

By, Kim M. Rodrigues

Teens and parties go hand in hand this time of year. News reports remind us of tragic accidents involving teens and drinking. Be consistent about no alcohol. You could save a life and a law suit.

If a party is hosted in your home, there are a few things to know. It is illegal to provide alcohol to minors and you can be criminally charged if you do. Also, you are legally responsible for anything that might happen to a minor who has been served alcohol in your home. Additionally, if you furnish alcohol to a minor, you may be liable for monetary damages caused by that individual in a civil lawsuit.

Don't panic there are things you can do:

- Communicate that it is a "no substance party."
- Do not let anyone bring an opened container to the party. There could be rum or vodka added to soda or juice. Water bottles can be filled with vodka.
- Collect all car keys at the door.
- You provide all snacks and drinks.
- Challenge kids to come up with creative things to do at their party.
- Be there

What if your teen attends a party? Remember, teens brains don't fully mature until around age 24. They still need guidance and supervision. Even if you trust your teen, still check. Let your teen know that you trust them but, you need to know what other people are up too for their safety. Also that peer pressure is a powerful thing. Share experiences of peer pressure to let them know you understand.

What to do when your child attends a party:

- Meet the parents or hosts.
- Share the tips outlined above for substance free parties.
- Share information on the law concerning youth and alcohol.

Ask:

- Is there liquor in your home? How is it kept away from kids?
- Are prescription medicines locked up?
- Are there guns in your home? How are they stored?
- Will there be a responsible adult present?

Together we create a healthy community for the youth of Greater Fall River.