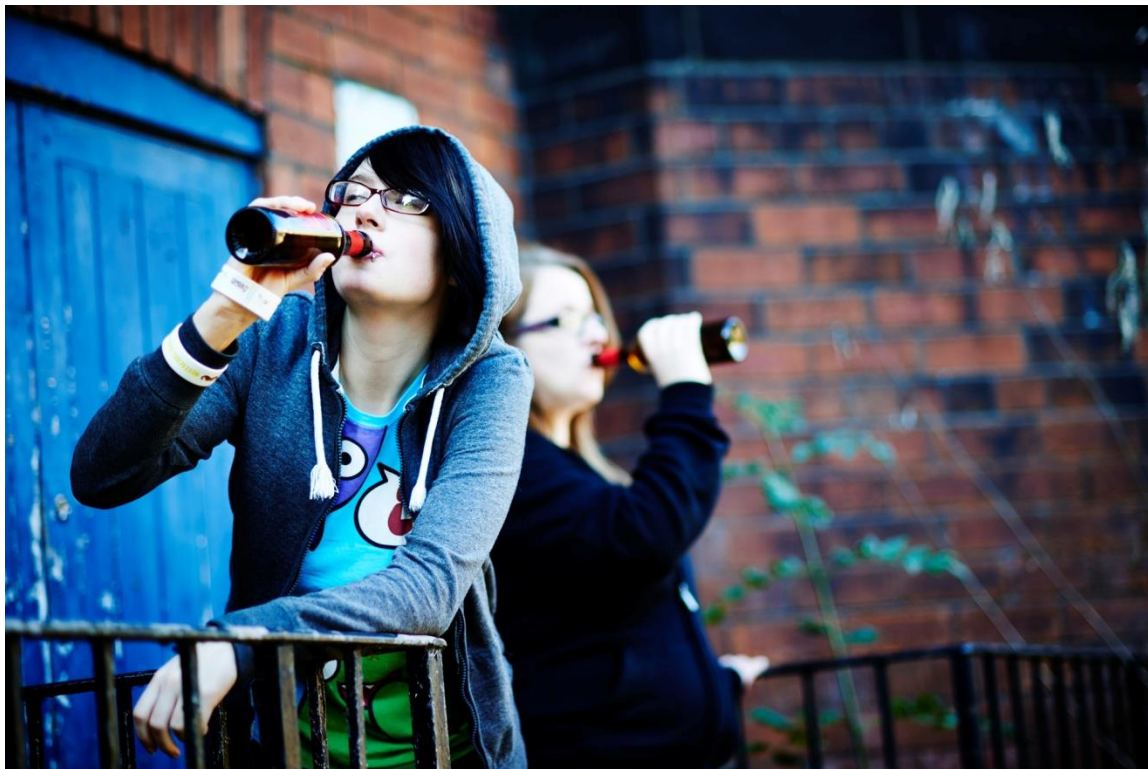


Alcohol Awareness Week- Relate Cambridge issues advice for parents worried about their teenager's drinking



Most teenagers have begun experimenting with alcohol by their mid-teens but this doesn't make it any less worrying for parents. With the Christmas party season nearly upon us, the chances of your teenager being offered a tippie or two are even higher. But how do you intervene if your son or daughter's drinking is becoming a problem, without damaging your relationship in the process?

To coincide with Alcohol Awareness Week, which takes place from 16th-22nd November, family and relationship experts, Relate Cambridge, have released top tips on talking to teenagers about underage drinking.

Overall the picture is looking more promising than it once was. The number of UK young adults who have binged on alcohol has fallen by more than a third from 29 per cent in 2005 to 18 per cent in 2013*. However, Relate Cambridge, who work closely with families and offer advice on parenting, still hear from many parents who are worried about their teenager's drinking.

Elaine Taylor, Relationship counsellor at Relate Cambridge said:

“Underage drinking can have a huge impact on teenager’s lives. Not only are young people who drink regularly at risk of liver damage but alcohol can also affect their mental health, sexual behaviour and achievement in the classroom.”

“Lots of parents have concerns about their teenagers and alcohol but find it difficult to communicate effectively, which can put the relationship under strain. The truth is it’s never too early or too late to have an open conversation about drinking and to lay down some ground rules. If like so many parents, you’re unsure where to begin, a Relate counsellor can lend a helping hand.”

Talking to your teenager about alcohol: Relate Cambridge’s tips for parents:

- Talk to you teenager openly and honestly about the risks associated with alcohol. The Drink Aware (drinkaware.uk) website is a good source of information.
- Put rules in place - research shows that teens who have rules around alcohol are less likely to get drunk. Sit down with your teen and agree some boundaries together.
- If your teenager does come home drunk, don’t talk to them about it until they’ve sobered up. Your son or daughter is unlikely to be able to think clearly while under the influence and the conversation is more likely to end in an argument.
- If they’ve been drinking, explain why you’re upset or concerned - tell them that you really love and care about them and that you’re scared for their safety when they drink.
- Avoid adopting a blaming position. It may help to reflect on your own experiences of alcohol as a teenager.
- Bear in mind your responsibility as a role model when it comes to your own drinking. This may affect their response to the way you communicate with them.
- Get professional support - if you think that your teenager has an alcohol addiction then you can get professional help from a trained counsellor via the Live Chat service on the Relate website or Relate Cambridge.

Relate Cambridge offers information, advice and counselling for all stages of your relationships, including family counselling which can include support for families and parenting. Call us on 01302 347712 or visit www.relatecambridge.org.uk for more information.

Relate also offers a free Live Chat service for parents of teenagers where you can talk to a trained counsellor in real time. Visit www.relate.org.uk/teens to find out more and for advice about how to deal with common teen issues.

For all media enquiries contact Elaine Taylor on **01302 347712**

Attached photo provided by Relate is available for use. Credit: Relate

*Stats taken from Health and Social Care Information Centre Statistics on Alcohol in England 2015 <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17712/alc-eng-2015-rep.pdf>

LIKE us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/RelateCambridge>

FOLLOW us on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/RelateCambridge>

Relate Cambridge – supporting relationships at every stage of your life

Notes to editors:

- Relationships are under increasing pressure – breakdown costs the UK an estimated £46bn each year.
- **Relate** champions the importance of strong and healthy relationships as the basis of a thriving society.
- Relate provides impartial and non-judgmental support for people of all ages, at all stages of couple, family and social relationships.
- Over a million people every year access information, support and counselling from Relate but it's clear many more would benefit from Relate services.
- Relate's couple counselling work delivers an estimated £11.40 of benefits for every £1 spent.
- Relate's services extend beyond relationship counselling to family counselling, counselling for young people, sex therapy and informal courses and workshops and are offered through a network of around 1,700 counsellors across the country.
- Relate Cambridge celebrated its 70th birthday in 2015.
- For more information and advice visit: www.relate.org.uk.