

HEALTH PROMOTION

provides resources and services around the **six dimensions of wellness** to empower students to become independent, responsible, and thoughtful leaders. Substance education and harm reduction is just one component of the office's work with students.

PARENTS ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS AGAINST ALCOHOL USE:

Students who perceived higher parental monitoring during the summer before college were **significantly less likely** to transition to experiencing alcohol-related consequences.

Students who perceived their parents were more permissive about drinking during the students' senior year of HS were **significantly more likely** to transition to weekly alcohol use, heavy episodic drinking, and consequences during college.

(Walls, Fairlie & Wood, 2009)

DID YOU KNOW?

Top 5 Leading Predictors of Student Success in College (in order)

1. Studying outside the classroom (+)
2. Rates of alcohol consumption (-)
3. Attending Class (+)
4. Volunteering (+)
5. Watching TV/time spent online (-)

(AlcoholEDU, 2012)

Parent's Guide: Tough Conversations

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CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR STUDENT IS A FIRST-YEAR AT URSINUS!

Welcome to the long summer of preparation and anticipation, excitement and apprehension for both you and your student! The new and unknown often leads to many mixed feelings but being open about it helps.

With a mission to empower students to become independent, responsible and thoughtful leaders, we invite students to engage in open conversations around substances and the impact they could have on overall health and success. We aim to partner with families to ensure students will make a positive and safe transition to college.

The health and safety of all Ursinus students is of utmost importance. The Health Promotion office, within the division of Campus Life, takes an active role in educating students about all 6 dimensions of wellness. Through collaboration with numerous offices on campus, we help to provide an array of resources and services for you and your student.

Whether you believe it or not, you still have an influence on your student's decision-making and can be a big help in your student's successful transition to college life.

Your student is preparing to be away from home, perhaps for the first time and may not admit it, but feels insecure in a new social setting and wants to fit in.

Studies have shown that family and peers alike can influence drinking behavior actively, by explicitly discouraging irresponsible alcohol use, or passively, by providing models of positive drinking behavior (NIAAA).

Once in college, your student will have the ability to make all decisions on their own. Your student will also have the full responsibility to deal with the consequences.

Be direct when discussing drinking and drugs at school and share your expectations.

It is important to consider



and discuss substance use, safety issues, and academic success. Discuss the cost of substance abuse in dollars and in sense.

It is important your student understands your concerns and expectations before heading off to college. And we know this can be a scary time for families as well so we have created this guide to help you with these tough conversations.

Good Luck!

INFORMATION IS KEY!

You have a large role in preparing your student to make responsible choices.

If there is a history of substance use disorder in the family, it is very important to discuss this. If there is a family history, there is a higher risk for developing a substance use disorder. Also, if your student is already dealing with any mental health issues, substance use can worsen or create new symptoms. Keep

this in mind when discussing substance use with your student.

Be a role model. Showcase that it is okay to talk about these taboo topics. Believe in your own power to help your student avoid trouble.

Be knowledgeable about substance use issues. Learn what you can about the issues so you can focus on the facts and correct misperceptions.

Be honest about what you will do if an alcohol or drug violation occurs and then follow through.

Be sure to sign up for **CampusESP** to stay up to date and connected via the parent portal.

For more information and links to more resources, visit: ursinus.edu/wellbeing and click on the tab: For Parents.

**PARENTAL
NOTIFICATION**

Ursinus partners with parents in alcohol and drug education efforts. In instances of alcohol or drug violations, parents are notified in accordance with FERPA guidelines.

For more information, please contact :

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Ursinus.edu/wellbeing

WHEN should you talk about alcohol and other drugs?

All the time! For many parents and young adults, bringing up the subject of substances is not easy. You may be unsure of when or how to begin and your student may try to dodge the conversation. Start the discussion now and continue the conversation often.

Try having the conversation **in the car** since you don't have to look each other in the eyes and neither of you can run away from the topic.

Join forces with another adult that your student trusts such as their aunt,

uncle, older sibling, cousin, coach, etc. Utilize these people to also have the conversation with your student about this topic.

After Orientation is a great time to discuss what you both learned. Ask what your student is excited or anxious about and share your excitement and worries.

Lecturing usually does not work so try to bring up the topic when in a **casual setting** doing some type of recreation you both enjoy.

Bring **friends** into the conversation. For example,

if your student's best friend is also gearing up for college, ask their thoughts on alcohol, drugs, and the party scene when you are all together. Do not bring it up during a disagreement or argument.

Timing is key to make sure your student is open and willing to talk.

Your student is required to complete an **Online Wellness Course** covering this topic this summer (*Due before move-in!*) Use this as a way to engage on the topic. Ask if they finished it and what they thought about it.

HOW should you talk about alcohol and other drugs?

Avoid scare tactics. Be open and honest. Remind your student that they can always be honest with you as well.

Recognize the social aspects of substance use. Recognize that your student might see positive aspects of drinking such as networking and socializing. Many students find it easier to follow the crowd and the majority of students do drink at some point in college, though that number is decreasing. Recognize

that simply telling your student to abstain will not work so it's better to talk about why and how to be safe.

Relate to your student as best you can. Remember when you were young? Remember that feeling of leaving your family and gaining freedom? Relate that feeling to what your student is going through; heading off into the unknown with tremendous academic strain. Remind them that you do under-

stand these feelings but you do not understand this new world context and ask them to share what it's like. At their age, they want to feel unique and special while also not alone.

Responsibility is now in the hands of your student. Discuss privileges and the consequences that come with that responsibility. Your student must learn to make these choices on their own. Discuss how being independent requires a new level of thoughtfulness.

Discussion Starters ...Now and Once College Life Begins

Remember that this is a discussion and not a lecture. Be open and supportive.

Prior to Starting College:

Q: You might be faced with the decision to drink in excess or try drugs at some point. What do you think your reaction will be?

Q: Did you learn anything new during Bear Beginnings about the social scene at Ursinus?

Q: What are you most nervous about when making new friends at college?

Q: You'll have a lot of decisions to make in college and you might even make some mistakes. Just know that you can talk to us about anything—even if you do make a mistake. We won't freak out. We want you to count on us to help you see everything as a learning opportunity. Okay?

Once College Life Has Begun

Q: How are you and your roommate getting along? Do you have similar styles in what you do for fun?

Q: What is the culture

there? Is it heavily focused on drinking and drugs?

Q: Have you witnessed anyone make a fool of themselves while drunk or high? What was that like?

Q: Do you know where to go for help if you or a friend is having issues with alcohol or other drugs?

Q: When it comes to the social scene, what should matter to you? How should we live together? How can we understand the world? What will you do? (*The Ursinus Quest Questions!*)

