

# STUDENTS & ALCOHOL:

# 7 Ways Parents Can Help

By: David Salafsky, DrPH, MPH, Interim Co-Executive Director, UA Campus Health Service

**W**hile the UA is nationally recognized for evidenced-based alcohol prevention programs that support student health, we simply cannot be successful without your help.

That's because students say their parents, along with their peers, are the two groups they go to most for advice, support, and modeling.

## Here are seven things you can do to help:

- 1. Set clear and realistic goals on academic performance.** Being upfront about expectations helps students put their education first.
- 2. Check in on Thursdays, Fridays or Saturdays.** It's no surprise that these are the days students drink most. Research suggests that parent phone calls, emails or text messages can reduce alcohol consumption by their student on the day of contact.
- 3. Encourage volunteerism.** Students who connect with their community while they are here will have a fuller, more enriching college experience. Research suggests they will also drink less.
- 4. Correct misperceptions.** Students tend to overestimate how much their peers drink. In reality, most drink moderately, if they drink at all (see "Just the Facts" to the right).
- 5. Communicate the risks.** Scare tactics don't work, but discussing the obvious risks openly and evenly can help discourage their participation

in drinking games, hazing, 21st birthday dangers, and other high risk behaviors.

- 6. Show your student how to intervene if they need to.** Explain how to prevent alcohol poisoning before it happens, and how to step up when someone needs help.
- 7. State the obvious.** Underage drinking and impaired driving are against the law. Avoid messages that obscure these facts.

For more ways you as a parent can help, please visit the UA Campus Health Service website at [www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu).

Adapted from: *The College Parent Advisor*, published by College Parents of America.



## JUST THE FACTS: UA Freshmen & Alcohol

- **39%** did not drink alcohol in the past 30 days.
- **92%** arrange to have a designated driver if they plan to drink.
- **90%** did not get in trouble with the school authorities or police during the past year.
- **69%** party less than weekly.

Source: 2018 Health and Wellness Survey (n=5,438), administered to a random sample of undergraduate classes at The University of Arizona