

Parent Guide

MAKE GOOD

DECISIONS

Make Good Decisions

Helping teens learn about the Indiana Lifeline Law and the dangers of underage drinking and drug use.



Talk about
the
Lifeline Law



Call / Text
911
in an
emergency



Underage
drinking is
dangerous

Visit for more resources:
<https://indysb.org/makegooddecisions/>

Talk to teens about alcohol

Alcohol is a sneaky drug

Q? How long does it take for one drink to affect the body?

A: About 30 minutes to feel it, and about 1 hour to process it

Problem! If someone has another drink too quickly, the liver can't process it. The alcohol can spill into other organs causing damage, injury, or even death. Factors such as gender, rest, hydration, food, and other substances can all impact how alcohol impacts the body.

Content levels are confusing

Q? What is considered one drink?

A: Beer is typically 12 oz, wine is typically 5 oz, hard alcohol is typically 1.5 oz

Problem! It all depends on the % of alcohol in each item. The label should indicate the % but every product is different. It is important to read labels, be aware of what is in anything you consume, and use safety tools like a Blood Alcohol Content app.

Experimenting is dangerous

Q? Do teens really die from alcohol?

A: About 5000 teens die each year from alcohol related causes

Problem! About 90% of Americans with a substance abuse problem started smoking, drinking or using other drugs before age 18. Too many deaths occur from alcohol poisoning and other drug use.

Stay safe

Q? How do I know if my friend needs help?

A: Don't try to play doctor or let them sleep it off. Call for help if something is unusual or you are unsure about what to do. Learn the signs.

Problem! Many young people are too scared or unsure if 911 should be called. The Lifeline Law is there to provide amnesty and save lives. Make a plan to stay together with friends & make the pledge to call for help.

Help them be prepared in case of trouble

Signs of Alcohol Trouble

- Acting unusually confused
- Repetitively throwing up, and/or dry heaving and salivating
- Loss of other bodily functions
- Breathing is different than normal
- Skin looks pale or bluish
- Snoring unusually or loudly
- Passed Out- you can't wake them up

Indiana Lifeline Law

The Lifeline Law provides legal amnesty from prosecution for underage drinking and many related offenses, for a medical emergency, sexual assault, or other crime.

The law protects the person in need, and all who

- call/text 911
- stay
- cooperate

Make the pledge:

“I will do my best to Make Good Decisions,
If someone needs help, I will Make the Call,
If I need help, I give You permission to Make the Call for me.”

Impact of Make Good Decisions

IYSA's Make Good Decisions program, along with former Senator Jim Merritt, has been bringing awareness to young Hoosiers about Indiana's Lifeline Law since 2012. Presentations and social media campaigns have reached tens of thousands of young people across the state. This messaging has been enhanced through a partnership with the Statewide 911 Board to include the Text to 911 capabilities.

The Make Good Decisions team includes families and individuals that have been affected by tragedies which could have been avoided if those involved had been aware of the Lifeline Law. Dawn Finbloom, a Make Good Decisions speaker, has shared, "I am the mother of a son who should be an adult now. But he's not. He died of alcohol poisoning when he was 18 years old. Friends at the party feared getting in trouble. The Lifeline Law would have given them immunity but they didn't know about the law. We must continually keep getting the message out to our underage people, educators, family, and law enforcement."

Stevan Stankovich, also a Make Good Decisions speaker had this to say: "The importance of the Indiana Lifeline Law cannot be overstated. I wish the Lifeline Law had existed in 2008 and that I or my fraternity brothers knew the signs of alcohol poisoning when my fraternity brother Johnny Smith passed away. No one should have to feel the heartbreak and tragedy of losing a friend because they didn't know enough or they were afraid to call or text 911."

Those stories indicate our work is having an impact. Young people also say that law enforcement is not the primary fear. School, athletics, and future opportunities pose an even greater concern. In order to continue to save lives, all institutions and organizations that impact young people must work in partnership to remove the fears and barriers that still exist.



More to know

Dangers of Drug Use

Most Americans with a substance use problem started smoking, drinking, or using drugs before age 18.

- Drugs are dangerous and deadly, especially when combined with alcohol.
- Recreational drugs can be laced with a multitude of chemicals that harm the body.
- You have no idea what you are truly ingesting into your body.

Calling for Help

Cooperate and stay with the person in need.

- Tell first responders what the person consumed- if you know.
- Lay the person on their side in case they vomit.
- Officers will ask for ID or personal information.
- Give accurate and truthful information.
- If you are unsure, ask, “Does this qualify for the Lifeline Immunity Law?”

Leave no friend behind

Before going out, make a plan to stay together. Don't let a friend leave if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Put your arm around them and say “No Friend Left Behind.”

Party Tips for Parents

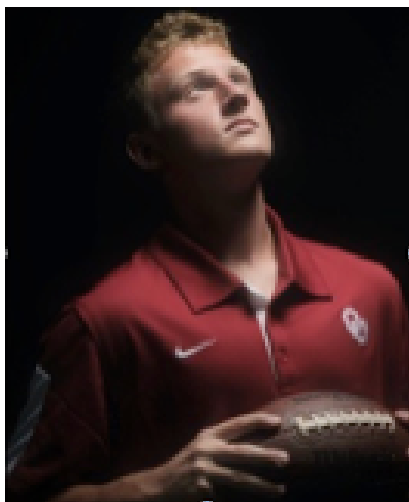
Do's and Don'ts for Chaperones

- DO discuss the rules and do NOT assume that teens know what is ok to do.
- DO offer plenty of soda/beverages and snacks.
- DO speak privately to any guests if you have a concern about them using drugs or alcohol. If you are unsure about the situation, DO call their parents.
- DO have other chaperones and do NOT leave the party unsupervised.
- DO pay attention to the teens and do NOT ignore unusual behavior.
- DO supervise cars and do NOT allow guests to sneak out to their cars or drive if under the influence.
- DO lock up any alcohol if you have it at your house and do NOT allow outside containers into the party.
- DO set an end time and do NOT allow the party to continue later than planned. Support local curfews.
- DO limit the number of guests that you can safely supervise. Do NOT allow in others who are not on the guest list.

What I wish Brett and his friends had known on August 2nd, 2012

Please Know

- Know that drinking too much, too fast can kill you. Your liver needs time to process the alcohol. Brett drank too much, too fast and he went into cardiac arrest. 9% of teen alcohol deaths are from alcohol poisoning.
- Know the signs of alcohol poisoning and call 911 right away. Brett's friends were understandably not sure what to do and waited to call for help.
- Know that the Indiana Lifeline Law gives immunity in precisely this type of underage drinking emergency. Brett's friends had not heard of the Lifeline Law.
- Know that losing a friend that you could have possibly saved is a tragedy.



A Grateful Parent's Story

A life Saved

Our daughter was at a birthday party with a mix of boys and girls, some younger and some older than her. A few of the boys started fighting and messing around, the parents called the police and made everyone leave. My daughter called me to come pick her up. I told her I was on my way and would be there in just a few minutes. We don't live far so she and three girlfriends, with some of the other boys, started to walk home.

When I found them walking, the other boys had run off and left the girls with one of their friends that was in terrible trouble - he just turned 15. They tried carrying him across the street to me because he couldn't walk. When I realized what was happening we got him to the grass and on his side, trying to get him to tell us what he had to drink, but he was in and out of being able to speak. I told the girls, this is where you use the lifeline law. Everything that we have ever talked about, this is the time you use it.

They were panicked to say the least, and I called 911. The ambulance came and all of the girls gave the police statements about what happened and called the boy's parents to tell them as well. The paramedics took him to the hospital. We found out later that he made it through the night and is back home doing much better.

I am telling you this story, not because I want to highlight the girls' actions, but to let you know that kids do hear your message. If it were not for you and Norm, and all of your efforts to bring awareness to situations like these, it could have ended much worse. I never would have known he was there if they had not come running to find him help. I would not know as much as I do about the Lifeline Law if it were not for all of your efforts - and neither would the girls.

Indiana Lifeline Law

Authored by State Senator Jim Merritt

The Indiana Lifeline Law, was enacted in 2012 as SB-277, authored by former Senator Jim Merritt, and was amended in 2025 as SB-74. The law gives amnesty from prosecution for underage drinking and many related drinking offenses for the person in need, the person who calls, and those who stay and assist the caller to report a medical emergency, crime or sexual assault. The purpose of the law is not to encourage underage drinking, but to protect Hoosiers in emergency situations and hopefully save lives. Most states now have such a law. The Make Good Decisions campaign educates teens about the law and the dangers of underage drinking and drug use. Tell teens to Make the Call and Save A Life.



Helpful Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Available 24/7

800-273-8255

Indiana Child Protection Services

800-800-5556

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

If unable to talk, text LOVEIS to 1-866-331-9474

National Human Trafficking Hotline

888-373-7888

Text "BEFREE" to 233-733

Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN)

800-656-HOPE (4673)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

National Helpline

800-662-HELP (4357)

Indiana Safe Place Network

Teens text the word "SAFE" and their location to 4HELP (44357)

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