

Conroy, M. (1988, May). Is Your Child an Alcoholic? Better Homes and Gardens.

OVERVIEW

Alcoholism is not just an adult disease. More and more children are becoming alcoholics. Parents, friends, and teachers should be aware of the warning signals. Youthful drinking is not a joke.

FACTS

- * The average age for beginning to drink is twelve.
- * Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among adolescents.
- * By the senior year, one of twenty students drinks daily.
- * Nearly half of teens who commit suicide are intoxicated at the time.
- * In 1986, more than 3,500 teens died in alcohol-related car crashes.
- * Nearly one out of three teens has ridden with a drunk friend.
- * Only 21% of children in grades 4-6 think wine coolers are a drug.
- * Adolescent abusers reach advanced stages of alcoholism in one year.

WHY KIDS DRINK

- * It makes them feel good.
- * It makes them more confident and "brave."
- * It helps them feel "older."
- * It helps them relax and forget their problems.
- * All their friends drink.
- * It helps them get attention from their parents, even negative.

WARNING SIGNS

- * Perpetual conflict with parents, friends, and teachers.
- * Withdrawal from family, friends, school, and social activities.
- * Depression, fatigue, lack of energy, and poor appetite.

- * Impulsive behavior.
- * Acting before thinking through actions.
- * Poor school performance, cutting class, and dropping out of extracurricular activities.
- * Change in friends, perhaps to a rougher crowd.
- * Injury resulting from falls, burns or fights.

HELP

There are a variety of treatments for alcohol abusers. The treatments range from self-help groups to in-patient therapy. No type of treatment is right for everyone. Some alcohol treatment programs include student assistance programs, intervention (in which family and friends confront the alcoholic with what they have observed), self-help groups (i.e., AA), outpatient treatment, inpatient treatment, and family support groups.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Youth alcoholism is a serious problem.
2. Today's young drinkers are tomorrow's alcoholics.
3. Young drinkers need to be stopped before serious damage is done.
4. The factors leading to alcohol dependency must be identified and alleviated.
5. Young people need a safe environment to explore and deal with their problems so that they do not turn to dangerous sources—such as alcohol—to get rid of them.

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