Helping Your Child Make Smart Choices

A successful intervention against alcohol and drug misuse

Christina Rush, Ph.D.
Welcome to Wake Forest

- Excited to help make these next four years memorable and successful

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  • Wake’s Perspective on Alcohol and Drug Use
    • Role of Parents

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Our Common Goals

- Send a consistent message regarding alcohol and other drugs
- Promote smart decisions
- Help students achieve their academic and personal goals
Observations from Wake Forest

- Alcohol is the most used and abused drug
- Marijuana use is on the rise
- Stimulant abuse is commonly reported but no good measure

- Lots of factors contribute to use: peer pressure, work hard, play hard mentality, and egocentrism
No Magic Bullet

- We constantly fine tuning policies, prevention efforts, and interventions
- We emphasize the importance of parental involvement and communication
  - Prevention (today)
  - Intervention
    - Parental Notification Policy
    - Implemented last year for all alcohol and drug offenses
Play SmartER Seminar

- First offenses from Residential Life and Housing and Judicial
- Based on CHOICES an empirically validated, group, harm reduction intervention
- Spring semester measured the effectiveness as well as parental notification
90% of students attending had already talked to their parents about their violation prior to the class.

Next question read “if you have told your parents about the violation, what was their reaction?” (n=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Themes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Answers Contained this Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not care</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad/Annoyed/Upset</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding/Supportive</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s college or they drank when 18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS Police were aggressive/went overboard</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warned student to be more careful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation was ridiculous/silly/stupid</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset with Wake Forest</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised child for honesty or integrity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad luck/wrong place, wrong time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told student to run from the police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22% of parents threatened the student with a consequence.

*Question read “if your parents threated a consequence, what was the consequence?” (n=29)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Themes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Answers Contained this Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay court fees/fines</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If another violation, removed from WF</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If another violation, pay for college</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car privileges removed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If another violation, something</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give less money</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No post exams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only threats</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey, cont.

I made changes to my drinking as a result of getting in trouble with my family.
Literature

- Parent’s approval of alcohol use is a major predictor of child alcohol use
- Parents are a trusted source of information for students
- Parent interventions are one of the few empirically validated interventions for college drinking
Parent Alcohol Handbook

- Rob Turrisi, Ph.D. – Penn State University
- Parent intervention for college drinking
- 10 plus articles published documenting the effectiveness of the intervention
3 Main Steps to Communication

- Generally Increase Communication
- Develop Student Assertiveness
- Educate about Alcohol and Drugs
Increase General Communication

- **First:**
  - Try to appeal to common goals

- **Second:**
  - Choose a good time
  - Be present
  - Listen
  - Verbalize respect
Increase Communication, cont.

Third:

- Avoid conversation “stoppers”
- Acknowledge that conflict is normal
- Resistance to change is natural
- Agree to disengage
- Avoid debate mode
Ask, Listen and Expand

- Goal is to help them talk through difficult experiences and feel confident to handle them.

*Questions to start conversations:*
- What are parties like?
- Who are you going to parties with? What are they like?
- What are your likes and dislikes about the social scene?
- What do you do if someone really pushes you to try alcohol or drugs?
Two Points

- Be prepared for questions about your past and answers
  - Personal choice
- Be prepared to drop the conversation and restart it at another time
Developing Assertiveness

- Two parts:
  - Resist *social pressure*
  - Help them see things *realistically*
- Help them develop ONE LINERS!
Assertiveness

(1) Know the Facts: 1 in 4 Wake Students don’t drink

(2) Even if students drink, this does not make it right or a good thing

(3) Peers may respect your son or daughter for not drinking.
## Wake’s Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reality</th>
<th>Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t drink</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t smoke</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t use marijuana</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t use other drugs</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alcohol and Drug Talks

1. Talk about drugs and the body
2. Make clear your own position concerning drugs
3. Know the variety of reasons students use
4. Express your willingness to help your son or daughter find constructive alternatives to using
5. Discuss reasons for NOT using and the many negative consequences that can result from using.
Central to its mission, the University believes in the development of the whole person — intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical. Alcohol misuse inhibits students’ development and is negatively correlated with academic success and personal safety. The vitality of the campus community relies on each individual and group taking responsibility for choices related to alcohol use. The health and well-being of the campus community should not be jeopardized by issues related to alcohol.
NC Law and Wake Forest Policies

- [http://partysmart.studentlife.wfu.edu/know-the-law/](http://partysmart.studentlife.wfu.edu/know-the-law/)

Medical Amnesty Policy

• NEW! If a student is ever unsure of what to do in an alcohol-related medical emergency, he/she can call 336-758-5911, 911, or Student Health without fear of judicial consequence.

• [http://stamp.studentlife.wfu.edu/medical-amnesty-policy/](http://stamp.studentlife.wfu.edu/medical-amnesty-policy/)
Warning Signs of a Problem

- Grades are dropping
- Less engaged
- Less interested in healthy activities
- Friends are calling concerned
- Defensiveness
- Getting in trouble
- Visiting the ER or Student Health
If you suspect your child is struggling...

- Be calm when discussing the problem with your son or daughter.
- Let your son or daughter know that you are concerned and are willing to help.
- Do not make excuses or cover up for your son or daughter.
- Do not take over your student's responsibilities but provide him or her with the means to take responsibility for himself or herself.
- Know the resources available to your child.
Resources at Wake

- **Dean of Student Services** [ww.wfu.edu/studentlife/judicial](http://ww.wfu.edu/studentlife/judicial) phone: (336) 758-5226
- **Greek Life** [wakeforest.orgsync.com/org/wfugreek](http://wakeforest.orgsync.com/org/wfugreek) phone: (336) 758-4070
- **Multicultural Affairs** [www.wfu.edu/multicultural](http://www.wfu.edu/multicultural) phone: (336) 758-5864
- **Office of the Chaplain** [www.wfu.edu/chaplain/](http://www.wfu.edu/chaplain/) e-mail: chaplain@wfu.edu
- **Office of Parent Programs** [parents.wfu.edu](http://parents.wfu.edu) e-mail: parents@wfu.edu phone: (336) 758-4237
- **Residence Life and Housing** [www.wfu.edu/housing/](http://www.wfu.edu/housing/) phone: (336) 758-5185 or (336) 758-7777
- **Student Health Service** [www.wfu.edu/shs/](http://www.wfu.edu/shs/) phone: (336) 758-5218
- **Substance Misuse Prevention Program (STAMP)** [www.wfu.edu/studentlife/STAMP/](http://www.wfu.edu/studentlife/STAMP/) phone: (336) 758-4371
- **University Counseling Center** [www.wfu.edu/ucc](http://www.wfu.edu/ucc) phone: (336) 758-5273
- **University Health Educator** e-mail: romeonl@wfu.edu phone: (336) 758-5937
- **Wake Forest Police** [www.wfu.edu/police/](http://www.wfu.edu/police/) On-campus phone: 911, Cell phone or off-campus phone: (336) 758-5911
Questions

How can I help you?