



PARTNERS for PREVENTION
A partnership for the prevention of substance abuse among youth!

MAJOR CONTRIBUTING RISK FACTORS FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG YOUTH

If a community has one or more risk factors for substance abuse among youth, chances are the community is experiencing high rates of substance use and even loss of young people due to alcohol related automobile crashes. ***Risk factors are tolerant parental attitudes and problem behaviors, poverty, family conflict, poor academics, negative peer pressure, alienation and rebelliousness, and many other negative circumstances a youth may experience.***

According to the Communities That Care Survey conducted in the fall of 2002, 49% of Wyoming County 12th graders indicated they had drunk alcohol in the past 30 days and 50% thought it was cool for someone their age to drink. According to the *2002 Touchstones Data Book*, DWI rates for youth 16-20 years in Wyoming County have exceeded New York State rates for the past seven years. The data show that too many of our youth are participating in risky behaviors.

In order to decrease the negative and sometimes devastating consequences of substance abuse, we need to reduce the risks within our communities. Creating changes in schools, families, and communities is not easy, but by being a part of a countywide effort, we can encourage healthy behaviors in all areas of a teen's life. We realize that reducing the risk factors for substance abuse among youth does not happen overnight, but small, gradual, and healthy changes throughout all of the Wyoming County communities can help us reach this important goal. Partners For Prevention has identified three basic risk areas that contribute to youth substance abuse in Wyoming County.

1. Tolerant Attitudes and Problem Behaviors – When community family events allow alcohol use, communities are giving the message that fun and alcohol go together. When parents ask their children to bring them a beer or cigarettes, they are involving their children in adult habits.
2. Availability – All underage drinkers get their alcohol from adults. This could be from the refrigerator of their parents' homes or older friends who purchased alcohol for them.
3. Poor Sense of Community – Where people do not feel close to their neighbors or believe they shouldn't get involved.
- 4.

What is Being Done

Schools: There is a prevention specialist assigned to each of the six Wyoming County school districts (Attica, Letchworth, Perry, Pioneer, Warsaw, Wyoming). The prevention specialists provide science-based substance abuse prevention



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programming for elementary, middle, and high schools. Programs offered are **Keep A Clear Mind** for 4th grade, **Project TNT** for 5th grade, **Project Alert** for 6th grade, and **TND** for 10th grade. Prevention specialists also assist schools with delivering **Second Step** for K – 5th grades, **Life Skills** 4th – 8th grades and **Rite Aid Drug Quiz** 5th – 8th grades, **An Apple A Day** K-4th grades. Prevention programs focus on the risk area Tolerant Attitudes and Problem Behaviors. The prevention specialists provide one-time classroom presentations for each of the school districts. They present information on many subjects such as underage drinking, marijuana effects, consequences of cigarette smoking, and much more information.

The prevention specialists, Reality Check, and schools are developing a countywide **SADD** (Students Against Destructive Decisions) group. This group offers positive activities for youth to help improve their communities and raise public awareness about the dangers of substance abuse.

Families: Partners For Prevention offers **Parents Who Care** and the **SafeHomes** program. **Parents Who Care** is a program designed for parents of teens. It focuses on healthy teen-parent communication. **SafeHomes** provides a directory of families who pledge to maintain a safe home for youth. Families pledge to not serve alcohol to minors and monitor any party that may take place at their homes. Families also receive quarterly newsletters that provide current prevention information. **SafeHomes** mainly focuses on Tolerant Attitudes and Problem Behaviors.

Communities: The partnership provides training and public awareness campaigns for the Wyoming County communities. **TIPS** is a server-training program offered to all businesses that sell liquor on premises and off premises. TIPS help businesses recognize potential problems like underage drinking and gives valuable information about safely serving alcohol to adults. The prevention specialists offer media literacy training to schools, church groups, and any other community organizations.

Media literacy training helps people recognize the real message the media is trying to sell to the public.

May through July, the partners recognize that proms and graduation parties are important celebrations where some youth may be tempted to drink. Youth and Wyoming County businesses are recruited to participate in **Project Sticker Shock** and **21 or Bust**. Project Sticker Shock enlists businesses that sell alcohol. The businesses allow youth to place ten thousand stickers on cases of beer stating that it is illegal to provide alcohol for off premise consumption to minors and tell what the penalties are. 21 or Bust local businesses that serve



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alcohol for on premise consumption receive from youth coasters and window posters that state the consequences for serving minors. **Parents Who Host Lose the Most**, participating local government, businesses, schools, churches, and other community engaged organizations distribute 10,000 fact cards, 10,000 placemats, and 50 posters that state the consequences parents face if they serve alcohol to minors.

Every year the partners offer micro-grants to community organizations that serve youth. Grant monies can help fund activities for youth that encourage healthy behaviors. These programs address all the risk areas.

We Need Help

In order to reduce substance abuse among our youth, we must have community support. We need new ideas, activities, and ways to get our messages out to the communities. Parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teens can support us by participating in activities scheduled throughout the year. The partnership meets on a bimonthly basis the **third Thursday** at 10:30a.m. – Noon at the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Meeting minutes and information are sent to everyone on the mailing list even if they are not able to attend. If interested in participating in the meetings or being on our mailing list contact us at 585-786-8970.