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Prom & Underage Drinking: Parents should talk to teens

Prom season is here and the Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) would like to remind parents that they can help prevent underage drinking. In Oklahoma, 6 out of every 10 high school seniors reported using alcohol in 2018* and with the increased opportunity for underage drinking during prom season, parents should be talking to their children about the dangers of drinking alcohol so the annual prom doesn't turn into a court appearance, hospital visit or even worse scenario.

Parents can help their children avoid alcohol problems by: Serving as positive role models, not making alcohol or a place to consume alcohol available, getting to know their children's friends, connecting with other parents about sending clear messages about the importance of not drinking alcohol, supervising parties to make sure there is no alcohol, and encouraging their kids to participate in healthy and fun activities that do not involve alcohol.

It's also important to remember that in Oklahoma it is illegal for adults to host a place for underage drinking to occur. In 2011, we passed the first Social Host Law, also known as 'Cody's Law', which holds individuals criminally liable if they host a place for minors to engage in alcohol use. If found guilty, one could receive a fine of up to \$2,500 and up to 5 years in prison.

The parents and youth in our communities need to know that underage drinking is not acceptable. We should all do our part to keep our youth safe, especially during the upcoming prom season.

Red Rock RPC's Mission is to encourage individual responsibility, positive behavior, and personal growth; strengthen families and communities; promote a drug-free society through education, training, prevention, research, advocacy, and environmental strategies. Red Rock RPC is funded through the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. For more information please contact the RPC at 580-323-9736.

*2018 Oklahoma Prevention Needs Assessment results