



# Prevention *for parents*

## Preventing Teen Alcohol Use: *What You're Drinking vs. What You're Thinking*

April is alcohol awareness month, and a great time to talk about alcohol with your child!

As kids are back in school and spending more time with their peers, they may encounter situations where alcohol is present. We know most teens choose not to use alcohol regularly, but when they are in a social situation, after a challenging year without much social interaction, they may be tempted to use.

Often times teens use alcohol to fit in at social events because they get bombarded with the idea that alcohol makes you more social, easygoing, or less awkward. We've all seen this idea depicted in TV shows, movies, songs, or other media.

What your teen may not have heard is that alcohol doesn't actually affect your

social behaviors, if we're just talking about the chemical structure.

The behaviors we see depicted in media (or in our own lives) are a result of our *expectations* of what will happen if we drink alcohol. In others words, it is a social construct that we are more social, likable, or less-awkward when we drink alcohol. This information comes to us from a study done at the University of Washington— check out this short [video](#) to learn more.

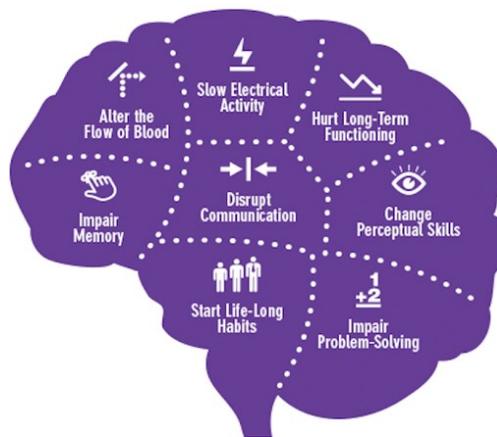
Certainly we are affected by alcohol— the clumsiness, slower

reflexes, and tiredness are a result of alcohol in our brain – but if your child thinks alcohol will make them more likable at a party, they are misinformed.

This is important because if your child's goal is to feel more comfortable in social situations, they should know they have better options than alcohol use.

Here are some tips to share with your teen for handling social situations:

- Take a buddy to an event so you're not alone
- Hold a cup/drink with something in it other than alcohol (even if others are drinking alcohol)
- Do a mindfulness meditation before a date/ party to calm your nerves
- Think about some things you can talk about before you go



Alcohol use affects the teen brain in negative ways

