

## REDUCING UNDERAGE DRINKING: WHAT DO WE THINK WORKS?

### NOTES:

This lesson plan is written for youth court directors or youth court education coordinators. It is intended to help young people in youth courts evaluate policy solutions for the problems associated with underage drinking.

This lesson works best after the young people in your class have completed the independent on-line lesson called “Web Search: What Do Our Laws and Policies Say About Underage Drinking?” available at: [www.youthcourt.net/street\\_law/alcohol\\_lesson.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/street_law/alcohol_lesson.htm)

If you have questions about how the two parts of this lesson work together, please go to the introduction page of the Web lesson at: [www.youthcourt.net/street\\_law/Co\\_Home.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/street_law/Co_Home.htm)

This part of the lesson will take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

### OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define the terms: underage drinking, DUI/DWI, deterrence, and zero tolerance laws.
- Examine the impact of underage drinking on individuals and the community
- Describe what works to effectively address the problems of underage drinking
- Generate ideas and strategies for responding to underage drinking
- Evaluate laws, policies and strategies to reduce underage drinking and alcohol-related driving

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart paper
- Numerous sets of markers
- Masking tape to hang the posters and flipchart paper
- Students should bring the handouts they completed independently in the Web-based lesson called “Web Search: What Do Our Laws and Policies Say About Underage Drinking?”

### HANDOUTS

- 1: Underage Drinking From My Point Of View
- 2: Risks of Underage Drinking – Activity Instructions

### 3: Evaluating And Ranking Strategies To Reduce Underage Drinking

#### **TRANSPARENCY OR POSTER**

Transparency or Poster: Evaluating And Ranking Strategies To Reduce Underage Drinking

#### **PREPARING TO TEACH THIS CLASS**

- Prepare the materials listed above.
- Write up and post the outcomes for the activity.
- We recommend that you (youth court administrators or teachers) complete the Web lesson, as well, so you can become familiar with laws that are specific to your state. To see a copy of that lesson, see:  
[www.youthcourt.net/street\\_law/alcohol\\_lesson.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/street_law/alcohol_lesson.htm)
- Look at the layout of the room where you are teaching this lesson. Pick a wall or chalkboard that students could easily line up along. The wall should be as long as possible. Write up signs that say “not effective”, “somewhat effective”, “effective” and “very effective” and place them along the wall or chalkboard in a continuum. See the continuum on Handout # 3 for an illustration, if necessary.

#### **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PEOPLE**

You may want to invite two or more community advocates or experts to help facilitate this lesson. Contact your local Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) chapter, your school resource officer, Alcoholic Anonymous (AA), Al-Anon or Alateen, elected officials or other community organizations with experience trying to combat underage drinking. See the resource section at the end of this lesson plan for information about how to contact these organizations.

Remember to explain to potential resource people that their role is not to lecture, but to help assist in the activity and lesson that you have planned. Be sure to send a copy of this lesson to them in advance. Once they have received it, discuss how you will work together to teach it.

#### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As noted above, this lesson builds upon work students have done independently when they each completed the Web-based lesson “Web Search: What Do Our Laws and Policies Say About Underage Drinking?” In that activity, students are instructed to bring their answers to various questions to their youth court director. Encourage them to bring those completed worksheets to this class.

It is possible to adapt this lesson to do it without the pre-assignment, but you will not be able to presume as much prior knowledge from the students in your class. If you are planning to teach this class without the pre-assignment you will need to add additional steps

in which students learn more about the problem and various solutions communities and governments have taken to address it.

## SUMMARY

It is very important that you include time for a summary when you teach this lesson. During this reflection time, students can discuss the information they learned, clarify any concerns and analyze the skills they have practiced. This is a critical step in the learning process and must not be neglected.

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## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION (15 minutes)

### 1

Share the outcomes with participants. If a community resource person has joined you for the lesson, introduce him or her.

### 2

Write the term “underage drinking” on the board.

- Ask students to try to define it and record their answers on the board.

*Underage drinking is consuming alcoholic beverages at an age that is younger than the law allows.*

- Ask students: Who sets the legal age for drinking?

*The minimum age drinking age is set by state legislators.*

- Ask students the legal age for drinking in our state.

*It has been at 21 in every state since 1986.*

Distribute “**Handout 1: Underage Drinking From My Point Of View**”, which can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Read the directions aloud as students read them silently. Ask if they understand the directions and tell them they have ten minutes to complete the handout and write the ending time on the board.

Ask students to work on this reflection quietly and on their own. As students are working, circulate around the room, but respect their privacy and do not look too closely at their papers. Tell students when time is nearly up.

**3**

Ask one or two students to volunteer to answer each question of the reflection.

**4**

Explain to students that the purpose of this lesson is to evaluate effective programs to reduce underage drinking and that their input and advice is essential.

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## **PART TWO: THE RISKS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING (30 minutes)**

### **NOTES:**

In this section of the lesson, you will help students review what they learned in the Web-based lesson they completed on their own. This helps to set the tone for the lesson and helps students recall their previous work. It is also useful for students to compare what they learned to what their fellow students learned.

Although we recommend that you review the highlights from the handouts students completed, we do not recommend that you discuss every question and every answer. Instead, we have suggested you ask representative questions from each handout. See the questions and activities below.

**1**

Encourage students to take out the handout called “Web Handout #2: Note to Shannon” which they completed for the on-line lesson. (This is a note they wrote to Shannon about the risks of underage drinking that have nothing to do with drinking and alcohol-related driving.) They can use those handouts to answer the questions below.

**2**

Ask students to select two people to work with on the next activity. Tell those students to move now to sit close enough together to see and hear each other well. They will also need space for writing and/or drawing.

Distribute “**Handout 2: Risks of Underage Drinking – Activity Instructions**”, which can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Review the directions with students. Assign each group a different topic: school performance, suicide, sexual assault, or short-term and long-term effects. (If you have more than four groups, you can have more than one group assigned to each topic.)

Tell students they have 15 minutes to complete the assignment and write the ending time on the board. Be sure students understand their tasks and then get them started on their work.

As students are working, circulate around the room to observe and assist them in their work. You should also distribute flipchart paper and markers at this time.

**NOTE:**

If students in a particular group are struggling (because they did not complete the Web activity or because they are having difficulty recalling it) you may want to prompt them with the following discussion notes. (Please do not prompt them if they are on track):

What did you learn about the connection between underage drinking and school performance?

*Answers will vary but may include the following: Young people who drink may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who do not drink. Students who use alcohol or drugs are more likely to drop out of school. Students who do not drink tend to have higher grade point averages.*

What did you learn about the connection between underage drinking and sexual assault?

*Alcohol does not cause sexual assault, but it can be a significant factor. For example, up to 60% of sexual offenders reported they had been drinking at the time of the offence. Alcohol was the most common drug present in the bodies of victims of rape.*

What did you learn about the connection between underage drinking and depression and suicide?

*Alcohol use and depression are related and lower a person's inhibitions, making suicide more likely to be carried out. The states that allowed drinking at younger ages also had higher suicide rate.*

Can you describe (other) short-term and long-term effects of underage drinking?

*People who began drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to report that they became alcohol dependent than people who began drinking after they became 21 years old. Stress can facilitate alcohol use. Drinking can cause poor judgment.*

Give a two-minute warning when time is nearly up and remind students to be prepared to present their drawing or commercial.

Ask the group(s) that focused on school performance to move to one corner of the room to present their work. If appropriate, ask them to hang their work on the classroom wall with tape.

It is probably not necessary to ask follow up questions after the group presentations, but if students are struggling, you may want to refer back to the optional discussion questions listed in the note in step 2.

Follow the same pattern (in different corners of the room) with presentations from groups that focused on the other three topic areas: suicide, sexual assault, short-term and long-term effects.

#### 4

Ask students:

- Do you think underage drinking is a problem in our schools or our community? Why or why not?

*Answers will vary. Be sure to ask students to explain their answers.*

Tell students:

- Given all the risks and costs associated with underage drinking, it is not surprising that people in government and other community-serving organizations are trying to do something about the problem. In the next part of the activity, we will review and examine what various people in our state are doing to reduce underage drinking.

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## **PART THREE: WHAT IS OUR STATE DOING TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING (5 minutes)**

### **NOTE:**

The questions in this section are from Web Handout #3: Laws and Programs In Our State to Reduce Underage Drinking. If you need additional information or citations, please see that part of the Web activity at: [www.youthcourt.net/Street\\_Law/StepC.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/Street_Law/StepC.htm)

#### 1

Remind students:

- When you did the part of Web Activity called “Our State Laws and Programs to Reduce Underage Drinking” you learned about various laws and programs related to the harmful outcomes of underage drinking.

**2**

Ask students:

- Does our state offer programs or laws (about underage drinking) that you think are effective? If so, explain the program and why you think it is probably effective.

*Answers will vary. Answers may include that the laws are so harsh that young people will respond to them or that a particular education program sounds like it does not talk down to teens.*

As students explain what they think makes a program or law effective, record their criteria on the board.

- Does our state offer programs or laws that do not seem effective in your opinion? If so, explain the program and why you think it probably is not effective.

*Answers will vary. (Again, record the students' criteria for what makes something ineffective on the board.)*

- Some of the programs you learned about focus on deterrence. Can you remember what that means? Please offer a definition of “deterrence” in your own words. (Write the definition on the board.)

*Deterrence describes a program or law that is intended to prevent or discourage someone from acting, by means of fear or doubt.*

- In what ways is our state trying to deter underage drinking?

*Answers will vary. For example, some states try to deter people from drinking by making the punishments so severe that teenagers will not drink because they are afraid of the consequences.*

*Encourage students to be as specific as possible. For example, in some states, like Virginia, the penalty for underage possession or consumption of alcohol is up to \$2500 in fines and/or a 12 month jail sentence. The same penalties apply for using a false identification to purchase alcohol.*

- Did you find any programs or laws in our state that are designed to educate young people about underage drinking? If so, describe them.

*Answers will vary. For example, in Minnesota, the Department of Health has a program that includes education and advocacy about alcohol-related issues. In Nevada, H.E.A.T. is a program that teaches young drivers about the dangers of drinking by simulating car crashes and roll-overs. In Alabama, there is an Alliance for Counteracting Alcohol and Tobacco Advertising Targeting Youth.*

- Did you find any other kinds of laws or policies in our state that you thought were trying to address underage drinking in a different way?

*Answers will vary. For example, in California, there are alcohol and drug treatment programs that also connect young people to community service projects and family service agencies.*

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## **PART FOUR: WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING? (10 minutes)**

### **1**

Write the term “zero tolerance” on the board and ask students what they think it means.

Then write the definition down:

*Zero tolerance laws punish offenders swiftly and significantly even for first offenses.*

*In the context of underage drinking, zero tolerance usually refers to laws that punish underage drinkers who drive with even very small amounts of alcohol in their systems.*

### **2**

Tell students:

- Zero tolerance laws apply in a variety of situations. For example, some communities pass and enforce laws to crack down on vandalism because they think areas with a lot of vandalism appear neglected and therefore invite more serious crime, like drug-dealing. Some states have zero tolerance laws requiring school administrators to suspend every student who brings a weapon to school.

Emphasize the second part of the definition and tell students:

- In the context of underage drinking, zero tolerance usually refers to laws that punish underage drinkers who drive with even very small amounts of alcohol in their systems.

In 1995, the United States Congress passed a law that threatened to withhold transportation funding to any state that did not adopt “zero-tolerance laws” making it illegal for people under age 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their bodies. Since 1998, all states have had zero tolerance laws.

Ask students:

- When you did the Web-based lesson, what did you learn about zero tolerance laws in our state? At what BAC level can underage drinkers be charged with DUI/DWI in our state?

*The answer varies by state. Typically, underage drinkers can be convicted of DWI or DUW with a blood alcohol level of .00, .01, or .02. (For adults, the limit is .08 in every state.)*

*If students do not know your state's limits, go to:  
[http://dui.findlaw.com/dui/dui\\_overview/dui\\_law.html](http://dui.findlaw.com/dui/dui_overview/dui_law.html)*

### 3

Ask students:

- What do you think about zero tolerance laws? Are they a good idea? Why or why not?

*Answers will vary.*

- Do you think zero tolerance laws “work?”

*Answers will vary. Supporters say zero tolerance laws save lives. For example, according to M.A.D.D., Maryland experienced an 11 percent decrease in crashes involving drinking drivers under 21. When researchers compared eight states that had passed Zero Tolerance Laws and compared them to eight nearby states that had not, they found a 20 percent reduction in single-vehicle, nighttime fatal crashes among 18- to 20-year-olds in states that had Zero Tolerance Laws versus states that did not.<sup>1</sup>*

- Did you notice that zero tolerance laws (related to drinking and driving) treat people under 21 differently than they treat people over 21? (For example, if you are 21, you will not be charged with DUI or DWI unless your blood alcohol level is .08 percent.) Is this type of different treatment acceptable, given how many lives it appears to save?

*Answers will vary.*

### 4

Tell students:

- In the next part of the lesson, we are going to talk about what happened to Shannon – the main character in the first part of the Web lesson – when she drank and encountered the law.

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<sup>1</sup> Davies, Laurie. (2004) “21 Turns 20: Drinking age anniversary is cause to celebrate what’s right and fix what’s wrong?” Driven Magazine.

**NOTE:**

The questions in the following section are from Handout #1 of the Web activity, “Alcohol and the Law: Shannon’s Story.” If you need additional information or citations, please see that part of the Web activity at: [http://www.youthcourt.net/Street\\_Law/StepA.htm](http://www.youthcourt.net/Street_Law/StepA.htm)

**5**

Ask students:

- Remember the first part of the Web activity? Who can tell Shannon’s story?

*Answers will vary, but basically Shannon was drinking at her friend’s house and then drove her car. She hit a tree, but was not hurt. The police were called and tried to determine if she had been drinking. Then they took her to the police station.*

- How old is Shannon?

*Seventeen years old.*

- What is the legal blood alcohol limit in our state? Remember to give the limits for underage drinkers (known as zero tolerance laws) as well as the limits for adults (known as per se laws.)

*It varies by state. They should have the answer for their state from the Web lesson. Shannon can be convicted of DUI or DWI with a blood alcohol level of .00, .01, or .02, depending on the state she lives in, (due to zero tolerance laws). For adults, the limits are .08.*

- Does Shannon have to take sobriety tests or blood-alcohol level tests?

*No. However, if she refuses, she may lose her driver’s license for between three and twelve months.*

- When Shannon is investigated by the police, what rights does she have?

*Shannon has the right to a lawyer, the right to be given Miranda Warnings if she is questioned at the point in time that she is not free to leave (custodial interrogation), the right not to have to incriminate herself in an investigation or trial, the right to a reasonable bail, and the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure.*

- What will happen if Shannon has more than one DUI/DWI conviction?

*It depends on the state she lives in. In some states, a second offense may result in increased fines, imprisonment and the loss of driving privileges for life.*

**6**

Tell students:

- Zero tolerance laws and the laws we have just discussed in relation to Shannon are part of a broader effort to reduce underage drinking and the harm it can cause to young people and our communities.

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**PART FIVE: WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING? (15 minutes)****1**

Tell students:

- If you are like most young people, you have already experienced a variety of classes or programs designed to reduce your chance of becoming an underage drinker. Think about the classes, programs and activities that you have experienced.

Ask students to think quietly about:

- Which of those classes or activities stand out in your mind because they were so persuasive? Which of these classes or programs did not influence your thinking at all?

After a few moments, tell students:

- Turn to one or two neighbors and tell them about one or two classes or activities that really made you think about the issue. Then tell them about two ineffective classes or activities.

Give students five minutes to complete this discussion. Write the ending time on the board. While students are talking in small groups, write two large columns on the board. Label them “effective” and “ineffective.”

After a few moments, ask a few students to give examples of effective and ineffective strategies. After each example, ask students to explain what makes the difference between the two categories. Record their ideas on the board.

**NOTE:**

You may want to ask one student to volunteer to record “effective” answers and another student to record “ineffective” answers on the board. This strategy increases class participation and allows you to concentrate on keeping the discussion moving. Be sure to thank the student recorders when they are finished.

**2**

Tell students:

- The problems of underage drinking, including the serious consequences it has for users, their families and friends, as well as the communities they live in can be prevented using tested, effective strategies.
- A number of scientific, educational, and program experts have studied what “works” and what does not “work” to reduce underage drinking.

**3**

Scan the information in the shaded Background Notes below.

- If students already listed one of these effective or ineffective strategies, place a star or other mark next to their answer on the board.
- If students did not list one of the strategies listed below, add it to the board and discuss it to be sure students understand it.
- Do not worry about listing or discussing every strategy. Just give an overview.

**NOTES:**

The research cited in these Background Notes comes from a variety of sources: ERIC digest, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and from the National Youth Court Center. Also, to avoid information overload for kids, the strategies listed in these Background notes are introductory, not all inclusive.

If you wish to learn more about significant research and strategies relating to risk factors and protective factors for substance abuse and how your youth court can help address those, please see “Underage Drinking And Other Substance Abuse: Opportunities For Prevention And Intervention by Youth Courts”, by Tracy Godwin Mullins, Director of the National Youth Court Center. The report was published in 2004 and is available at:

[www.youthcourt.net](http://www.youthcourt.net)

Background Notes for Instructors:

WHAT DOES NOT WORK TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING?

The following are some of the strategies that research has proven are less effective at reducing underage drinking and substance abuse:

- Fact-based educational approaches: Just telling young people information about the dangers of substance does not change their behaviors.<sup>2</sup>
- Scare tactics: Strategies to threaten or scare youth are ineffective. It is likely to raise youth's defenses and make it harder for them to learn prevention messages and ways to deal with the daily pressures they encounter.<sup>3</sup>
- One-shot programs: Speakers and films may be effective at generating interest among young people, but they should be combined with follow-up and prevention programs that give young people time to process, reflect, and apply what they have learned.<sup>4</sup>
- The (wrong) messages from people in recovery: Hearing from people in recovery can be powerful, but it is critical that the speakers do not inadvertently convey the message that while their experiences have been difficult, they are somehow better for the experience.<sup>5</sup>

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#### WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING?

The following are some of the strategies that research has proven are more effective at reducing substance abuse:

- Avoid the ineffective strategies: Effective programs do not rely on the approaches described above.
- Include prevention, intervention and treatment elements: Combining these three levels of response is more effective. Prevention programs address everyone in the community and include education and motivation before the problem begins or becomes serious. Intervention refers to providing services (and consequences, when appropriate) for youth who are particularly at-risk of underage drinking or who are in

<sup>2</sup> Gonet, M. M. (1994) *Counseling the Adolescent Substance Abuser: School-based Intervention and Prevention*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Goodstadt, M. (1996) "Education and Policy Prevention." *The Prevention Researcher*, 3 (1), 5-9.

Kail, B.L. (1992) Recreational or Casual Drug Use: Opportunities for Primary Prevention. In E.M. Freeman (Ed.) *The Addiction Process: Effective Social Work Approaches*. New York: Longman.

Crowe, A.H. (1999) *Working With Substance Abusing Youths*. Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole Association.

All of these works were cited by Mullins, Tracy Godwin (2004) "Underage Drinking and Other Substance Abuse: Opportunities for Prevention and Intervention by Youth Courts". *Selected Topics On Youth Courts*. Lexington, KY: American Probation and Parole, National Youth Court Center.

<sup>3</sup> Crowe, 1999 as cited in Mullins 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Gonet, 1994 and Crowe, 1999 as cited in Mullins, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Gonet, 1994 and Crowe, 1999 as cited in Mullins, 2004.

the early stages of substance use or abuse. *Treatment* programs are designed to help specific young people who are using or abusing alcohol to manage their recovery.<sup>6</sup>

- Enforcement is a major component in reducing underage drinking, especially through enforcing laws about DUI, DWI, and liquor laws. Laws with no enforcement send the wrong message to young people and waste resources. Laws that are enforced work.
- Start young: Begin prevention efforts at early ages and continue through adolescence.<sup>7</sup>
- Let peer pressure be positive: Peer-led interventions or strategies can be more effective at addressing youth substance abuse than programs that are strictly led by adults<sup>8</sup>
- Be relevant and aware: Programs that work are tailored to community and culture of each group of young people. For example, when necessary, offer materials that are translated and culturally appropriate.)
- Offer alternatives: Successful programs provide recreational, cultural, and social opportunities for young people that are alcohol and drug-free.<sup>9</sup>
- Build and practice skills: Prevention programs should include a variety of active learning strategies (such as role-playing) to train young people general life skills such as resistance, refusal, assertiveness, and problem solving. It is important to establish activities that let young people practice those skills in class and after class.<sup>10</sup>
- Connect young people to their communities: Programs that are on-going, like mentoring, community service and advocacy give young people a chance to work

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<sup>6</sup> Crowe, 1999, and Governors Highway Safety Association (formerly known as National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives). (2001a, March) *Community How To Guide On Prevention and Education*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Transportation, as cited in Mullins, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Governors Highway Safety Association, 2001, as cited in Mullins, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Komro, K.A., Perry, C.L., Murray, D.M., Veblen-Mortenson, S. Williams, S.L. & Anstine, P.S. (1996) as cited in Gardner and Brounstein, 2001 and Mullins 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Governors Highway Safety Association, 2001, as cited in Mullins, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHA) Model Programs as reported in Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (2003). *Science-based Prevention Programs and Principles, 2002*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as cited in Mullins, 2004.

Summerfield, Liane M. (1991) *Drug and Alcohol Prevention Education*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education. #ED330675.

together and with other caring adults to address laws and policies related to underage drinking in their communities.<sup>11</sup>

- Enforce liquor laws to reduce access to alcohol: Laws with no enforcement send the wrong message to young people and waste resources. Laws that are enforced work.
- Enforce “zero-tolerance” laws: When communities enforce zero tolerance laws for underage drinkers who drive they save lives. In one study, researchers found a 20 percent reduction in single-vehicle, nighttime fatal crashes among 18- to 20-year-olds in states that had Zero Tolerance Laws versus states that did not.<sup>12</sup>
- Help young people by strengthening families: Help parents improve their parenting skills and establish consistent and appropriate limits about drugs and alcohol.<sup>13</sup> Families who could benefit from additional social services should also be referred to such resources.

**NOTE:**

*If you wish to extend this lesson, or if you want to encourage students explore best practices and research further, you may choose to direct students to the Web site for the National Registry for Effective Programs and Practices at: <http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov>*

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## **PART SIX: EVALUATING AND RANKING VARIOUS SOLUTIONS TO UNDERAGE DRINKING (35 minutes)**

### **1**

Put students into groups of three to five students. Students should move so they can hear and see each other easily.

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<sup>11</sup> Gardner, S.E., & Brounstein, P.H. (2001). *Guide to Science-based Practices 3: Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Palmgreen, P., Lorche, E.P., Donohew, L., Harrington, N.G. Dsilva, M.N., & Helm, D. (1995). Researching At-risk populations in a mass media drug Abuse Prevention Campaign: Sensation Seeking as a Targeting Variable. In C.G. Leukefelt & R.R. Clayton (Eds.) *Prevention Practice in Substance Abuse*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc.

Kail, 1992 and Crowe, 1999, cited together in Mullins, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Davies, Laurie. (2004) “21 Turns 20: Drinking age anniversary is cause to celebrate what’s right and fix what’s wrong?” *Driven Magazine*.

<sup>13</sup> Governors Highway Safety Association, 2001, as cited in Mullins, 2004.

**2**

Ask students:

- If you were given an opportunity to develop a program to teach young people about underage drinking, what would the program look like?
- With what age group would you want to begin your program? Why?

**3**

Distribute **“Handout 3: Evaluating and Ranking Strategies to Reduce Underage Drinking”** which can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

NOTE: Handout 3 contains numerous references to the ideas of other people. Please see the shaded sections below for the citations. These citations do not appear on the student handout for reasons related to space.

Teacher Version / Citations for Handout 3: Evaluating and Ranking Strategies to Reduce Underage Drinking

(This does not contain the instructions, just the material that should be cited.)

\_\_\_\_\_ A. SPEND MORE MONEY ON EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING.

There needs to be more federal funding given to underage drinking. According to the National Academy of Science, in 2000, the nation spent 25 times more money preventing illicit drug use than it did in preventing underage drinking, but alcohol kills 6.5 times more kids than all other illicit drugs combined and young people use alcohol more than any illicit drug.<sup>14</sup>

We should invest in programs that work, especially programs in schools and communities.

\_\_\_\_\_ B. RESTRICT ALCOHOL-RELATED ADVERTISEMENTS AND SUPPORT A NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON UNDERAGE DRINKING

Reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising, which “bombards” youth with “irresponsible” alcohol marketing messages depicting alcohol consumption as cool, sexy, and glamorous. The federal government should fund and actively support the development of a national media effort to reduce underage drinking. These campaigns should include media literacy programs

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<sup>14</sup> Hamilton, Wendy J. Testimony of the National President, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Hearing on Underage Drinking, September 30, 2003.

to teach young people to be aware of how advertisers attempt to manipulate potential consumers.<sup>15</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_ C. **MAKE IT HARDER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET ALCOHOL**  
Even though every state has a minimum drinking age of 21, a majority of eighth graders (60%) and high school students (90%) report that alcohol is “fairly easy or very easy to obtain.” We should have laws that:

- Put more police officers inside (and outside) liquor stores so they can ticket minors attempting to purchase alcohol as well as ticketing adults who buy alcohol for kids;
- Increase penalties for using false identification to purchase alcohol;
- Impose more penalties on retailers who sell alcohol to minors;<sup>16</sup>
- Have and enforce laws that allow bars, restaurants, or other vendors to be sued if they serve alcohol to a minor who later causes injury.

\_\_\_\_\_ D. **WORK HARDER TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING.**

Despite zero tolerance laws, teens do drink and drive or drink and ride with a driver who is impaired. In 2000, 69 percent of youth killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes involved underage drinking drivers.<sup>17</sup> We should:

- Have more sobriety checkpoints, where police can check for impaired drivers;
- Work to strengthen enforcement of zero tolerance laws. When some police officers, prosecutors, or judges let kids off lightly, they send a message that underage drinking is not serious.

#### 4

Read the directions aloud as students read the directions silently. Assign each group a number and ask students to record that number on their handout.

Confirm that students understand their tasks. Give students 20 minutes to complete this activity and write the ending time on the board.

As students are working, circulate around the room to observe their work and to assist them, if necessary.

If you have not already done so, put up the signs in the room that indicate “not effective”, “somewhat effective”, “effective”, and “very effective”. The signs should be spaced along the chalkboard or a long wall so they look like the continuum shown on “Handout 3: Evaluating and Ranking Strategies to Reduce Underage Drinking”.

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, 2003

<sup>16</sup> Hamilton, 2003

<sup>17</sup> Hamilton, 2003

You should also use this time to project Transparency or Poster: Evaluating and Ranking Strategies to Reduce Underage Drinking, which is similar to Handout # 3, except it does not contain the directions and the options are simplified to one or two phrases.

## 5

When time is up, show students the continuum you have created in the classroom. Explain to students that they will share their responses by participating in a continuum activity. Read the first solution, (solution A) and ask one member from each group to move to where they think that solution belongs on the continuum. Once they have settled, ask a few students to give their group number and then explain why they stood where they did.

Then record their responses on the **“Transparency or Poster: Evaluating And Ranking Strategies To Reduce Underage Drinking”** that can be found at the end of this lesson plan.

Show student that, for example, if Group 1 thought solution A was not effective, you would write: Group 1 (A) above the left part of the continuum that reads “not effective”.

Follow the same process using a different student from each group for each of the other solutions (solutions B – G).

### **NOTE:**

Check the clock. Be sure you leave at least five minutes for the summary discussion. If you think you have time to ask about all the solutions, continue having students read, move, and explain their positions until you finish. If you are short on time, just pick a few solutions.

## 6

Ask students to return to their chairs. Ask students:

- If you were a policy maker with a limited budget, which three solutions would you fund and implement to reduce underage drinking in our schools and community? Why? (Give students two or three minutes to think about their answers.)

## 7

Invite two students to come to the board to be counters. Their jobs will be to listen to the votes cast by other students and to record the number of votes next to that solution on the transparency or poster. For example, if 12 students vote for policy solution A, they would write a 12 next to letter A on the transparency.

The first student would count and record responses for letter A. Then second student would count and record the number of votes for solution B. The first recorder would be ready to count and record votes for solution C, etc.

**8**

When the voting and tabulating is finished, thank students for their input. Tell students:

- The process we just went through is similar to the process used by law-makers and concerned community members when they have to evaluate and prioritize strategies to reduce community problems like underage drinking.

Ask students:

- If you were to take this activity one or two steps further, what would you do?

*Answer will vary, but may include contacting their own lawmakers and suggesting these changes, building public support for their ideas, etc. Each of these options can be explored further in the optional extension activity following the format of Youth Act! For more information about Youth Act! see the notes at the conclusion of this lesson plan.*

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**PART SEVEN: SUMMARY (5 minutes)****1**

Ask students:

- What role do you think members of our youth court should play in reducing underage drinking? Explain your answer.
- What role should members of our youth court play in helping police enforce existing laws about underage drinking? Explain your answer.
- Are you likely to do something about this problem? Why or why not?

*If students could benefit from additional ideas to get involved, you might mention peer mentoring programs or citizen patrol programs. For more information, contact NHTSA at the Web address provided at the end of this lesson plan.*

- Is there anything someone else can do to motivate you to get involved in reducing under age drinking?

**2**

Tell students:

- Advocates are people who try to persuade others to support a cause, an idea, or a policy. While people under the age of 18 cannot vote, countless young people have

become advocates for various issues and have been quite successful in changing policies and laws to make their communities better.

Ask students:

- Why do you think advocates are critical in a democracy?

*Answers will vary. Democracy depends on citizens giving guidance and approval to their leaders who make laws and set priorities. Citizens are responsible for working to change laws that are not helping to solve problems. They (we) are also responsible for working toward new laws and policies that best serve them (us).*

(See the note on the following page about the optional advocacy activity for more ideas about extending this discussion and lesson.)

### 3

Ask students to turn to a neighbor and tell him or her about the most memorable part of this lesson today.

### 4

Thank students for their input and ideas. Thank community resource people, if any have joined you to co-teach this lesson.

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## OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

1. The topic of underage drinking can be a meaningful and successful service learning project. If you or your students are interested in learning strategies for young people to become advocates and problem-solvers in their communities, you may want consider Street Law's project called Youth Act!™. Students and teachers will learn about advocacy strategies and activities other young people have done by visiting the Street Law Youth Act!™ home page at [www.youthact.org](http://www.youthact.org). The program has been used by young people nation-wide to raise awareness and change policies about graduated licensing, distracted driving, and seat belt laws and many other topics that concern young people. The Web site also offers strategies and materials to conduct similar projects.
2. Encourage students to check out the Web site for the Speak Out & Make NOYS, which is described in the resources below.
3. Order (or encourage students to order) a free resource called: Make Your Parties Rock... Substance-Free: A Guide to Safe and Sober Event Planning. It is sponsored by a partnership between The National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA)

## RESOURCES

- The National Youth Court Center offers a wide range of resources for youth courts. One resource, “Underage Drinking And Other Substance Abuse: Opportunities For Prevention and Intervention by Youth Courts” published in *Selected Topics On Youth Courts: A Monograph*, provides particularly relevant ways to help your youth court improve its services for young people who are or may be underage drinkers. Go to: [www.youthcourt.net](http://www.youthcourt.net) for this and other helpful resources.
- Street Law, Inc. offers a variety of law-related education and youth development programs. Youth court administrators using this lesson may also be interested in other Street Law projects:
  - *Street Law for School Resource Officers, Second Edition (2004)* was funded by OJJDP through a national law-related education project called *Youth for Justice*. It contains fifteen lessons for police officers assigned to schools, (including a lesson about underage drinking and a lesson about arrests) that would compliment the part of the youth court Web-based lesson that deals with Shannon’s story. To order this curriculum, go to: [www.streetlaw.org/sro.asp](http://www.streetlaw.org/sro.asp) or call 301-589-1130 ext. 220.
  - *Street Law’s Classroom Guide to Mock Trials and Moot Courts (2005)* contains a mock trial called “Vickers v. Hearst” which is about third party “host liability.” In it, the host of a party is sued for damages resulting from a car accident caused by one of the guests. The trial raises many pertinent issues, including third party liability, driving while under the influence, and peer pressure. The curriculum is published by Glencoe of the McGraw-Hill Companies and is available by calling 800-334-7344.
  - *Community Works, Second Edition* is a program and curriculum resulting from a partnership between Street Law, Inc. and The National Crime Prevention Council. It contains more than thirty activities designed to help young people take an active part in crime prevention so they may improve their communities and avoid becoming victims of crime. It is available at: [www.streetlaw.org/cw.asp](http://www.streetlaw.org/cw.asp) or 301-589-1130 ext. 254
- The National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) is a nonprofit coalition of more than forty government agencies and nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving youth safety and health. NOYS works with its partners to develop and distribute three excellent resources:
  - *Speak Out & Make NOYS, Youth Changing The World, One Voice At A Time: Project Organizer, and Manual*
  - *Make Your Parties Rock... Substance Free – Planner*

- *In partnership with R.A.D.D., and HBO Family, NOYS has produced a documentary on underage drinking called “Smashed: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol”. The kit includes the documentary, lesson plans, pre/post tests, and other support materials.*

Street Law, Inc. has been a proud member of this coalition for many years and recommends you learn more about these publications and its work by going to:  
[www.noys.org](http://www.noys.org)

- The National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence sponsors a variety of programs such as Alcohol Awareness Month, a national campaign to reach the American public with information about the disease of alcoholism – that is a treatable disease, not a moral weakness, and that alcoholics are capable of recovery. They offer a kit to help people become involved with Alcohol Awareness Month. Learn about their efforts at:  
[www.ncadd.org/programs/awareness/](http://www.ncadd.org/programs/awareness/)
- The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth hosts a very interesting Web site with information about how to help young people understand and resist techniques that the alcoholic beverage industry uses to entice people to purchase alcohol. The Web site is:  
[www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org)
- The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It offers a number of resources including:
  - reports about underage drinking and other substance abuse issues at:  
[www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov](http://www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov)
  - The National Registry for Effective Programs and Practices at:  
<http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov>
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) helps people recover from alcoholism and provides numerous resources to communities. Check their Web site to find a group near you:  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)
- Al-Anon and Alateen are both adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous. Al-anon helps families and friends of alcoholics recover from the effects of living with the problem drinking of a relative or friend. Alateen is a recovery program for young people. They share a Web site that offers resources in English, Spanish and French. You can also find out about groups near you at [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org)
- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) is an organization that had more than 1.5 million young members since 1982. SADD has comprehensive materials and resources for young people to work with their peers to reduce underage drinking, illegal drug use, teen pregnancy, eating disorders and other concerns. Their Web site is at:  
[www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org)

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is dedicated to reducing unsafe driving and crashes involving drivers who had too much alcohol. Their national and local chapters offer speakers, resources, and a variety of resources. Contact them at: [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)
  
- The Federal Interagency Committee for the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) sponsors a Web site containing links to federal resources from several agencies. The Web site also features a PowerPoint and ad campaign, “Start Talking Before They Start Drinking”, which is downloadable. Go to: [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov)

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## HANDOUT 1

### UNDERAGE DRINKING FROM MY POINT OF VIEW

This is for your eyes only. You will not be required to show this paper to anyone or discuss it, so be honest. However, the instructor may invite people to volunteer to share their answers, so if you choose to talk about this, you may.

#### Directions:

Think about an experience related to underage drinking. It may be an experience that involves you, friends, relatives, neighbors, or other people you know. Based on that experience, answer as many of the questions below as possible.

1. Why do you think the young people involved in that situation chose to use alcohol?
2. How did those young people get the alcohol they drank?
3. What were the consequences of their use of alcohol? (Think about the consequences to themselves, to their families, to their community, and to anyone else.)
4. Were these young people “caught” or punished for their actions? Was that a good thing in any way?

## HANDOUT 2 RISKS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING – ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

### Directions:

1. Working with one or two other students, discuss what you learned about the social consequences of underage drinking when you completed the Web activity and the “Web Handout #2: Note To Shannon”.
2. Your group should focus on: (circle one when you are assigned by your instructor)

crime, sexual assault and rape	grades and school performance
general health and well-being	addiction and serious problems
suicide	resisting underage drinking
3. Work with your group to create a drawing or two-minute commercial that reflects what you learned about your topic.
4. When your drawing or commercial is finished, be prepared to share it and explain it to the rest of the class.



### HANDOUT 3, continued

To reduce underage drinking in our schools and community, we need to:

\_\_\_\_\_ A. **SPEND MORE MONEY ON EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING.**

There needs to be more federal funding given to underage drinking. According to the National Academy of Science, in 2000, the nation spent 25 times more money preventing illicit drug use than it did preventing underage drinking, but alcohol kills 6.5 times more kids than all other illicit drugs combined and young people use alcohol more than any illicit drug.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ B. **RESTRICT ALCOHOL-RELATED ADVERTISEMENTS AND SUPPORT A NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON UNDERAGE DRINKING**

Reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising, which “bombards” youth with “irresponsible” alcohol marketing messages depicting alcohol consumption as cool, sexy, and glamorous. The federal government should fund and actively support the development of a national media effort to reduce underage drinking. These campaigns should include media literacy programs to teach young people to be aware of how advertisers attempt to manipulate potential consumers.

\_\_\_\_\_ C. **MAKE IT HARDER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET ALCOHOL**

Even though every state has a minimum drinking age of 21, a majority of eighth graders (60%) and high school students (90%) report that alcohol is “fairly easy or very easy to obtain.” We should have laws that:

- Put more police officers inside (and outside) liquor stores so they can ticket minors attempting to purchase alcohol as well as ticketing adults who buy alcohol for kids;
- Increase penalties for using false identification to purchase alcohol;
- Impose more penalties on retailers who sell alcohol to minors;
- Have and enforce laws that allow bars, restaurants, or other vendors to be sued if they serve alcohol to a minor who later causes injury.

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\* The citations for the statistics and ideas in this handout are included in the instructor’s lesson plan.

**HANDOUT 3, continued****\_\_\_\_\_ D. WORK HARDER TO REDUCE UNDERAGE DRINKING AND DRIVING.**

Despite zero tolerance laws, teens do drink and drive or drink and ride with a driver who is impaired. In 2000, 69 percent of youth killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes involved underage drinking drivers. We should:

- Have more sobriety checkpoints, where police can check for impaired drivers;
- Work to strengthen enforcement of zero tolerance laws. When some police officers, prosecutors, or judges let kids off lightly, they send a message that underage drinking is not serious.

**\_\_\_\_\_ E. CRACK DOWN ON UNDERAGE DRINKING PARTIES**

We need to strengthen and enforce laws that give police authority to ticket minors at parties where alcohol is served and any adults who provide alcohol to them. We should also prohibit underage drinkers from purchasing kegs of beer by enacting keg registration laws. We need to educate parents and young people about their responsibilities and liabilities as party hosts.

**\_\_\_\_\_ F. GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE MORE POSITIVE ACTIVITIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

Programs like youth courts, recreation, mentoring, community service, and sports give young people something interesting and worth-while to do. Our community should invest more resources in these activities and try to include more young people in them.

**\_\_\_\_\_ G. SOMETHING ELSE**

Use this space below to describe an idea of your own – perhaps the idea you thought of in the very beginning of this lesson when you did your private reflection. You might also propose one of the programs or laws that you learned about in the Web activity.

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**TRANSPARENCY OR POSTER:  
EVALUATING AND RANKING STRATEGIES  
TO REDUCE UNDERAGE**



To reduce underage drinking in our community, we need to:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. Spend more money on effective programs to reduce underage drinking
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. Restrict alcohol-related advertisements and support a national media campaign to focus attention on underage drinking
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Make it harder for young people to get alcohol
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Work harder to reduce underage drinking and driving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Crack down on underage drinking parties
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Give young people more positive activities in their communities
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Something else:  
\_\_\_\_\_