December 2013 – LIVE REAL Mentor Listserv Email

Hello LIVE REAL Mentors!

The holiday season is a time of celebration for many, and these celebrations generally include great friends and family, delicious food, and, frequently, alcohol. We all want holiday celebrations to be enjoyable and safe. Unfortunately, injuries and deaths from alcohol-related accidents typically increase over the holiday season. As LIVE REAL Mentors, we have an opportunity to share important facts and tips about safe holiday drinking with students, colleagues, family, and friends.

- **Alcohol impacts driving ability, even before the physical signs of intoxication are present.** Critical driving-related skills, such as fine motor skills and response time, and decision-making abilities are impacted long before a person may show obvious signs of being intoxicated.
- **The effects of alcohol do not stop when drinking does.** Even after a person stops drinking, alcohol can continue to enter the bloodstream from the stomach and intestine. A person’s BAC can continue rising and the effects of alcohol will continue long after, as well.
- **Drinking coffee or another caffeinated beverage after drinking alcohol will not sober a person up – only TIME can do that.** Caffeine will not counteract the effects alcohol has on decision-making or coordination – even if a person feels less intoxicated! Keep these other facts about sobering up in mind, as well:
  - Everyone sobers up at approximately the same rate: 0.015% reduction in BAC per hour
  - Eating won’t sober you up – while eating prior to drinking will slow down the rate of alcohol absorption, it will not prevent the alcohol from being absorbed or sober someone up faster.
  - Sleeping isn’t magical either - a person’s BAC may still be over the limit and driving ability may still be impaired even the morning after a night of heavy drinking.

So, what can you do as a LIVE REAL Mentor this holiday season?

- **Talk honestly about alcohol and its effects.** As strange as it sounds, talking about standard drink sizes (how many drinks are really in that punch?) or what mixing alcohol and caffeine does to the body can be interesting conversation topics at those awkward holiday parties.
- **Share tips for stress reduction that don’t involve alcohol consumption.** Yes, this time of year is often considered to be the most wonderful, but for many it can also be very stressful (*Have you seen the crowds at the mall? Did my uncle actually just say that?*). This can contribute to increased drinking around the holiday season. Suggest alternate stress-reduction activities instead, like getting some exercise (take a walk, go sledding, etc.) or taking some quiet time away from everything (and everyone) to relax and unwind.
- **Help others make a plan to consume safely** – use the online BAC calculator to help others determine how to maintain a BAC of .05 or lower. This “point of diminishing returns” is the point at which one more drink will no longer increase the desirable effects of drinking.
- **Other tips to share:**
  - If you plan to drink, choose the number of (standard) drinks you will have ahead of time.
Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the evening.
- Select a designated driver who won’t be drinking at all that night.
- If you are the designated driver, please help ensure all of your passengers get home and inside safely.

Thank you for all you do as LIVE REAL Mentors! Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Best,

Erika

Spring 2013 LIVE REAL Mentor Sessions:

LIVE REAL Mentor Parent Session: Wednesday, January 29th @ Noon (Hidatsa Room, Memorial Union)

LIVE REAL Mentor Basic Session: Tuesday, February 25th @ 11:30 a.m. (Meadow Lark Room)

LIVE REAL Mentor Marijuana Session: Thursday, March 27th @ 11:30 a.m. (Meadow Lark Room)

LIVE REAL Mentor Advanced Session: Wednesday, April 9th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (Peace Garden) – RSVP to Erika.Beseler@ndsu.edu by April 4th

LIVE REAL Mentor Basic Session: Wednesday, April 30th @ Noon (Hidatsa Room)