

# COALITION CHRONICLE

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[www.pactprevention.org](http://www.pactprevention.org)

## This New Year: Legally, Safely, & Responsibly

As part of the first month in the new year, this month's feature article focuses on some alcohol guidelines to adopt in 2008. First, the phrase, 'under the influence' must be defined. According to Florida law, a driver 21 years of age and older whose blood alcohol level is .08 or higher can be charged with Driving Under the Influence. For those under 21, the threshold is much lower. A person under the age of 21 can be cited for being under the influence with a blood alcohol content of .02. That equals one drink for a 120 pound female and 2 drinks for a 200-plus pound male. A good resource for determining blood alcohol content is located at <http://www.ou.edu/oupd/bac.html>. This site is sponsored by the University of Oklahoma Police Department.

Because alcohol is consumed in a variety of places, by a variety of people in a variety of ways, it is important to define some broad guidelines which can apply to a multitude of situations. No one who values their own health and safety and the health and safety of those around them is exempt from these guidelines. To follow these guidelines when alcohol is consumed, it must be done

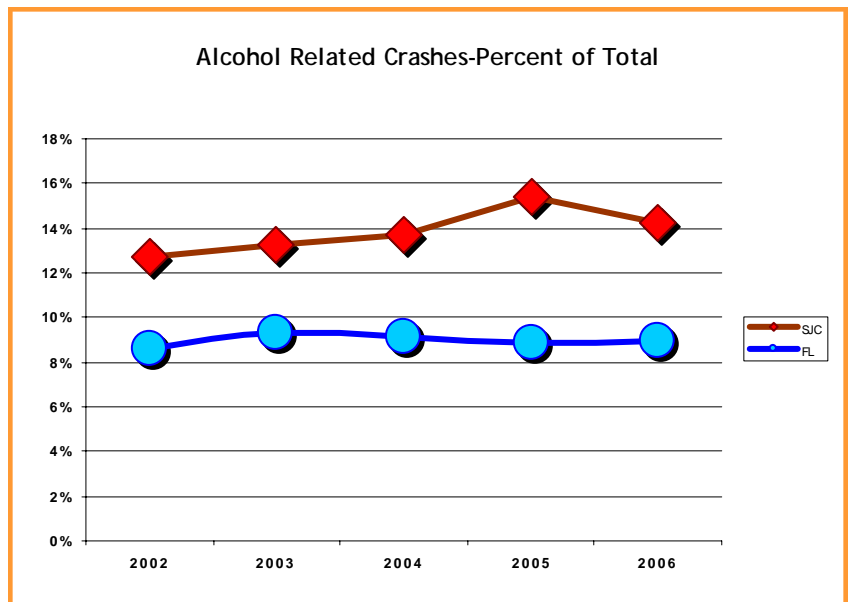
### Legally, Safely and Responsibly

**Legally** is about more than being 21 years of age or over. It is also about obeying other alcohol related statutes such as open container laws. See Chapter 562 for Florida Statutes related to alcohol.

**Safely** is about only consuming alcohol at a rate that does not cause sickness or poisoning. This means that binge drinking must be avoided. Binge drinking (5 or more drinks per hour for men, 4 or more drinks per hour for women) leads to alcohol poisoning, which in some cases is fatal. Women should also be aware that they metabolize alcohol at a slower rate than men leading to a higher blood alcohol content in a shorter amount of time. This puts women at higher risk for unsafe decisions such as unprotected sex and choosing to drive under the influence.

**Responsibly** is about avoiding those situations where neither oneself or others could be injured as a result of one's drinking. A good example of this is driving under the influence. The alcohol-related crash rate in St. Johns County is 74 percent higher than the state rate resulting in almost 300 injuries alone (see chart).

Another consequence which is sometimes overlooked is the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. This behavior increases the baby's chance for developing fetal alcohol syndrome, a syndrome whose effects are both mental and physical and continue throughout a child's life. Some of these effects include developmental delay, organ dysfunction, facial abnormalities and epilepsy. Visit [www.kids.org/parent/medical/brain/fas.html](http://www.kids.org/parent/medical/brain/fas.html) for more information.



Remember, if you do make the decision to consume alcohol, there are three things to keep in mind in order to minimize negative consequences. Alcohol must be consumed:

- **LEGALLY** (over 21)
- **SAFELY** (Blood Alcohol Content under .08)
- **RESPONSIBLY** (Avoid situations where you could hurt yourself or others, such as driving)

## Helping Adolescents Make the Most of Their Changing Brains

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*Please visit [www.alcohol-info.com](http://www.alcohol-info.com) for more information on this topic.*

### JUST THE FACTS

#### *Adolescence*

- ↗ Adolescence is the transition from childhood (dependence) to adulthood (independence).
- ↗ No distinct beginning and end, but roughly 10-20 years of age is a good approximation.
- ↗ Normal adolescent behavior consists of changes in sleeping and eating habits, an increase in conflicts with family members, a desire to be with one's friends around the clock, resistance to messages from authority, irritability, risk taking, and proclamations of sheer boredom!
- ↗ These changes compel adolescents to explore the deeper end of the gene pool and acquire the skills, competence, and confidence necessary to survive on their own.
- ↗ A biological wedge is naturally driven between parents and adolescents to aid the transition from dependence to independence. The closer the family, the harder this process can be.

#### *Adolescent drug use*

- ↗ More than half of all adolescents will experiment with alcohol (80%) and/or marijuana (50%) by the time they become seniors in high school. Fortunately, most move through this stage of experimentation smoothly with no lingering drug problems.
- ↗ Levels of marijuana use have really skyrocketed in the past ten years, though they are still lower than they were in the early-mid 1980s.
- ↗ Alcohol misuse is by far the biggest drug problem among our kids. Alcohol kills more young people than all other drugs combined. Where do they get it? From us.

#### *Adolescent brain development: Possibilities and pitfalls*

- ↗ It is now quite clear that the brain undergoes a tremendous amount of development during the teen years, including a major remodeling of the frontal lobes, which are involved in planning, decision-making, impulse control and language.
- ↗ Changes in the frontal lobes and other areas are influenced by experience, which means that the decisions that kids make can have a big impact on how their own brains develop!
- ↗ Healthy choices = healthy brains, unhealthy choices = unhealthy brains.
- ↗ Because of the changes occurring in the brain during the teen years, alcohol affects teenagers and adults differently - for instance, it appears to produce bigger impairments in learning and more widespread brain damage in adolescents than in adults.
- ↗ Repeated alcohol exposure might alter the trajectory, or path, of teen brain development.
- ↗ The moldability, or plasticity, of the brain decreases as we enter the early 20s, which means that we might not be able to make up entirely for the poor decisions that we make as teenagers.

#### *How to help teenagers make the most of it*

- ↗ Embrace the changes in adolescents rather than fight them. Help them find healthy forms of risk taking so that they can build confidence and explore the world in a relatively safe way.
- ↗ Talk to them about different drugs and other issues of safety and health - be certain they know how you feel about them. Communication between parents and kids on this topic really seems to diminish the odds that they will become substance abusers.



NATIONAL  
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# National Coalition Academy

*"Two words: Do it."*

That's sound advice from Liz Ford, founder of I CAN (Independent Community Assistance Network) in West Philadelphia. Ford is a participant in the National Coalition Academy, a comprehensive training program developed by CADCA's National Coalition Institute and offered without charge through a partnership with the National Guard Bureau. "After 20 years the light bulb came on and I got excited. I've learned how to implement strategies in a comprehensive way," continued Ford.

Coalitions participating in the Academy learn about creating and maintaining partnerships, sustainability, cultural competency, assessment, prevention planning and implementation, and evaluation.

The National Coalition Academy is a year-long innovative training program that combines three-weeks of classroom training, distance learning and web-support to teach your community what it need to know and what it needs to do to start and/or sustain a highly effective anti-drug coalition.

Through a partnership with the National Guard Bureau, classes are available at training centers across the country. PACT Coalition members would be attending training at the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

## Academy Participants Will Learn How to:

- Create and maintain partnerships
- Assess community needs and resources
- Analyze problems and goals
- Develop a framework or model of change
- Increase participation and membership
- Build leadership
- Enhance cultural competence
- Improve organization management and development
- Develop strategic action plans
- Develop interventions
- Advocate for change
- Influence policy development
- Write grant applications for funding
- Evaluate initiatives
- Sustain projects and initiatives
- By the end of the training, the coalition will have developed a community assessment, logic model, action plan, intervention, evaluation plan, and a sustainability plan

**There is no charge for tuition, or for lodging or meals** during the three week-long, on-site classroom sessions at National Guard facilities. Participating communities are required to pay for all other expenses, including travel. PACT will pay for all travel related expenses including airfare and mileage.

### Cohort 9 Dates for Classroom Sessions

March 24-28, 2008 (Travel March 23 & 29)

June 23-27, 2008 (Travel June 22 & 28)

September 22-26, 2008 (Travel September 21 & 27)

*Space is limited and priority will be given according to seniority. You are only required to attend one of the classroom sessions. Call or email Julia for more information or to apply.*



## Substance Abuse Response Guide (S.A.R.G.) Update

The Substance Abuse Response Guide team continues to meet and is almost finished collecting data for the project. Over the course of our next two meetings, the committee will be analyzing the data to determine exactly who the target population and what the contributing factors are. The next SARG team meeting is Thursday, January 17th at FCTI, Building A, room A123 (Pat Gay's Office) at 10:00am.

# Spring Awareness Activities Begin

Although it is only January, this month is the beginning of awareness activities which will continue into the summer. The Coalition works to provide activities for several audiences and multiple venues throughout the county.

### Surviving the Teenage Years

The presentation gives an overview of the most prevalent risks for middle and high school students today. Afterwards, service providers representing local agencies participate in an informational fair. Parents can receive materials and speak directly with experts who can address their areas of concern. The Coalition has been presenting this original program to middle schools throughout the county since 2005.

### Teen Speak: When Your Teen Knows More Than You

Teen Speak was born from the repeated request by parents to hear directly from teens about their daily lives. Facilitators guide groups of parents through the process of formulating a question for the teen panel to answer. These questions are used by a panel of high school junior and seniors to help parents better understand their children. PACT presented this program at four middle schools for the first time in Spring 2007.

### From Elementary to Middle School: Helping You Both Make the Transition

The parents of fifth grade students often have anxiety over their child's transition from elementary to middle school. This presentation on their child's development and how it impacts their reaction to the potential pitfalls of middle school offers parents suggestions on how to cope with this milestone.

### Safe Prom

Through a partnership between PACT, St. Johns County Fire and Rescue, and the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, the Safe Prom presentation is available to up to two St. Johns County schools per year. This live DUI re-enactment features student actors, preferably from the hosting school, active rescue equipment and a field sobriety test. The story follows the teens beginning from a girl being picked up by her prom date all the way through the trial of the drunk driver. Safe Prom was presented here in its current form in May 2007.

### Meetings & Events

- \* January 15th: General Membership Meeting
- \* February 19th: General Membership Meeting
- \* March 3rd: Teen Speak @ Pacetti Bay Middle School
- \* April is Alcohol Awareness Month
- \* May 6th: From Elementary to Middle School @ Osceola Elementary School

*If you have a meeting or event you would like included in the Chronicle, please send it to [julia@pactprevention.org](mailto:julia@pactprevention.org) seven days before the General Membership meeting.*