Binge Drinking and Young people
What is binge drinking?

- Binge drinking is drinking heavily on a single occasion, or drinking continuously over a number of days or weeks. It is also commonly known as ‘getting smashed’ or ‘drinking to get drunk’
- A person who binge drinks may usually have restrained drinking habits, but may frequently overindulge to an extreme level.
- Someone may not necessarily set out to drink a lot, but may be unsure of their limits, resulting in drinking too much over a short period of time.
- People may also be more likely to binge drink if you are feeling peer pressure to do so. They may be feeling anxious or socially awkward.
How many young people are drinking?

• According to the 2007 National Drug Strategy household survey over 20% of 14-19 year olds consume alcohol on a daily basis.
How much are young people drinking?

Amongst young people drinking:

• 29% of males aged 12-17 had consumed seven or more drinks on one occasion.

• 32% of females in the same age group had consumed five or more drinks on one occasion.

(2005 Australian Secondary students alcohol and drug survey)
How harmful is it?

• Alcohol depresses the central nervous system and changes the way people think and feel.
• Young people can be more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol because they have not built up physical tolerance
• Young people lack drinking experience and are less able to judge their own levels of intoxication
Harmful

• Most young people are smaller than adults and so alcohol can have a greater effect.
• Evidence suggests that developing minds and bodies may be more vulnerable to the negative effects of alcohol.
• The earlier a young person begins unsupervised drinking, the greater the risk of alcohol related problems in later life
Harmful

- Risks are often taken when drinking such as unprotected sex and sexual assault can occur.
- A recent study has shown approximately 40% of 14-19 year olds drink at levels that risk harm in the short term.

Why do young people drink?

• Curiosity
• To be part of the group
• Peer pressure
• Makes them feel older, or gives a certain image among friends
• Young people may drink to make themselves more social and to enjoy themselves more in some environments
• To forget things
• To help sleep
• In some cases young people drink just to get through the day.
Normal VS Abnormal behaviour
What can I do?

• Help the young person develop a responsible attitude towards drinking- including eating before going out.

• It's never too early to start talking to your children about the effects of alcohol, and this helps to keep the lines of communication open down the track.

• Role model

• Deal with consequences in the morning
What if my young person comes home drunk?

• You may want to talk with the young person about it immediately, especially if you are upset or angry!!

• WAIT and talk with them in the morning

• Have a rational discussion

• Reinforce the rules that have been broken, your disappointment and consequences.
Your drinking, their drinking

• Sometimes refuse a drink when offered
• Don’t always use alcohol to celebrate occasions or declaring “I need a drink” when dealing with a stressful period
• Not drinking till intoxication
• Not drinking and driving
How do I talk to my young person about alcohol?

• Choose an appropriate time and place to talk
• Bring the topic up informally- perhaps after watching a TV show, a news item or a movie that acts as a conversation starter.
• Be open and honest and encourage your teenager to express their feelings, thoughts and opinions
• Be clear about the rules and ensure your young person knows that under age drinking is against the law in most circumstances.

• Research shows that teenagers expect and want boundaries to be set, even if they do transgress occasionally.
• Avoid scare tactics- young people are more likely to be persuaded by listening to a realistic presentation of the facts.

• Talk to your teenager about your concerns so they understand the potential consequences of drinking.
Peer pressure- how to deal with that?

• Help your young person to say no to alcohol, when there is pressure to drink.
• Stress the importance of never getting into a car with a driver who has been drinking
• Agree on a plan if that situation ever arises which may include paying for a taxi when they get home, picking them up, or allowing them to stay overnight at a friend's place if that is not possible
Peer pressure

• Talk about the dangers of drink spiking and how they can protect themselves

• Discuss what to do if a friend is intoxicated.
Party planning

• Be involved in the planning - discuss the ground rules before the party is announced.
• Agree on whether alcohol will be allowed
• If alcohol is to be allowed make sure there is plenty of food and non alcoholic drinks.
• Make sure there is some adult supervision
• Emphasise that excessive drinking will not be tolerated and agree on a plan for dealing with someone who is drunk or sick
Party planning

• Uninvited guests (gatecrashers) are a growing problem. Check out part safe programs in Sydney.

• Plan how guests will get home

• Talk to other parents about their teenagers parties for advice.
Recap:

- Open communication
- Role modelling
- Talk about drinking- don’t make it a taboo subject
- Safe planning
- Deal with situations the next day, outlining consequences, feelings and how to move on.
Resources

- [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)
- [www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au](http://www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au)
- [www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)