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Living Well.

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Relate Well.

Beware of summer boredom

Having idle hands, idle minds can lead to drinking

Kim M. Rodrigues

It's summer, kids sleep late, and hang out with their friends. Having time

off is great. But, having too much time off can lead to boredom and risk taking behaviors like drinking alcohol. Did you know that summer months are when most youth use alcohol for the first time?

So what's the big deal about alcohol? Our biggest youth substance use problem is alcohol. In Massachusetts, 46 percent of high school youth report use of alcohol in the last month. This is true of Greater Fall River, too.

Kids start drinking younger than you think. According to Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration, many kids start drinking in middle school, risking adverse affects on their still developing brains. Also, children who start drinking before age 15 are 5 times more likely than those over 21 to develop alcohol abuse problems.

Here's what we know,

SAMSHA reports that the key reason youth report for choosing not to drink is parent's disapproval. So, talk to your kids and tell them that you don't approve.

Reducing access to alcohol also reduces youth substance use. That means:

- Locking up your alcohol
- Never



providing alcohol for

- youth
- Never buying alcohol for underage youth
- Telling friends and neighbors to do the same

Finally, provide alternative things for youth to do.

- Check local libraries for free passes to local attractions as well as, youth activities.

- Check out free lunch in the park programs and activities.
- Check out myfallriver.org to see what's going on in

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Greater Fall River.

- Get youth involved with sports or the arts.

Remember, kids start drinking sooner than we think and many take their first drink in the summer, also alcohol can affect brain development. Youth cite parent disapproval for the key reason they don't drink and reducing access to alcohol reduces youth substance use. Finally, find alternative things for kids to do with their time. Protect our youth from the harmful affects of alcohol now and possible addiction issues in the future. Together we create a healthy community for the youth of Greater Fall River.



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