Choose Responsibility
balance | maturity | common sense

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What is binge drinking?
Binge Drinking

- 56% increase in binge drinking between 1993 and 2001 by 18-20 year-olds (1)
- More than 90% of all alcohol consumed by underage drinkers is consumed during binge drinking (2)
- 35% of 18-20 year-olds binge drink (3)

1 Naimi et al., 2003
2 Institutes of Medicine, 2003
3 NSDUH, 2007
Extreme Drinking

- College students experienced a nearly 10% increase in the rate of drinking to get drunk between 1993 and 2001, which corresponded to an increase in secondary consequences and treatment for alcohol overdose (1).

- In a study of college freshman, 20% of males frequently drank more than 10 drinks in an evening (2).

- At a major university, treatment for alcohol overdose increased by 84% in three years, and the average BAC of those admitted rose from .23% to .25% (3).

1 Wechsler, 2002
2 White, et. al, 2006
3 Mahon, 2009
Where does binge drinking take place?

“College officials have agreed with students that the change in minimum age has not stopped student drinking, only displaced it.”

~ Ernie Boyer, *The Undergraduate Experience in America*
Deadly Consequences

- Over 1,000 lives of 18-24 year-olds are lost annually to alcohol off the highways, a figure that has been increasing since 1998 (1)
- 60 percent of the deaths related to underage drinking occur off the highways (2)
- Underage drinking annually contributes to some 599,000 injuries, and 97,000 cases of sexual assault among college students (3)

1 Hingson, 2005
2 NIAAA, 2006
3 Hingson, 2005
How did we end up with Legal Age 21?

- Growing concern over drunk driving in early 1980s
- MADD and other advocacy groups get involved
- Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving
- 1984-Passage of National Minimum Drinking Age Act
Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities, by age group

(Hingson & Winter 2003)
It’s not 1984 anymore…

- In 1980, nearly 50% of all fatal crashes were alcohol related. In 2007, that proportion had fallen to 32% (1)
- Many anti-drunk driving policies implemented in last 25 years (.08 BAC limit, Administrative License Revocation, Zero Tolerance, etc.)
- Mandatory seatbelt and airbag laws
- Designated drivers, massive public education efforts

1 NHTSA, 2008
Positive Change: The Drunk Driving Example

“I think you’ll agree with me, if you look back, that it’s no longer acceptable to drive drunk. It’s socially reprehensible, in fact, to drive drunk. I think everyone will agree with that. It was ‘wink and nod’ 20 years ago. It’s not that gray an area anymore.”

~Jeff Runge, Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2003
What 18-20 year-olds can do…

- Enlist or be drafted, risking their lives for our nation
- Marry, adopt children, and be legal guardians
- Open bank accounts, go into debt, own property, sue or be sued
- Vote, and seek or hold public office
- Purchase firearms
- Smoke, buy lottery tickets, and gamble
- Enter into legally binding contracts
Finding a common sense solution

Our current approach to binge drinking is as effective as a parachute that opens on the second bounce.
MADD CEO Chuck Hurley on 60 Minutes
Realistic ways to make a difference

- Mandatory alcohol education
- Parental involvement
- Exceptions to the 21 year-old drinking age for supervised programs of education and provisional licensing
- Mandatory ignition interlocks for first time DUI offenders of all ages
- Maintenance of Zero Tolerance laws for all people under age 21
- Low alcohol content beer for 18-20 year-olds
But what about?

The effects of alcohol on adolescent brain development

There are plenty of studies indicating that early, unsupervised drinking can lead to trouble for teens—both immediately and down the road. But this does not mean that an 18 year-old who has a beer or two every couple of weeks is doing irreparable damage to her brain. It is the 18 year-old who downs five or six drinks in a row on his way to a dance that worries me.”

~ H. Scott Swartzwelder, Duke University
But what about?

Age of onset and risk of dependency

Data from Hingson, et al. (2006)
But what about?

The International Context
Ratio of Intoxication Occasions to Drinking Occasions Among 15-16 Year-Olds in 30 Countries

(Data From Babor, et al. 2003)
“Canadian reductions in youth drinking and driving, followed virtually the same pattern as in the United States. But the Canadian reduction was not due to laws directed at youth: the drinking age did not change during this time, and zero tolerance laws were implemented after the reduction had occurred. This means that the changes must have resulted from some combination of the difficult-to-assess educational and motivational programs and from other factors outside of traffic safety. This conclusion suggests that a substantial portion of the reduction in the United States also resulted from these same causes.”

~Hedlund, Arnold, and Preusser (NHTSA), 2001, “Determine Why There Are Fewer Young Alcohol Impaired Drivers.”
Gordie Bailey, 18

"Gordie died alone in an empty room with his friends surrounding him. And it's just very preventable. Just inexcusable."

~Leslie Lanahan, Gordie Bailey’s mother

CU Student Found Dead Inside Frat House

“Bailey and the other pledges had begun the evening Sept. 16 [2004] blindfolded and abandoned in the woods near Gold Hill. Police said the pledges were told to drink large amounts of Ten High whiskey and Carlo Rossi wine…The next morning Bailey was found face down on the floor, and could not be revived. **His blood-alcohol level was 0.328 percent, four times the legal limit for driving in Colorado.**”

~Channel 7 News, Denver, CO
Ali Marie Raddatz, 18

"My daughter was a bright, energetic, hard working lady. From all outward appearances, you would have never thought anything like this was going on.” ~Ali’s father, Paul Raddatz

UWM Freshman Found Dead of Apparent Drug, Alcohol Overdose

“Raddatz, 18, was found at 11:07 a.m. Saturday, unresponsive on a sleeper sofa at a friend’s house…Friends told Milwaukee police Raddatz had been drinking raspberry rum in her dorm room before heading to the friend’s duplex. She had also consumed OxyContin and Valium.” ~Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel
References

- Swartzwelder, H.S. Personal communication, 26 June 2007.
Alcohol is a reality in the lives of young people. It cannot be denied, ignored, or legislated away.