

DISCUSSION / VIEWER GUIDE



This Discussion Guide is made possible by

SafeTeen New Mexico
New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department
Bernalillo County Substance Abuse Prevention Program
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Christopher Productions, LLC

Thank you for your interest in the **SMASHED** Discussion/Viewing Guide. We are excited to present this program to ignite discussion among children, parents and teachers. We want to empower and support young people to discover solutions to life-threatening behavior and situations. We also want parents, educators and youth to fully understand how binge drinking can affect brain development and growth and ways that youth, parents and communities can help deter underage drinking.

Enclosed are some ideas for discussions and activities for students and adults. Feel free to alter any of these suggestions for a better fit with your particular group. This is intended as a guide and starting point.

You may find it helpful to visit our website:

www.SafeTeen.net

for further information on this and other issues of concern for young people including dangers of illegal use of prescription drugs, mental health issues, alcohol and drug issues, date violence and distracted driving.

RESPONSE REQUESTED: We supply these materials to you free of charge, in the hope that they support your efforts in reaching students with enlivened discussions about difficult situations and adolescent curiosity, insecurity and empowerment.

The only thing we ask in return is that you let us know if you are using this so we can track the number of participants and the lives you've affected. A response page can be found at the end of this guide.

On behalf of SafeTeen New Mexico we want to thank you for working with young people and helping to brighten their future.

Sincerely,

Thom Turbett
President
SafeTeen New Mexico

Chris Schueler
Executive Director
SafeTeen New Mexico

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SHOW OVERVIEW

“SMASHED” is a half hour television program designed to help people understand how alcohol can affect brain development and growth, especially before the late 20’s. We hope this will also help generate discussion about ways to prevent underage drinking and safe alternatives.

A years worth of research went into the information in the program including “think tanks” with experts in all areas related to alcohol and youth and ways to engage youth in healthy alternatives to drinking.

This show is meant to be a catalyst for discussion, which means that there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to encourage discussion so young people can discover, for themselves, how alcohol can affect their lives and future. Young people should be encouraged to actively participate in exchanging ideas and researching related topics of interest.

Please read the script and watch the program prior to sharing it with students. This will make discussion with your students easier and more effective.

THE SCRIPT IS AVAILABLE THROUGH

www.SafeTeen.net

and

www.ChristopherProductions.org

Please download, read and have available prior to viewing program.

This guide includes discussion and activity ideas for involving students at various levels of development. **Further information and a complete list of additional resources are included at the end of this guide.** Our hope is that this is just the beginning, and that together we can make an important difference in our communities and in the lives of our children.

GENERAL INFO

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, research has indicated that human brains continue to grow well into the mid 20s. As a result, **when alcohol is introduced into brains that are not fully developed** the consequences can be profound and long lasting. This means when teens are faced with drinking decisions, it has extremely dangerous and life changing consequences. This is why **parents and youth need to understand** and have specific **tools to help**.

THE PROJECT

“YOUTH, BRAINS AND ALCOHOL” is a comprehensive media campaign to help PARENTS, EDUCATORS and MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS throughout New Mexico understand youth brain development, particularly during adolescence, and HOW ALCOHOL CAN AFFECT THAT. It gives parents **tools to use with their children and gives students tools to help them make healthy decisions**. This campaign utilizes a variety of media to reach parents and youth with the information necessary to help keep kids safe.

The project will involve parents, teens and brain experts extensively in the creative process and will center on the production of a 30 minute documentary along with a 30 minute live community conversation phone in program that has been broadcast in fall of 2011 just as school was beginning. It also includes a series of television informational promos, a shortened version of the documentary for public talks and a viewer guide about the issue.

APPROACH: UNDERSTANDING THE DANGERS AND CONSEQUENCES

While the video highlights the key brain development information, it also stresses the **overall reason** for concern; **keeping our youth safe so they can live full lives**.

The campaign includes basic information about the **various dangers that exist within our youth community** regarding alcohol use and it's affect on other dangerous behaviors (sex, violence, driving, etc.)

The project includes a **centralized website**, www.safeteen.net , that helps guide viewers to resources in their local communities.

BROADCAST PARTNER AND DISTRIBUTION

This program partners with the CBS affiliate news station, KRQE, as well as KRWG 22 the PBS affiliate in Las Cruces to reach southern New Mexico and KENW 3 the PBS affiliate in Portales to reach eastern New Mexico.

This partnership has extended beyond prime time broadcast of the finished program and included **several news stories within regularly scheduled newscast leading up to the broadcast**. The broadcast included the **half hour documentary** and a **half hour, live, follow up program in PRIME TIME**, a series of PSA's about the issue and a 20 minute version of the documentary for use with talks where the full program would be too long..

The purpose of this project is:

To give **YOU** a tool...something to rally around...to address UNDERAGE DRINKING and END IT in **YOUR community**, in **YOUR family**, and in **YOUR schools**. Check out your tools below:

- DVD of the TV show “SMASHED”
30 MIN. DOC / 20 MIN VERSION
- Discussion guide for classroom or group use
- Online resources (see “resources” at the end of this guide)

To get copies of these tools, please visit:

www.SafeTeen.net

or

www.ChristopherProductions.org

V I E W I N G S U G G E S T I O N S

- **Provide additional information and instruction.**

The information and stories in “SMASHED” are presented in a style that serves as a catalyst for thoughtful discussion. It is assumed by the creators of the program that more in-depth information and instruction will be provided by the group leader or teacher. Some of this information can be found in the resource section of this guide.

- **Discuss the content before watching the show.**

Many young people today are exposed regularly to situations in which they must make difficult decisions about their own behavior. Most likely, they’re struggling to balance personal beliefs and social pressures in order to make good decisions. Briefly discuss the content before watching the show in order to make the discussion after the show more effective. Discuss the difference between a documentary (real life) and a fictional movie (created script). Mention that this is about youth in New Mexico.

- **Set ground rules prior to viewing.**

Teachers or group leaders need to be prepared to offset disruptions in order to guarantee respect for those students wanting to see the show. Talk to students ahead of time and agree on appropriate behavior during the viewing. This should include **no talking or asking questions** until the show is concluded. You should also supply or **have available paper and pens or pencils** so that students can **jot down ideas and questions during the viewing for later discussion.**

- **Use “Discussion and Activities” for your grade.**

There are many ways to encourage open discussion. Since the need for facilitation and supervision will vary among ages, more age-specific suggestions are given on the following pages.

P R I O R T O V I E W I N G

Instructors: Please keep in mind that this guide contains discussion questions that may be sensitive in nature and may cause uncomfortable feelings and emotions to surface for some students due to personal experience or other reasons.

Have resource information readily accessible to students and discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling.

PRIOR TO SHOWING THE DOCUMENTARY:

1. Be certain to preview the video and read through this guide.
2. Gather and have available print resources (reference resources list at the end of this guide).
3. Download and read the script of the video.
4. Determine how much time you will have and what the discussion goal will be.
5. If you can, ask a trained expert to assist with the discussion (perhaps your school counselor).
6. Use clear guidelines. Avoid general, unstructured discussion.
7. Allow enough time to discuss the topics after the viewing.
8. Discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling

Go over the following with your group **prior to viewing**:

1. Explain that this is about making healthy decisions.
2. Be certain all cell phones and pagers are turned off.
3. Be sure everyone has pen and paper and encourage them to jot down notes, ideas, and questions. (perhaps review questions you'll be asking after the show – see "Discussion" Section.)
4. Explain the program is 30 minutes long and then a discussion about the program will follow.
5. Explain that the video was created with the help of teenagers and that all the **interviews and scenes are real**. You might explain the difference between a documentary (real stories and people) and a fictional film (written and not real).
6. Tell your group that if they feel uncomfortable at any point they may choose not to watch (be sure to arrange for a place where they can go in advance).
7. Explain that the program can be an emotional experience and to respect everyone's personal feelings.

AFTER VIEWING

Because it is important to protect everyone during the discussion, ask the group **not to use any names**, and set ground rules that include using the phrase “a person I know” OR REFERRING TO THE PEOPLE IN THE VIDEO each time. This may allow a more open discussion for everyone.

- 1. Give everyone a few moments to jot down ideas and questions they may have about the information in the documentary.**
- 2. Explain that this is not a tattletale session and it's not about telling on others.**
- 3. Say that this will be a discussion about the facts and dangers that are associated with alcohol use and abuse.**
- 4. Follow some of the ideas for discussion in this guide and from the aforementioned specialized tapes you may have already viewed as group leader.**
- 5. Be sure to leave enough time for adequate discussion. If time is short after the viewing (30 minutes or less), you may want to take just one of the discussion topics and leave the rest for later.**

DISCUSSION

Middle School Students

It is important that young people are provided with tools to make smart decisions on their own. All discussions should be conducted with this in mind. Young people will make better decisions if they understand that their actions will have consequences.

Discuss what kids in the video said about alcohol at the beginning and end of the film. What did they mean by those words?

(Alcohol is: Crazy, Amazing, Uncontrollable, Enticing, Everywhere, Available, Fun, Dangerous, Violent, Expensive, Trouble, Poison, An Industry, Your Deceiving Friend)

Discuss what the last girl in the program meant when she said alcohol was “You Deceiving Friend”.

Discuss what the scientist said about your brain development and how it’s like a road system. How does alcohol affect the brain? How long does the affect last? (for life)

Discuss how the media portrays alcohol and why that affects our decisions about it. According to the scientist, does alcohol have a happy chemical in it? (no) A friendly chemical in it? (no) Then why do we think it makes us those things? (because the ads tell us that).

ACTIVITIES

Middle School Students

- Have the students write about some things that happen to your brain if you use alcohol before you are an adult:
 - Impaired: Concentration, Memory, Decision Making
- Have the students do posters about the brain and alcohol.
- Have the students write about ways to help:
 - Having fun without alcohol
 - Ways to say no to alcohol in different situations.

DISCUSSION

High School Students

It is important that young people are provided with tools to make smart decisions on their own. All discussions should be conducted with this in mind. Young people will make better decisions if they understand that their actions will have consequences.

Initiate a discussion and then let the students direct its course. This will allow them to reach their own conclusions. However, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. Also, have everyone use the phrase "someone I know" or have them just refer to the people in the video. It is extremely important **not** to allow personal stories.

Following along with the student discussion in the film, ask the students the following:

- Discuss what role alcohol plays in young people's lives today? Were the students in the program accurate when they said "I don't think teens really think about the health risks at all"
- Discuss media and alcohol. Is the scientist in the film accurate when he says the media influences what we think alcohol will do to us? Do you think our brains are affected by that much advertising? Why would alcohol companies pay for that much advertising?
- Ask the students the following:
 - According to the show, what happens after more than one drink?
 - According to the show, what happens to your testosterone when you drink? How does that affect your ability as an athlete?
 - How long does it take after drinking to get back to your peak training as an athlete? Would that affect you even if you weren't an athlete?
 - What is the worst kind of drinking you can do in terms of it's effect on you and your brain? How is binge drinking defined?
 - What are some ways the students mentioned to get out of drinking? Would they work for you and your friends?
 - What are some ways for you to get out of drinking at parties or with friends?

A C T I V I T I E S

High School Students

ROLE PLAY:

Set up a scene with a teen at a friends party and everyone is trying to get him/her to drink. Eventually he/she gives in and has a drink.

AFTER THE FIRST TIME (he/she finally gives in) DISCUSS:

- What were the keys that made this person give in to drinking?
- What were the critical moments that he/she could have used to get out of the situation?
- What are three or four ways to get out of the situation and how to actually use these?

AFTER THE SECOND TIME (he/she uses some of the ways discussed to refuse and sticks to it) DISCUSS:

- What were the keys to getting out of the situation?
- When and why did the friends give up trying to get him/her to drink? (be sure to discuss thinking through these ways ahead of the party and responding strongly to the pressure right away).

CREATE:

Make a list of ways to get out of drinking at parties.

Create a personal list of reasons you wouldn't want to drink.

Create a non drinking media campaign for your school.

DISCUSSION

PARENTS

Initiate a discussion and then let the parents direct its course. As with all discussion, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. As with the students say up front that you DO NOT want personal stories during the discussion.

DISCUSS:

How information about drinking and it's dangers has changed from 5 or 10 or 20 years ago until now.

The brain research from the program, the affect of alcohol on the prefrontal cortex and how that has life long effects.

How media has changed since the parents were teens and affected kids perceptions.

- Ask the parents the following:
 - Do you agree with the scientists ideas about parents role in supporting and helping by setting specific ground rules.
 - How can you talk to your children about drinking?
 - What did you learn from the video regarding alcohols effect on athletic performance and training? Regarding amount of alcohol needed for a "buzz" and what happens with more alcohol?

ACTIVITIES

PARENTS

- Pick a date and time to talk with your children about this program or a time to watch it with them. Use the Facts section of this guide to discuss alcohol and it's dangers.
- Meet with school officials and discuss showing the video in health classes or for a school assembly.
- Role play with each other how to talk to your children about how to refuse alcohol at parties.
- Create an event for youth that could replace dangerous parties and reinforce fun and safe activities.

F A C T S t o D I S C U S S

ALCOHOL USE AND RELATED BEHAVIORS 2009 NM YRRS

- **Over 40% of 9th to 12th graders** say they are current drinkers. **Almost 50% of 12th grade girls** say they are current drinkers (49%)
- Almost 30% of New Mexico youth say they had their first drink **before age 13**.
- New Mexico is **highest in the nation** in use of alcohol before age 13.
- Americans who begin drinking before the age of 15 are **four times more likely** to develop **alcohol dependence** than those who wait until the age of 21.
- Over **1 in 4** New Mexico youth say they are **binge drinkers**.
- New Mexico is highest in the U.S. for youth who say they **drank alcohol on school property** (8%).
- **30,000 young people** each year need treatment for **acute alcohol poisoning**.
- Underage Alcohol use costs our country **\$53 billion per year** mostly in the form of traffic fatalities and violent incidents.
- A study of students 18-24 found over 70,000 were victims of alcohol-related **sexual assault**.
- Studies have found that alcohol is involved in approximately **half of all rapes**.
- **31% of parents** of 15-16 year olds believe their child had a drink in the past year however, **60%** of 15-16 year olds **report having had a drink**.

Q U E S T I O N S t o A S K

START BY SAYING: “I need your help on this. Bear with me and see what you come up with.”

- Is this video a fair representation of underage drinking and dangers?
- Are the people who made this video or the people who are concerned about this issue making much ado about nothing?
- Is this issue as important as the video alludes to?
- Is underage drinking really a problem in our (school, community, state)?
- Whose problem is it?
- Is it a teenage problem?
- Is it a parent problem?
- Is it a legal problem?
- Why and how does underage drinking affect all of us?
- Is it possible for youth to make healthy decisions about this? How?
- What role do parents play in helping kids in these situations?
- How does knowing the brain risks of alcohol help us help others?
- Can you refuse alcohol at a teenage party effectively/realistically?
- Is it really possible to talk to friends about alcohol and the risks?

CONTINUE TO ASK “why?” and “why not?” and “can you explain that? ” after each answer.

If a class can establish that underage drinking is a problem, ask:

- Is it a problem that needs to be solved?
- Can it be solved?
- Who can solve it?
- How can it be solved?

RESOURCES

SafeTeen New Mexico	www.SafeTeen.net
Teen Site for Alcohol Information and Safety	www.thecoolspot.gov
Parenting Skills Website	www.parentingteens.about.com
The Partnership at Drugfree.org	www.drugfree.org
Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth	www.camy.org
Bernalillo County Substance Abuse Prevention	www.bernco.gov
Children Youth and Families Department, New Mexico	www.CYFD.org
UNM Institute of Public Law / Transportation Safety	www.transportation.unm.edu/
New Mexico Attorney General's Office	www.nmag.gov
New Mexico Public Education Department	www.ped.state.nm.us
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov/
Healthy Minds New Mexico	www.healthymindsnm.org
Life Skills Training, Institute for Prevention Research	www.lifeskillstraining.com
Parenting Adolescents Wisely, Ohio University	www.familyworksinc.com
SMART Moves Program, Boys & Girls Clubs of America	www.bgca.org
National Organizations for Youth Safety	www.noys.com
Christopher Productions Social Issues Information	www.ChristopherProductions.org
New Mexico Parent Teacher Association	www.nmpta.org



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Television to Touch the Heart

SMASHED

Order Form Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE

Name: _____

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Phone: _____

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Documentary 30 minutes and Shortened Version

Number of DVD's X \$10 _____

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Note: To Keep Costs Down WE DO NOT ACCEPT PO'S or CREDIT CARDS
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Send this form along with a **check or money order** for the total cost, to:

SafeTeen New Mexico
1511 University Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

PLEASE NOTE: YOU CAN ORDER THIS VIDEO ON LINE AND
AT www.SafeTeen.net

SMASHED: Youth, Brains and Alcohol:

RESPONSE FORM:

Please take a moment to fill out the information below and then EMAIL to us as a word doc: Chris@ChristopherProductions.org

Thanks for letting us know how you're using the materials.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Which materials were used (documentary, curriculum):

Date(s) materials used:

Group(s) using materials (i.e. Class, Club, Group – what kind?)

Number of people using the materials:

Youth:

Adults:

Other comments about the materials and your discussion: