests for driving while intoxicated, 480, 000 arrests for liquor law violations and 704, 000 arrests for drunkenness come to a total of 4. 3 million arrests for alcohol and other drug statutory crimes. That total accounts for over one-third of all arrests in this country. The impaired judgment and violence induced by alcohol contribute to alcohol-related crime.

Rapes, fights, and assaults leading to injury, manslaughter, and homicide are often linked with alcohol because the perpetrator, the victim, or both were drinking. The economic cost of alcohol or drug-related crime is on average \$61. 8 billion annually. The need for preventing alcohol and other drug problems is clear when the following statistics are examined: Alcohol is a key factor in up to 68 percent of manslaughters, 62 percent of assaults, 54 percent of murders/attempted murders, 48 percent of robberies, and 44 percent of burglaries.

Among jail inmates, 42. percent of those convicted of rape reported being under the influence of alcohol or alcohol and other drugs at the time of the offense. [5] Over 60 percent of men and 50 percent of women arrested for property crimes (burglary, larceny, and robbery) in 1990, who were voluntarily tested, tested positive for illicit drug use. In 1987, 64 percent of all reported child abuse and neglect cases in New York City were associated with parental AOD abuse. (Lang 55) In 1992, there were 6, 839 deaths due to alcohol. There were 1, 154 deaths from direct alcohol related problems and 5, 685 deaths indirectly due to alcohol.

Alcohol related deaths accounted for 9. 4% of all deaths. In 1985to 1992, the number of deaths has remained relatively stable. Of all direct alcohol related deaths, 74. 8% are due to chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. The rest are due to alcohol dependence syndrome (18. 2%) toxic effects of alcohol (2. 2%) alcoholics psychoses (2. 0%) alcoholics cardiomyopathy (2. 0%) and alcoholic gastritis (0. 8%). Most alcoholics' deaths occur among men (72. 4%) this is why most men become alcoholics.

When students want to talk to or with someone about their problem, 50. percent report that they would choose a peer 62. 1 percent a parent 39. 1 percent an adult friend and 30. 4 percent a relative other than a parent. At school, 27. 2 percent of sixth graders and an average of 12. 1 percent of seventh graders, ninth and seniors would trust a teacher and an average of 13. 2 percent would trust a coach. In general, the percentage of students expressing trust of any kind has decreased over the past four years the only exception being an increase from 1991 to 1993 among sixth and seventh graders who indicate they would take a drug concern to a parent.

Alcoholic's Anonymous does not engage in the fields of alcoholism research, medical or psychiatric treatment, education, or advocacy in any form, although members may participate in such activities as individuals. The Fellowship has adopted a policy of " cooperation but not affiliation" with other organizations concerned with the problem of alcoholism. Traditionally, Alcoholics Anonymous does not accept or seek financial support from outside sources, and members preserve personal anonymity in print and broadcast media and otherwise at the public level. A. A. experience has always been made available freely to all who sought it – business people, spiritual leaders, civic groups, law enforcement officers, health and welfare personnel, educators, representatives of military establishments, institutional authorities, representatives of organized labor, and many others.

But A. A. never endorses, supports, becomes affiliated with, or expresses an opinion on the programs of others in the field of alcoholism, since such actions would be beyond the scope of the Fellowship's primary purpose. In the United States and Canada A. A. s relations with professional groups, agencies, facilities, and individuals involved with the problems of alcoholism are handled by the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community.

Mutual understanding and cooperation between AA members and others who work with alcoholics are the concerns of this standing committee of the General Service Board. Student Life Alcohol and Drug Education Programs offers alcohol and other drug prevention and education courses for adjudication purposes. The goal of required alcohol education is to promote

healthy choices and responsible decision making about alcohol and other drug use.

Required alcohol education is intended as both an intervention and educational tool. The participants are students who have been involved in alcohol related incidents and who have opted to attend the classes. Students in the Alcohol Education Workshop classes undergo formal assessment by a licensed chemical dependency counselor. Students in other classes are assessed informally some are then referred for professional assessment. An examination of American public policy on problem drinking reveals that it is until still another area where our ambivalence about alcohol is evident.

There is no clear and single-minded plan to deal with the drinking issue. Instead policymakers have accepted the simplest disease concept of alcoholism. The result has been a heavy investment of resources in just one area for only one group that represents but a small part of the drinking problems of this country. Coming to grips with our ambivalence about the social meaning of drinking is essential. Though this is clearly not just a problem for teenagers, they may represent one of the best groups with which to start. After all, they will shape the alcohol policy for the next generation to come.