WHAT IS BINGE DRINKING?
Binge drinking is the consumption of several alcoholic beverages in a short period of time with the intention of attaining a buzz or getting drunk. In most cases, this involves a social setting where teens are curious about what it feels like to drink, believe it will make them feel good or reduce stress, and will make them appear older, “cool” and more popular. In fact, the Center for Disease Control reports that 90% of all alcohol consumed under the age of 21 is in the form of binge drinks.

DO YOU KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES?
Alcohol poisoning is the most life-threatening consequence of binge drinking. But binge drinking is associated with many other risks including car accidents, sexual assault, sexually transmitted diseases, and violent crimes. And while some parents may feel their kids are curious about what it feels like to drink, believe it will make them feel good or reduce stress, and will make them appear older, “cool” and more popular. In fact, the Center for Disease Control reports that 90% of all alcohol consumed under the age of 21 is in the form of binge drinks.

WHAT CAN I DO TO BE PROACTIVE?
- Create a strategy for monitoring your children’s social behavior
  - Let other parents know that you are open to communication.
  - Don’t hesitate to contact other parents to confirm social plans.
  - Follow your child’s digital behavior.

HOW DO I START THE CONVERSATION?
It’s never too soon to start the discussion and start protecting your children. And, as is the case with most lessons, many small conversations are more effective than one big “talk.” So how do you do it?

- Find circumstances to have the conversations
  - During dinner
  - Driving in the car
  - When they seem open to the dialogue

- Things to keep in mind when planning the conversation
  - Use examples appropriate for your child’s age.
  - Be mindful of your reactions to facilitate sharing.
  - Know when to talk and when to listen.

- Conversation starters
  - “Have you heard of kids in your school drinking at Hopkins Pond? How about Crow’s Woods?”
  - “Have any of them been sick or hurt as a result of drinking?”
  - “Have you ever tried alcohol? Do you feel pressure to drink?”

- Be aware of how you promote your own experience with alcohol
  - Try not to romanticize drinking with your own funny stories.
  - When you drink in front of your kids, be mindful that The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism considers binge drinking to be 4 or 5 drinks in a couple of hours.
  - Plan activities and social events where the “fun” does not require alcohol.

RESOURCES
- Talk They Hear You app on Apple iTunes Store (from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association)
- What Parents Need to Know About College Drinking (collegedrinkingprevention.gov)
- The Role of Parents in Preventing and Addressing Underage Drinking (taadas.org)
- How To Be a Better Parent (PDF brochure) (behavioralinstitute.org)