



Discussion Guide for

THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL

NOTES TO LEADER

Mothers Against Drug Driving (MADD) reports that 4 people are killed every day by drunk drivers. Alcoholism is a serious disease that affects not only the person's health, but increased costs related to health care, and the families and strangers these problem drinkers come in contact with, so it is important to know the truth about alcohol.

Alcohol is a drug. It contains a mind-altering chemical known as Ethanol. Ethanol depresses the central nervous system which slows down the body's ability to function and interferes with the mind's ability to make wise decisions. Alcohol is also harmful to the body in numerous other ways and affects every major organ. Because alcoholism is so widespread and drinking may begin with children as young as 12 years old, it is crucial to teach the reality about alcohol use.

The Truth About Alcohol is intended to help prevent underage drinking and to curb the abuse of alcohol by presenting the facts in a clear and easy to understand format. The material in this video covers immediate and long-term effects of alcohol usage, including some statistics and legal consequences of underage drinking and drunk driving as applicable in the United States.

U.S. FACTS AND STATISTICS AS STATED IN THE VIDEO	COMPARISON CANADIAN FACTS AND STATISTICS
Alcohol is responsible for more than 100,000 deaths/year	In 1992, 6,701 deaths and 86,076 hospitalizations were attributed to alcohol
1:10 people who drink become alcoholics	1:10 people say they have problems with their drinking
10 million Americans are alcoholics	9.2% of adults in Canada have drinking problems ¹ which equals 2,645,276 based on 1993 survey of Canada's population being 28,753,000) ²
3.3 million teens between the ages of 14-17 who drink have problems with alcohol	Canadian comparisons are not readily available
Alcohol abuse is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S.	Impaired driving is a major cause of death
Highest use of alcohol was in 1980	The trend we are seeing is a gradual decline of alcohol use among students since 1979.
More than half the States lowered legal drinking age to 18	Drinking age varies from province to province
Alcohol is the #1 killer of Americans 15-24 years old; about half of all teenage deaths from drowning, suicides and homicides are alcohol-related; alcohol is the #1 drug problem among teens	Canadian comparisons are not readily available
If a breathalyzer test proves you have been drinking you can be charged with possession even if you aren't holding a can or bottle; if alcohol is simply within your reach you can be charged with possession whether you are drinking or not (in some States).	You would be charged with a drinking-related offense under the Criminal Code. Contact your local police dept. To find out your provincial laws. (Liquor License Act).
If you refuse to take a breathalyzer or are found to have been drinking your license can be cut up on the spot.	A 90- day driving suspension could be given out.
Alcohol is the primary cause of car accidents in young people; Passengers are twice as likely to die in an alcohol-related car crash than drivers.	Motor vehicle accidents accounted for the largest number of alcohol related deaths. ²

Although we were unable to provide similar Canadian statistics, a comparison chart follows for your information.

ABOUT THE FILM

This video begins with an overview of how many are affected by alcohol, especially teenagers. The narrator explains what alcohol is and how it affects the body. Then, a brief history of alcohol use from the early 1900's to present is given. The video refers to the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 1917 (Prohibition). In Canada there was no national prohibition in effect, however, there were some short-lived prohibition laws in some provinces.

The narrator discusses the power of advertising and the media and how they can create false or misleading messages in order to sell a product. Many of the myths about alcohol are dispelled throughout this video with the presentation of graphics, statistics, dramatizations and hard facts provided by a narrator, a police officer and teen actors.

1 1993 General Survey, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

2 1993 Population Trends, Statistics Canada



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THE PRESENTATION

0 - 5 MINUTES – INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Explain briefly that the purpose of this presentation is to learn the truth about alcohol. The audience will learn what alcohol is, why it impairs the brain, what some immediate and long-term physical effects are, including alcoholism and death and how it can cause other behavioural and legal problems.

5-20 MINUTES – SHOW THE VIDEO

Show **The Truth About Alcohol** to inform your audience completely about alcohol and its effects. Use the video to present accurate information regarding alcohol use and raise awareness levels among the audience in a step towards prevention.

20 - 50 MINUTES – DISCUSSION

Ask questions from the "Questions for Discussion" section of this guide. Based on your audience, choose the questions that you want to emphasize. Encourage the audience to participate by sharing their own experiences relating to alcohol use and peer pressure. Ask for suggestions on how to deal with the problems that alcohol creates in our society, especially among teenagers and how they can be prevented.

50 - 55 MINUTES – CLOSE

Distribute any accompanying or relevant materials. Explain and discuss any handouts with the audience so they will know what they are taking with them. Finally, encourage them to share what they have learned with others.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Q. What is alcohol?

A. Alcohol is a drug. It contains a mind-altering chemical called Ethanol. Ethanol is a depressant and once it enters into the bloodstream it depresses the central nervous system and impairs the body's functions causing symptoms such as slurred speech, loss of balance and sometimes unconsciousness.

Q. What are some of the immediate effects of alcohol?

A. Some immediate effects of alcohol use can include dizziness, slow reactions, loss of inhibitions, loss of coordination, impairment of mental functions such as slurred speech and blurred vision, increased aggressiveness and sudden mood swings, high blood pressure, irregular heart rate, vomiting, loss of memory, unconsciousness and possibly death.

Age	% who are Abstainers	% who Drink
13 - under	69	31
14-15	43.1	56.9
16-17	25	75
18+	21.8	78.2

Q. What are some long-term effects of alcohol use?

A. Over time, alcohol can cause permanent damage to many organs, especially the liver, the brain and the heart. This damage is irreversible and is often life-threatening. Other long-term effects of alcohol use include: anemia, ulcers, constant diarrhea, heart failure, cancer, high blood pressure, memory loss, skin problems, mental disorders and impotence.

Q. Can drinking too much, even just once, kill you?

A. Yes. Too much alcohol can cause your body to shut down. This is called "alcohol poisoning".

Q. What is the percentage of teens who are abstainers?

A. Ontario statistics are given here as an example. It is suggested the facilitators or students find out the statistics in their particular area.

Q. What should you do if someone who is drinking gets sick?

A. If you are around or with someone who is drinking and he/she gets sick, it is important to stay with that person and make sure he/she is okay. If a person won't wake up when you shake or pinch his/her body, the skin is clammy or purple and that person is having trouble breathing, get help immediately. You can call a doctor or 911 if it is available in your area. In the meantime, help that person to lay on his/her side or sit the person up with the head bowed to keep him/her from choking on vomit. If the person has vomited, make sure the mouth is clear and that the person can breathe easily. Do not put your fingers in the person's mouth.



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Q. What should you do if someone has been drinking and wants to drive?

A. It is up to you to find another way home or to wherever you are going. Even if that person swears that he/she can drive, don't believe it. Take away that person's car keys if you have to and drive the person home yourself, or find someone who is sober to drive you and the other person home. You could also call a taxi or a parent or another adult to help. Don't let the fear of getting in trouble with your parents stop you because what is worse – having your parents upset with you or having the police come to their door to advise them you've been killed? In fact, if you do call, you are acting responsibly.

Q. What should you do if you or someone you know has a drinking problem?

A. A drinking problem can be someone who drinks too much, gets drunk at social events, drinks a lot when alone, lets drinking get in the way of other activities, or thinks and talks about getting drunk or having a drink. Talk with a counselor or go to a clinic or doctor or another adult you trust and respect. There are also various hotlines and agencies that specialize in drug and alcohol treatment which can be found through your local yellow pages or phone directory.

Q. If it's so bad, why do most adults drink?

A. This is a good discussion question.

PROGRAMS DETAILS

LENGTH:

12 minutes

SUBJECT AREAS:

Alcoholism

AUDIENCE LEVELS:

Adult

ORDER NUMBER:

2-5134SG

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