

# HELPING HAND

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## Radio Alcohol Ads Reach Too Many Youth, Watchdog Says

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) says that while alcohol companies are spending less on radio ads, more ads for beer, wine and liquor are being broadcast during “youth-oriented” programs, The Associated Press reported earlier in the year. A new CAMY report estimated that 36% of alcohol radio ads are placed on shows where per-capita youth audiences are higher than adult audiences.

“What (alcohol companies are) doing is more efficiently reaching kids. That’s presumably a waste of their marketing dollars — there is no good reason for them to be doing it,” said CAMY Executive Director David Jernigan.

The Beer Institute replied that its members adhere to a standard of advertising on shows where underage listeners comprise no more than 30% of the audience. And Anheuser-Busch Vice President Carol Clark said, “Preventing underage drinking is about preventing youth access to alcohol, not about what a teen does or doesn’t hear on the radio. If teens can’t get alcohol, they can’t drink it.”

Jernigan said that the CAMY study found that 8% of ads were placed on programs with more than 30% youth listeners, but that the ads still reached a disproportionate number of youth because only 15% of the population is aged 12-20.

CAMY wants the industry standard amended to permit advertising on programs with no more than 15% underage listeners. Clark said that would “prevent the companies from advertising in media where there is substantial adult interest.”



# Someone to Complain With Isn't Always a Good Thing—Especially for Teenage Girls

Friendships that lend themselves to ruminating about problems may actually contribute to emotional difficulties in girls, according to new research. A study in the July issue of the journal *Developmental Psychology*, published by the American Psychological Association, finds that girls are more likely than boys of the same age group to develop anxiety and depression as a result of extensive conversations with friends about their problems.

Co-rumination, or excessively talking with another person about problems, including rehashing them and dwelling on the negative feelings associated with them, is thought to have both costs and benefits for people experiencing unpleasant situations. This six-month longitudinal study involved 813 third-, fifth-, seventh- and ninth-grade girls and boys, and tested whether co-rumination is associated with depression and anxiety while simultaneously benefiting girls and boys by strengthening friendships.

For girls, co-rumination predicted increased positive friendship quality, including feelings of closeness between friends. However, the study also found that girls who co-ruminate had increased depressive and anxiety symptoms, which, in turn, contributed to greater co-rumination.

“Having anxiety symptoms (and presumably, associated heightened levels of worries and concerns) and a high-quality friend to talk to may provide a uniquely reinforcing context for co-rumination,” stated Amanda J. Rose, PhD, lead author and associate professor of psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Rose and her colleagues speculated that co-rumination may lead girls to think about problems in a way that is different from boys, and that is more closely linked to emotional problems. For example, girls may be more likely than boys to take personal responsibility for failures, according to the study’s authors. For boys, co-rumination predicted only greater positive friendship quality and not increased depression and anxiety. “These findings are interesting because girls’ intentions when discussing problems may be to give and seek positive support. However, these conversations appear to contribute to increased depression,” said Rose.

The research cautions parents and adults against being lulled into a false sense of security about youth, especially girls, with seemingly supportive friendships. While other studies indicate that adults should worry about socially-isolated youth, this research raises the issue that youth in seemingly supportive friendships may also be at risk for depression.

(Source: “Prospective Associations of Co-Rumination With Friendship and Emotional Adjustment Considering the Socioemotional Trade-Offs of Co-Rumination.” Amanda J. Rose, Wendy Carlson, and Erika M. Waller, University of Missouri-Columbia. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 43, No. 4)

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Editor: Erin Bell  
Graphic Designer: Lisa LaGrou

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## Most Young People Disapprove of Meth Use, Survey Finds

About a third of teens surveyed say they see only a slight risk — or no risk at all — in trying methamphetamine, The Associated Press reported in September 2007. However, 76% of teens said they strongly disapproved of using the drug even once or twice.

The study by The Meth Project also found that around a quarter of the 2,602 teens surveyed said they believed that meth use could have some benefits, such as providing feelings of happiness or euphoria (24%), helping with weight loss (22%), and relieving boredom (22%). Similar numbers said they think it would be “very easy” or “somewhat easy” to get the drug.

On the other hand, the latest surveys show that adolescent use of meth has leveled off in recent years, and remains relatively low.

# Thinking About the Unthinkable: Terrorism Preparedness in Schools

*By John Cavanagh and Anne Malia*

In August 2003, a disturbing report appeared, titled the “National School-Based Law Enforcement Survey.” The study, which involved school-based police officers from all 50 states, revealed that 90% of these professionals consider the nation’s schools to be “soft targets” for terrorism, which means that they are unprotected against an attack. After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, many former “soft targets” have adopted new safety procedures to guard against terrorist attacks. The majority of our nation’s schools, however, have not yet begun to address this potential threat. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers, and administrators to work together to establish heightened security procedures to follow during terrorist threats or when the Department of Homeland Security issues a heightened alert.

## How Is Terrorism Different From Other School Emergencies?

Unlike school shootings, schools subjected to terrorist attacks would be chosen at random. With alertness to warning signs of school violence, it has become easier to identify students at risk for violent behavior; this is not so with terrorists. Also, the perpetrators of terrorism are not likely to be students at the school being attacked. In other types of teenage violence, administrators have the ability to discipline the students involved but, naturally, terrorists are out of their jurisdiction. Terrorist attacks involving schools will probably involve explosions, or chemical or biological weapons. The extent of the casualties and damage might be far more extensive than even the most lethal occurrence of school violence to date. The destruction will probably directly affect the surrounding community. Schools cannot act alone in preventing terrorism in their facilities, since they do not have many tools available to them. Emergency preparedness, however, can be initiated and planned by the school itself.

## Additions to Your School’s Preparedness:

Protecting against terrorism requires additional measures, all of which can be implemented with the cooperation of your board of education, school officials, or PTA, or in conjunction with local government, at minimal cost. An important safety procedure in the event of a terrorist attack is called “sheltering in place,” which means to stay put in a safe, windowless area. This space must be evaluated to determine how long its air supply would last when sealed. “Sheltering in place” supplements the basic lockdown and evacuation plans that your school should already have established to protect against school violence.

## Further Anti-Terrorist Procedures:

- Do not allow students to open school mail. Staff should handle all mail and be educated to recognize suspicious packages.
- Custodial staff should be part of the school’s crisis response team. They should know how to shut down heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems.
- Have duct tape and plastic sheeting on hand to seal off windows, vents, and doorways.
- Prepare safety kits in advance. Include battery-operated AM/FM radios; flashlights with fresh batteries; bottled water and adequate food supply; towels; candles; matches; first-aid kit; medicines for students who normally have them at school; charged batteries for cell phones for school’s crisis team; personal cleaning supplies and hand sanitizers; etc.
- Create plans for a separate area to quarantine anyone who becomes contaminated. The area should have accessible showers and fresh clothing.
- Meet with hazmat; fire; emergency medical; law enforcement; emergency management; and other local, county, and/or state officials to establish specific response and prevention protocols, and to educate your school faculty, staff, crisis teams, and community about issues associated with biological and chemical terrorism.
- Have an emergency communication plan, which can include walkie-talkies, cell phones or multiple phone lines. Receptionists should have emergency numbers posted by their phones, and each classroom should have two-way communication to the school office.
- Be aware of anniversaries or other significant dates that could trigger an attack. An annual meeting of teachers and custodial staff prior to the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks is a good time to review safety procedures.

# Prevention Advice for Divorced or Single Parents

If you are a parent who is single, divorced, or separated, raising your teenager may bring additional challenges. If you know or suspect that your teenager is using drugs, you may want to reach out to your extended family and friends for help with this problem. Although difficult, you may also need to talk with your ex-spouse, or the child's parent, in order to create a consistent plan for establishing and enforcing a no-tolerance drug policy.

Firmly and warmly make it very clear that you will not tolerate drug or alcohol use by your teen. Identify the consequences if he or she does use. All parents find it hard to set and enforce rules, but it's particularly hard for single



parents who are hesitant and don't want to disrupt the balance of the relationship with their teen. For these parents, it might help to commiserate with your teen. For example you could say, "I know it's difficult that I have to make these rules. But I wouldn't be a good parent if I didn't take care of and protect your safety."

Also remember to be available to listen if your teen is having difficulties dealing with your divorce. Use consistent discipline in your home and attempt to communicate with your child's father/mother in order to continue to enforce the same rules in both households. Make clear rules about curfews and be consistent about

asking your teen which friends he/she is hanging out with. Be particularly attentive about knowing where your teenager is after school, especially if you are working long hours. Lastly, continue to help your child grow his/her relationships with grandparents, cousins, uncles, and aunts in order for him/her to have valuable role models besides yourself.

## Parents More Worried About Their Teen Driving Drunk, Shoplifting, or Having Sex Than Using Marijuana

Many parents report that they are more worried about their teenage sons or daughters driving a car while intoxicated, shoplifting, or having sex than about their using marijuana, according to a recent national telephone survey of parents of youths ages 12 to 17. More than 80% of the parents reported that it would bother them more if they found out their teen had driven a car while intoxicated than if their teen used marijuana. Around one-half of the parents reported that their teen having sex or shoplifting would bother them more than their teen's use of marijuana. Behaviors that parents found less worrisome than smoking marijuana were skipping school, cheating on a test, or hitting another teen.

### Drug Prevention Plan for Divorced Parents

1. Parent as a team.
2. Review signs of drug abuse.
3. Supervise your child. Make sure both parents are aware of who their child's friends are and where they are going.
4. Make a consistent parenting plan. The child should have consistent rules and consequences with both parents.



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