

Underage drinking is a fairly commonplace even, not everyone does it but no one is shocked when it happens. At least half of my friends drink and only a tenth of those people stay home by themselves. At any given hour of the day you can find someone in highschool talking about drinking. When it comes to my friends it's not the act of drinking that bothers me (I can't change that), it's the chance that one of them may do something stupid. Stupid being: Unprotected sex, driving, or getting into fights with people much bigger than them. I worry allot about my friends, but there isn't a whole bunch I can do.

Now as for what hasn't been tried in the past to stem underage drinking? It seems to me that only one group of teens has been contacted. The message needs to vary for the diversity that is the modern America. Musicians, athletes, and anyone else teens listen to need to be enlisted; not just the pop/mainstream musicians, athletes, and others but the punk, alterative, indy, emo, rap, heavy metal, grunge, opera, musical theater, local bands, and any other genre of hero someone can dream up. One of the major failings of the anti-drinking campaign is assuming that one message will work for every teen.

Another thing to consider is how the message is delivered. I know that many teens don't watch much television or listen to the radio. Instead they listen to their I-pods and serf the internet. Parent groups, local communities , the government, students, whoever could rent out space on frequented websites. Not pop-up adds mind you, no one likes pop-ups, but actual space in the margins of the page. Try for pages like web comics, sports pages, online games, or message boards.

Also, you can't be afraid to make things more graphic. Teens have grown up with a higher level of violence. Violence is in our movies, video games, on the news, it only makes

sense that we have developed a sort of immunity to it. In this age of Grand Theft Auto (the game) images about the effects of drunk driving need to be more shocking than ever, it needs to be something that makes everyone catch their collective breaths and stop for a moment. You need to let teens see something that scares them.

The real key is conveying this revamped message without talking down to teens. Don't act like they are stupid and you'll get a better response. You want to make an impact but at the same time not repeat the same ideas over and over. There needs to be a variety ways the central message is stated, in songs or jingles that stick in people's heads, bold exciting images, and frightening ideas of what the worst case scenario could be.

More groups should be started by kids, that embrace others that abstain from drinking. Now I'm not talking about more church groups or lame little clubs (no offense intended), but just groups of normal teens who do normal stuff (go to parties, the movies, the mall, ect.). The main reason I can think of that teens drink is that's what everyone else was doing at the time. That mentality makes it not a conscious choice, it's just something that happens.

Finally teens should be made aware of the physical and psychological health factors associated with drinking at an early age. How drinking affects the way the brain functions. If you give people the facts, it really does change things. I mean actual facts not just the old "This is your brain (holds up an egg), this is your brain on drugs (throws egg, shell and all, in to a hot frying pan)."

I don't know if this is all new and shocking revelations, I don't really think it is, but this is one teenager's take on the situation. Remember it's all delivery, .shock value, variety, support, and knowing the facts. Someone once told me that people will first act in their own best interest, the same is true of teenagers. If you can prove that it is socially, mentally, and physically

advantageous for teens to be sober to teens there should be no problem.