

**31st Annual
Alcohol Awareness Month**

ORGANIZER'S GUIDE



**“Connecting the Dots:
Opportunities for Recovery”**

A comprehensive approach to addressing underage drinking

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About the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD):

Founded in 1944, NCADD and its National Network of Affiliates is a voluntary health organization dedicated to fighting the Nation's #1 health problem – alcoholism and drug addiction and the devastating consequences of alcohol and other drugs on individuals, families and communities.



A Brief History of NCADD's Alcohol Awareness Month:

Founded and sponsored by NCADD, Alcohol Awareness Month was established in 1987 to help reduce the stigma so often associated with alcoholism by encouraging communities to reach out to the American public each April with information about alcohol, alcoholism and recovery. Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive disease, genetically predisposed and fatal if untreated. However people can and do recover. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 20 million individuals and family members are living lives in recovery!

An integral part of NCADD's Alcohol Awareness Month is **Alcohol-Free Weekend**, which takes place on the first weekend of April (March 31-April 2, 2017) to raise public awareness about the use of alcohol and how it may be affecting families, individuals, schools, businesses and the communities in which we live.

During Alcohol-Free Weekend, NCADD extends an open invitation to all Americans to engage in three alcohol-free days. Those individuals or families who experience difficulty or discomfort in this 72-hour experiment are urged to contact local NCADD Affiliates, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Al-Anon to learn more about alcoholism and its early symptoms.

About the Theme:

The 2017 theme, "**Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery,**" is designed to draw attention to the many opportunities individuals, families, and communities have to help prevent teen alcohol use. Reducing underage drinking is critical to securing a healthy future for America's youth and in a society that continually promotes alcohol and drug use at every level, the need is great to provide education on the dangers of alcohol and/or drug abuse for children and to connect the dots that can lead to recovery.

NCADD's National Network of Affiliates and other NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month supporting organizations across the country will use this theme as a way of addressing underage drinking through a broad range of media strategies, awareness campaigns, educational programs and local events. Uniquely positioned in communities across the country, NCADD and its network of local affiliates provide direct help and assistance to millions of individuals and families through education, prevention, intervention, information/referral, treatment and recovery support services. NCADD is often the first call people make when difficulties with alcoholism and drug dependence strike.

**April 2017:
NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH
“Connecting the Dots:
Opportunities for Recovery”**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
FOR USING NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH KIT**

- 1) **Adaptation and Reproduction Permission:** All of the materials may be reproduced or adapted to your own needs and distributed within your community without permission. An acknowledgment of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) as the founder and sponsor of NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month and identification of our website (www.ncadd.org) as an information resource is required.
- 2) **Distribution:** Distribute materials to other organizations and local print media to begin generating early community interest in NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month.
- 3) **Localize Materials:** Add local information to the sample proclamation and press materials to greatly increase their appeal for officials and media in your community.
- 4) **Time Line:** The following time line may be helpful in using this kit:
 - JANUARY:** Customize materials for use in your community; identify public officials to issue proclamations; begin planning suggested grassroots activities or develop your own activities; place camera-ready advertisements.
 - FEBRUARY:** Submit live copy PSAs to radio stations.
 - MARCH:** Adapt sample proclamation and press materials for local use; plan proclamation ceremony or press event to kick-off NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month; distribute media advisory and news release; make follow-up phone calls to media.
 - APRIL:** Publicize each of your NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month activities to target audiences; submit letter to the editor and op-ed piece.



PROCLAMATION: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Issuing a proclamation on behalf of your city, county, town, or State is an important tool in raising awareness for Alcohol Awareness Month. A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative such as Alcohol Awareness Month. Proclamations are typically signed and issued by Federal officials, governors, State legislators, or other government officials at the local level. By issuing a proclamation designating April as Alcohol Awareness Month, your community will bring attention to the problems of underage drinking and spread the message that prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services are critical pieces of a comprehensive approach to reducing underage drinking and drug use.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Select Officials:** Make a list of top public officials and other leaders in your community who have expressed concern about alcohol problems. Decide who would attract the most press coverage.
- 2) **Local Relevance:** Make the proclamation as relevant to your community as possible by adding local statistics to the sample below. You will have a much better chance of enlisting the support of a local public official.
- 3) **Who to Contact:** If anyone in your organization knows the person you want to issue the proclamation, have that individual send it directly to the official, then follow up with a phone call. If you don't have a personal contact, send the proclamation to the individual's press representative or community affairs liaison with a cover letter explaining your request and the activities that you have planned for NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month.
- 4) **Other Community Organizations:** Contact other concerned organizations in your community and ask them to participate in NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month. Ask them to send letters to the official urging him/her to issue a proclamation.
- 5) **Final Draft and Reproduction:** Once an official agrees to issue the proclamation, work with his/her office on a final draft. Reproduce the proclamation as large as possible for use as a prop on television.
- 6) **Electronic Copy:** Request a digital or electronic copy for use on your website, newsletter, with press releases, etc.
- 7) **Press Conference and Photos:** Schedule a press conference and/or photo opportunity with the official for the last week in March to announce NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month in your community. Use the event to highlight a successful local prevention program for youth and to publicize other activities you have planned. Invite local health, law enforcement and educational professionals to participate. Have someone take photos and post photos on your website and add to your newsletter.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017 **Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery**

WHEREAS, excessive drinking is responsible for more than 4,300 deaths among underage youth each year; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States; and

WHEREAS, nearly 10 million young people, ages 12 to 20, report that they've consumed alcohol in the past 30 days; and

WHEREAS, young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21; and

WHEREAS, drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, yet people aged 12 to 20 drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the typical American will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18; and

WHEREAS, kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic crashes, and to have serious school-related problems; and

WHEREAS, a supportive family environment is associated with lowered rates of alcohol use for adolescents; and

WHEREAS, kids who have conversations with their parents and learn a lot about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50% less likely to use alcohol and drugs than those who don't have such conversations.

THEREFORE, I, (INSERT NAME OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL) now join the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and do hereby proclaim that April 2017 is Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA GOVERNED BY LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL). As the (INSERT TITLE OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL), I also call upon all citizens, parents, governmental agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, hospitals, schools and colleges in (REPEAT NAME OF AREA) to support efforts that will provide early education about alcoholism and addiction and increase support for individuals and families coping with alcoholism. Through these efforts, together, we can provide **Hope, Help and Healing** for those in our community who are facing challenges with alcohol use and abuse.

May it be so decreed.



MEDIA ADVISORY: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Conducting media outreach and securing media placements are valuable ways to spread awareness about Alcohol Awareness Month and build interest in your event. Any form of media coverage for your event will highlight your efforts within the community and draw attention to the participants, volunteers, and sponsors of your event. Through media support, the local community is exposed to the Alcohol Awareness Month message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

Instructions for use of Media Advisory:

- 1) **Localize Media Advisory:** Substitute local information in the media advisory below, reproduce copies on your letterhead or news release paper and use it to alert the media to your NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation ceremony.
- 2) **Distribute Advisory:** Send the media advisory to the city desks of your local newspapers and to the assignment editors at your local radio and television stations. Be sure that they receive the advisory at least two days before the event.
- 3) **Media Follow-Up:** Call the media before your event to make sure that they received the advisory and try to persuade them to cover the event. Call the day before to remind them and answer any last minute questions.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017 **Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery**

For More Information, Contact:
(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)
(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

MEDIA ADVISORY

(INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL) TO PROCLAIM NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH IN (INSERT NAME OF AREA) AS PART OF A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE OF ALCOHOLISM AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

WHO: (INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL)
(INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION)
(INSERT NAMES AND TITLES OF ONE OR TWO OTHER NEWSWORTHY PARTICIPANTS)

WHAT: (INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL) will proclaim that April is NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA) and join the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) in a national call to action to focus on a comprehensive approach to reducing underage drinking that includes prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services. Hundreds of communities across the country will participate in this grassroots effort aimed at helping our young people connect the dots about alcohol

and drug use and to highlight healthy alternatives and critical recovery resources that are available to our youth.

WHERE: (INSERT LOCATION)
(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)

WHEN: (INSERT DATE)
(INSERT TIME)



NEWS RELEASE: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Instructions for use of News Release:

1) **Localize News Release:** Substitute local information in the news releases below, reproduce copies on your letterhead or news release form to inform media that your local public official has proclaimed that April is NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month in your community.

2) **Distribution of Release:** Give the news releases to press covering the proclamation ceremony. Send copies to the city desks of your local newspapers and to the assignment editors at your local radio and television stations. They should receive the releases shortly before the events take place. Even if they don't send a reporter, a story can be written.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017 **Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery**

TO ANNOUNCE: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

For More Information, Contact:
(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)
(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

For Release (INSERT DATE AND TIME OF EVENT):

(INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL) PROCLAIMS NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH IN (INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY) AND JOINS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE OF ALCOHOLISM AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

(INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL) today, (INSERT DATE), proclaimed that April is NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA) and joined the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) in a national grassroots

campaign to draw attention to the critical public health issue of underage drinking and its impact on individuals, families and the community, while highlighting resources available to help.

“(INSERT QUOTE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM AND THE FAMILY FROM PUBLIC OFFICIAL)” said (INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL).

“(INSERT QUOTE DESCRIBING LOCAL EFFORTS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN COPING WITH ALCOHOLISM FROM REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION)” said (INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION).

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT LOCAL NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH ACTIVITIES).

NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month, sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. since 1987, encourages local communities to take action to help individuals, families and children affected by alcoholism.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING YOUR ORGANIZATION)

(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017

Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery

TO ANNOUNCE: Alcohol-Free Weekend

For More Information, Contact:

(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)

(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

For Immediate Release:

ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND TO BE OBSERVED March 31-April 2, 2017

Alcohol-Free Weekend, traditionally observed during NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month in April, is scheduled for March 31-April 2, 2017.

Alcohol Awareness Month, founded and sponsored by The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) since 1987, is a national grassroots effort observed by communities throughout the United States to support prevention, research, education, intervention, treatment and recovery from alcoholism and alcohol-related problems.

During Alcohol-Free Weekend (March 31-April 2, 2017), NCADD and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) ask parents and other adults to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages for a 72-hour period to demonstrate that alcohol isn't necessary to have a good time. If participants find it difficult to go without alcohol during this period, they are urged to call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER) for information about alcoholism.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION IS DOING TO HELP THE COMMUNITY OBSERVE ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND)

NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month offers community organizations concerned about individuals, families and children an opportunity to work together to not only raise awareness and understanding about the negative consequences of alcohol use, but to highlight the need for local action and services focused on prevention, treatment and recovery.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION)

(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)



:30 RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Public service announcements (PSAs) encourage individuals in need of treatment and recovery services to seek help. Distribute the live-read PSA scripts to local radio stations to promote Alcohol Awareness Month. Most stations are particularly concerned with issues that are impacting their communities, and you can identify which stations are most appropriate for your target audience, considering demographic data such as age, gender, race, and location.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Localize PSA:** Adapt any or all of the “live copy” radio scripts for local use.
- 2) **Finalize Script:** Type each script, double-spaced, on your letterhead with the name of a contact person from your organization.
- 3) **Distribution of PSAs:** Try to submit scripts to radio public service directors in your community by mid-late February. Your chances of getting them aired may increase if you give each radio station a different set of scripts.
- 4) **Media Follow-Up:** Follow up with a phone call to the public service director 3-5 days after you submit the scripts asking if they have arrived and if broadcast during April will be possible.
- 5) **Media Reminder:** If the public service director was receptive to your first phone call, follow up with an additional call in late March to remind him/her of the PSA.
- 6) **Thank You:** Send a thank you note to the manager of any radio station that airs one of your PSAs.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017

Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery

FOR PARENTS:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want parents to know that progress is being made in the struggle to address underage drinking in our community. Research shows that kids who learn about the dangers of underage drinking from their parents are up to 50% less likely to experiment than kids who don't. So, help connect the dots for your kids about alcohol use – it's worth it. To learn more about underage drinking in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER).

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and if you think your child is drinking just to "have a good time," think again: many kids drink alone because they are bored or depressed. This puts them at greater risk for developing alcohol-related problems later in life. So, talk to your kids – help them connect the dots about alcohol use. For information on underage drinking, call (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AND PHONE NUMBER) in (INSERT NAME OF AREA). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). It's worth it.

FOR YOUTH:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want young people to know not everybody drinks. For more information about sober activities in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER).

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want to help you connect the dots about alcohol use and remind you of several reasons not to drink: suicide, homicide, accidental death, violent injury, disrupted families, unwanted pregnancy. Think it can't happen to you? For more information about the impact of alcohol and drug use in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Call today.

FOR SCHOOLS:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that despite the legal drinking age of 21, high school students still consume 31 million gallons of wine coolers and 102 million gallons of beer each year. For more information about underage drinking in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). You can make a difference.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that drinking is associated with the leading causes of death among young people, including car crashes, murder and suicide. Get involved. Join us in helping kids connect the dots about alcoholism and addiction in (INSERT NAME OF AREA). Call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER) That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Let's talk about it.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that alcohol is the deadliest drug for America's teenagers: a 16-year old is more likely to die from an alcohol-related problem than any other cause. For more information about how you can help, call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Help save a life.

ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND:

During Alcohol-Free Weekend (March 31-April 2, 2017), NCADD and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) ask parents and other adults to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages for a 72-hour period to demonstrate that alcohol isn't necessary to have a good time. If participants find it difficult to go without alcohol during this period, we urge them to call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER) for information about alcoholism. That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER).

DRINKING AND DRIVING:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that even though most teenagers know that you should not drink and drive, nearly a third still accept rides from drivers who have been drinking. For more information about how to keep our kids safe in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Help save a life.

GENERAL USE:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that if your drinking has caused problems in your relationships, at work, at home, financially, physically or legally, it may be time to get help. For more information about alcoholism and recovery in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Help is available right now.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want you to know that if you are concerned about your own use of alcohol or that of a friend, family member or child, help is available. For more information about alcohol problems in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Call today for the information you need.

IN THE WORKPLACE:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want to remind you that alcoholism and alcohol-related problems cost employers billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, accidents and poor job performance. For more information about alcoholism and recovery in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER).



OP-ED NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Writing and placing an op-ed or bylined piece in a print or online media outlet can be critical to raising awareness for Alcohol Awareness Month. An op-ed is a way for you to express your opinion and perspective on a certain subject or initiative. To gain additional attention for your op-ed, reach out to well-known organizations in your community and offer to co-write an op-ed or online article with them. Having an established partner might catch the eye of an editor and increase the chances that your op-ed is published.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Contact Person:** Call the editorial page of the most widely circulated newspaper/media outlet in your city. Ask if they accept "op-ed" pieces and find out the name of the person to whom they should be directed.
- 2) **Write Op-Ed:** Type the sample cover letter, on your organization's letterhead, for signature by one of your board members or the head of your organization. Type the sample op-ed double-spaced on blank paper. Submit both the cover letter and the op-ed to the appropriate person.
- 3) **Follow-Up:** Follow up with a phone call to the appropriate person several days later. Ask if the op-ed has arrived and whether it is being considered for publication.
- 4) **Denied, Try Again:** If your initial attempt is unsuccessful, repeat the process with other newspapers/media outlets in your area, but make sure that no more than one newspaper/media outlet at a time is considering your op-ed. If one does not agree to publish it, submit the op-ed to other newspapers/media outlets.
- 5) **Copies to NCADD:** Send copies of any related press or published op-eds (as e-mail attachments preferred) to: NCADD, 217 Broadway, Suite 712, New York, NY 10007. E-Mail: national@ncadd.org.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017

Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery

Dear Editor:

April 2017 is NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month and thousands of communities across the country are joining together to focus on underage drinking and its effect on individuals, families and communities. For some, alcoholism and addiction develop at an early age, requiring intervention, treatment and recovery support. (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) believes that early education about alcoholism and addiction is a necessary component in keeping kids healthy, and it starts with the parents of (INSERT NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY).

We hope that you will consider publishing the enclosed op-ed piece to stimulate discussion about one of the most important public health issues in (INSERT NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME & TITLE)
(INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION)

SAMPLE OP-ED:

Connecting the Dots

The need to provide meaningful education on the dangers of underage drinking and drug use here in (ADD NAME OF COMMUNITY) has never been greater. A few facts help to highlight that need:

- Alcohol and drugs are the leading causes of crime among youth.
- Alcohol and drugs are the leading factors in teenage suicide.
- More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs.

Young people, like adults, drink alcohol for many different reasons. Some of the reasons may seem obvious, but understanding the feelings behind these reasons – as well as how everyday teen life comes into play – can be difficult.

Young people often drink to check out from family problems or issues with school and grades; loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety disorder and other mental health issues can contribute; they may drink to deal with the pressures of everyday social situations, to change their image or to fit in when moving to a new school or town; to gain confidence or lose inhibitions.

As kids get older and alcohol and drugs enter the picture, parents are faced with a unique set of challenges. They can simply sit back and hope their kids will “get through it,” or they can take an active role in learning about alcohol and drugs – and helping their kids to do the same.

Parents can be a primary source of positive and reliable information. In fact, research has shown that kids who have conversations with their parents and learn a lot about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50% less likely to use these substances than those who don't have such conversations.

And it is important to take advantage of “teachable moments” when parents and other adults can help kids connect the dots about underage drinking and drug use. It’s not so much about having “the big talk,” but about being there for them when the issues come up – on TV, at the movies, on the radio; about celebrities or sports figures, or about their friends.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, here are some guidelines that can help parents talk about alcohol and drug use:

Listen before you talk: For kids, knowing that someone is really listening is most important. Ask open-ended questions. Be involved. Be honest and open. Be positive: talking about these issues can build bridges rather than walls. And remember, addiction is a chronic, progressive disease that can be linked to family history and genetics. So, if you there is a family history of problems be matter of fact about it, as one would be with any other chronic disease, such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer.

“Alcohol and drug use is a very risky business for young people,” says Andrew Pucher, President and Chief Executive Officer of NCADD, “and parents can make a difference. The longer children delay drinking and drug use, the less likely they are to develop problems associated with it. That’s why it is so important to help your child connect the dots and make smart decisions about alcohol and drug use.”

So, this April (NAME OF ORGANIZATION) is celebrating Alcohol Awareness Month by holding a variety of informational and educational events (OR NAME SPECIAL EVENT) to raise public awareness about underage drinking and encourage parents to speak to their kids early and often about alcohol and other drugs.

Additionally, I urge local businesses, community organizations, colleges, schools, administrators, and government agencies to get involved in these activities. It can make a tremendous difference in our community as we reach out to those who are most vulnerable and help our next generation avoid the many problems that underage alcohol and drug use can bring.

(INCLUDE AUTHOR NAME, TITLE, AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS THAT MAKE HIM OR HER AN EXPERT ON THIS TOPIC)

For more information about Alcohol Awareness Month, contact NCADD or one of its local Affiliates at www.ncadd.org.





LETTER TO THE EDITOR: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Media research shows that the letters to the editor section is one of the most widely read parts of the paper. It's a natural forum for sharing your opinion and story with your community.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Write Letter:** Use the sample letter below to create your own letter, with local information, on your own letterhead and have it signed by the head of your organization.
- 2) **Submit and Follow-Up:** Submit the letter to the editor of the most widely read newspaper in your area. Follow up with a phone call to the letters department to ask if the letter has arrived and whether it is being considered for publication.
- 3) **Denied, Try Again:** If the letter is rejected, submit it to the editors of other daily and weekly newspapers, one at a time, in your area.

NCADD ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2017 **Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery**

Dear Editor:

This April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) since 1987, this year's theme is: "Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery."

No other substance is more widely used and abused by America's youth than alcohol, making alcoholism and alcohol-related problems the number one public health problem in the United States.

It is important to connect the dots that lead to awareness and recovery from underage alcohol and drug use. Fostering healthy and responsible attitudes, talking openly and honestly, encouraging supportive relationships, and showing children that their opinions and decisions matter, are all ways to help prevent the use of alcohol and drugs.

It can be challenging to develop the communication skills needed to talk with your children about drinking and drugs, but it will be well worth the effort you put into it, as you get to know your children a little better and help them build the coping skills they need to handle the anger, stress, peer pressure, loneliness and disappointment that are part of being an adolescent.

So, let's get started. We can't afford to wait any longer.

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME & TITLE)
(INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION)



SUGGESTED GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES: NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

Organizing an event for Alcohol Awareness Month is a great way to celebrate people in recovery, their families, and others throughout the community who make living in recovery possible. Events help unite those already in recovery and can broadly spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

FOR STATES:

- Issue an Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation utilizing the theme, "Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery" (see sample proclamation) from the Governor's Office.

FOR COMMUNITIES:

- Issue an Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation utilizing the theme "Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery" (see sample proclamation) from the Mayor's Office.
- Offer public recognition to young people and community members who lead alcohol and other drug-free lifestyles.
- Observe "Alcohol-Free Weekend" (see sample news release). In some communities, family-oriented businesses provide discounts or free admission to members of the community who have signed a pledge to remain alcohol-free with an organization that works to prevent alcoholism and other drug addictions.
- Partner with local businesses (including fast food restaurants, book, video and music stores, movie theaters, skating rinks, bowling alleys and miniature golf courses) for alcohol-free youth events or promotions.
- Hold a "Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking" in your community.
- Schedule "Parent Empowerment Workshops" to raise awareness and understanding of issues of family recovery; to teach how adult role models influence young people; to look at the effect of advertising; and to show how every parent can do his/her part to change social attitudes. The workshops will help parents maintain standards of conduct, let participants know that other parents support their standards and encourage community members to support and encourage recovery. They can be hosted by the PTA, churches, service clubs, and taken to local business. Hold them during the day, at lunch, at night or on weekends.
- Review school rules regarding the use of alcohol, paying particular attention to athletic codes, and determine if the rules are adequately enforced.
- Organize an Alcohol Awareness parade or rally.

- Counter the pressures on young people to drink alcohol through after-school programs, good recreational facilities, alternative programs for potential school drop-outs, job training, confidential health services and community service opportunities.
- Insert a list of self-help groups and local resources with public utility bills.
- Plan an Alcohol Awareness Month luncheon at a local hospital with guest speakers who represent the health community.

FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS:

- Organize alcohol-free extracurricular activities, sporting events, dances and rock concerts, using promotional items such as t-shirts and hats, and promote them to other students as alcohol-free activities.
- Use liners in school cafeteria trays to promote Alcohol Awareness Month.
- Ask local grocery stores to provide quantities of grocery bags to schools and ask students to illustrate these bags with Alcohol Awareness Month messages. Return the illustrated bags to the grocery stores for use with customers during April.
- Raise money to support NCADD and NCADD Affiliates or for alcohol prevention curricula and public education campaigns through school walk-a-thons, raffles, athletic events, auctions, concerts, plant and rummage sales, and dinners.
- Guidance counselors can develop a checklist regarding college alcohol policies to assist students and parents in their selection of schools.
- Administrators can examine advertising solicited by the school, including student newspapers and yearbooks, to assure that there is a consistent and appropriate message regarding no use of alcohol. They can also examine policy that is used in the selection of favors for dances to assure that there is a consistent no-use message for people under age 21. If a change in these policies seems advisable, use Alcohol Awareness Month as an opportunity to announce them.
- Teachers can teach critical skills for watching television and understanding selling techniques and commercials during Alcohol Awareness Month. Ask students to clip print ads for alcoholic beverages and bring them to class for discussion. Students can learn that drinking isn't a way to feel or be "independent." Rather, students can learn that they are being "influenced" to drink and that independence from advertising influences really means not drinking. Also ask students to prepare a list of other "pro-drinking" influences, including sponsorships of sporting events and rock concerts, and promotional items such as t-shirts and hats.

FOR STUDENTS:

- Remember that use of alcohol is your decision and that drinking is not necessary for having a good time.
- Know that "Drinking Too Much Too Fast Can Kill You" and that alcohol poisoning, a drug overdose, is more common than many people think.

- Avoid situations where someone else's alcohol consumption or other drug use may put you at risk.
- Always respect another person's decision not to drink alcohol.
- If you are concerned about yourself, a friend or family member, call NCADD and our National Network of Affiliates TODAY! NCADD will connect you with someone who is specifically trained and successfully experienced in helping individuals and families dealing with alcohol-related problems.

FOR COLLEGES:

- Raise awareness of the fact that alcohol, the drug of choice for college students -- and binge drinking are key factors in academic and social problems on American campuses. Recognize the link between serious campus problems and alcohol: vandalism, date rape, poor academic performance, dropouts, injuries and death.
- Appoint a task force of school administrators, faculty, students, Greek system representatives and others to make recommendations for a broad range of policy and program changes to reduce alcohol- and other drug-related problems, and provide the resources necessary for implementing and promoting such changes.
- Provide maximum opportunities for students to live in an alcohol-free environment and to engage in stimulating, alcohol-free recreational and leisure activities. Increase programming and social activities at the beginning of the academic year when students may be more susceptible to high-risk drinking.
- Enforce a "zero tolerance" policy on the illegal consumption of alcohol by students both on and off campus and take steps to reduce the opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumni to legally consume alcohol on campus by limiting places and times for drinking; prohibiting drunkenness; regulating conditions of use; and not sanctioning a "bar" on campus.
- Establish alcohol education programs on college campuses that include information on alcoholism prevention and treatment, and stress the non-use of alcohol as a healthy and viable option. Support programs and services, including housing for students in recovery is essential.
- Ban alcohol sales at sporting arenas, or establish alcohol-free seating sections.
- Eliminate alcoholic beverage advertising and promotion in all forms from university and college campuses, including alcohol industry sponsorship of college activities.
- Form "Town/Gown" alliances with community leaders to encourage commercial establishments that promote or sell alcoholic beverages to curtail illegal student access to alcohol and adopt responsible alcohol marketing and service practices.
- Encourage prevention efforts by having students and faculty direct studies in their discipline toward college drinking problems.
- Organize and promote alcohol-free activities during spring break.

FOR FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES:

- Sponsor non-alcoholic rush or membership recruitment activities.
- Ban alcohol from events where minors are likely to be present.

FOR MEDIA:

- If you work for a radio or television station, do what you can to urge the owners to follow the leads of the major television networks who have agreed not to accept advertising for distilled spirits.
- Broadcast or publish relevant information about alcohol, alcohol problems, alcoholism and recovery (see radio PSAs, op-ed piece and letter to the editor).
- For a week-long period during NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month analyze all news stories for mention of alcohol. Aside from such obvious stories as alcohol-related traffic fatalities, pay particular attention to violent crime, domestic violence, sexual abuse, suicide and other social issues where use of alcohol is likely to be involved. Then do a “round-up” story about the negative consequences of alcohol consumption illustrated by the evidence in your community.
- Counter and challenge stereotyping and glamorization of members of the journalism and entertainment professions as hard-drinking “heroes” by identifying leaders of your profession who do not engage in these practices, and by reporting the lost health, careers and lives of those who do.
- Run a three-part series, run on successive days, starting with Sunday, focused on alcoholism and looks at the impact on the individual, the family and the community. The series must include first-hand stories of recovery from individuals and family members.

FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS:

- Integrate alcohol issues into the ongoing religious education of young people.
- Encourage role models who have achieved success without using/abusing alcohol to participate in congregation-sponsored events.
- Allow use of your facilities for alternative youth activities, mentoring programs, parent training, stress management seminars, healthy lifestyles workshops and substance abuse prevention education sessions.
- Assemble an “Alcohol Awareness Month” bulletin board. Ask members of your congregation to bring in news clippings of alcohol-related incidents in your community. Tell them to look for mentions of alcohol, particularly in crime stories.
- Conduct a candlelight vigil or sponsor an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast that focuses on the healing effects of treatment for all family members.
- Publish information about recovery programs in church bulletins.

- Religious groups can establish an “Amnesty Day/Week” at their houses of worship for youth who need help but are embarrassed, afraid or don’t know where to get it. Help and/or referrals can be provided confidentially and without fear of reprisal.

FOR PARENTS:

- Teach your child that abstinence from alcohol is an acceptable lifelong decision and that they have a right to stand up for a safe academic environment.
- Teach your child that drinking can be risky and to intervene when they see that their classmates are in trouble.
- If your child is of legal age to drink (21 in all states), explain to them how to use alcohol moderately (no more than two drinks per day for men, no more than one per day for women) and appropriately (as a complement to a meal and at social gatherings or during family celebrations).
- If you drink, be sure to set an ongoing healthy example regarding adult alcohol use and never brag about your use of alcohol or other drugs during your own college years.
- When helping your children to select an appropriate college, be willing to question officials about campus alcohol policies. The Best Colleges, an annual guide published by the Princeton Review, groups schools by categories (“Lots of beer,” “Lots of hard liquor,” “Major frat and sorority scene” and “Stone-cold sober schools”).
- When your children go to college, set clear and realistic expectations regarding academic performance, and continue to be as interested and involved in their lives as you were when they were in high school.
- If you are concerned about yourself, a friend or family member, call NCADD and our National Network of Affiliates today! NCADD will connect you with someone who is specifically trained and successfully experienced in helping individuals and families dealing with alcohol-related problems.



SOME HELPFUL INTERNET LINKS:

- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD): **www.ncadd.org**
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): **www.aa.org**
- Al-Anon Family Groups: **www.al-anon.alateen.org**
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA): **www.niaaa.nih.gov**
- College Drinking: Changing the Culture (NIAAA): **www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov**
- Stop Underage Drinking: Portal of Federal Resources: **www.stopalcoholabuse.gov**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Alcohol and Public Health: **www.cdc.gov/Alcohol**
- Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth: **www.camy.org**
- Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS):
www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/UnderageDrinking.html



Thoughts on Stigma from NCADD's Founder, Marty Mann:

“Few among you consider alcoholism a proper subject for open discussion, few among you would willingly label yourself, or a friend or colleague, an alcoholic, and even fewer would be able to recognize alcoholism early, when there is the best chance for recovery.

“All of this is the result of stigma, a state of mind which is essentially mindless since it overlooks all the things which have been learned; a state of mind which produces public attitudes that are anti-therapeutic to say the least. In bold language, Stigma Kills.

“Stigma manifests itself in many ways; in false beliefs, such as that alcoholism is a moral problem and alcoholics moral delinquents; or that alcoholism is simply a matter of will power and alcoholics are weaklings; or that alcoholism is a deliberate self-degradation and alcoholics are simply letting themselves slide downhill—‘throwing their lives away,’ or that alcoholism is only found among homeless indigent derelicts—‘Skid Row bums’; or finally, that alcoholism is a hopeless condition and alcoholics are all ‘hopelessdrunks’ (spoken as one word).

“The results of stigma are also many, and all are destructive. The family that has an alcoholic in its midst goes to great lengths to conceal this, and the fellow workers of the alcoholic—often including his immediate superiors—cover up for him, keep giving him ‘one more chance to straighten up.’ The friends, neighbors and others in more casual contact with the alcoholic carefully look the other way. All are participating in a great conspiracy of silence, many of them in the mistaken belief that they are protecting the alcoholic when actually they are preventing him from getting help.”

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HOPE LINE: 800 NCA-CALL (24-hour Affiliate referral)