



Safer Partying Toolkit

Toronto Public Health

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About the Partying Safer Prom Toolkit

We know that many traditional approaches to addressing youth substance use (e.g., zero-tolerance policies, abstinence-only education, etc.) have limited effectiveness and can produce unintended negative consequences. As a result, this toolkit uses a harm reduction approach and aims to reduce the negative social and health outcomes related to alcohol and other drugs. The goal is to support and encourage healthy behaviours and good decision-making. This resource includes information on the risks of using alcohol and other drugs and encourages youth to celebrate in a safer, less harmful way on their prom/grad night or any events/parties celebrating the end of the school year.

Many of the resources and lessons in this toolkit can be used at any time to increase teens' awareness of the importance of safer partying.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide school administrators, teachers, students, and parents/caregivers with resources and messaging that encourages students to have fun on their prom night while making decisions to celebrate in safer ways.

The toolkit contains the following components:

- [Student Party PROMise Pledge](#)
- [Safer Partying Tip Sheet](#)
- [A Lesson on Consent](#)
- [Protect Yourself from Sexual Violence Tip Sheet](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Teen About Prom: Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet](#)
- [Social Media Messages](#)
- [Announcements](#)
- [Links to Resources](#)



Student Party PROMise Pledge

Alcohol and other drugs affects decision-making abilities and can contribute to unintended consequences. A “promise,” which is sometimes referred to as a “pledge,” is an easy way to encourage ownership of an individual’s intention to behave or act in a certain way. Students need to value themselves and their friends and classmates. The goal of the PROMise Pledge is for students to take responsibility for their behaviour to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and others. The PROMise Pledge can be found in [Appendix A](#) of the toolkit. Your school or prom committee can create your own PROMise Pledge using this as a template.

How to use this resource:

Before Prom:

- Share it using various communication platforms with students attending prom (e.g., send to each student to read in grade 12 homeroom after reviewing the [Safer Partying](#) and [Protecting Yourself from Sexual Violence](#) tip sheets.
- Share in conjunction with the daily morning announcements.
- Share with parents/caregivers to review with their teens before prom.
- Print out the PROMise Pledge (see [Appendix A](#)) and place these in common areas of the school to be signed by the students who are attending prom.

On Prom Night:


- On the day of prom, post these at the entrance of the venue and/or print out the PROMise Pledge to be signed by students as they arrive.
- Read out during the welcoming speech at the celebration.

Safer Partying: Tip Sheet

It is common for schools to have a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol and other drugs for students attending prom. However, it becomes more difficult to supervise what takes place once students leave the facility and continue celebrating on their prom night. This resource encourages students to party in safer, less harmful ways while highlighting information on the risks of using alcohol and other drugs (see [Appendix B](#)).

How to use this resource:

- Give to students who are attending the prom, and promote it using various communication platforms.
- Use it to facilitate discussion in class or at assemblies.
- Share the resource with parents/caregivers of students attending prom.

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- Turn the tips in the resource into content that can be used during announcements, or communications going out to the school community about prom (see [Announcement Section](#) of the toolkit).
 - Use adapted materials for social media posts and display monitors at school (see [Social Media Section](#) of the toolkit).

A Lesson on Consent

The [Supreme Court of Canada](#) (Section 273.1(1) of the Criminal Code) defines consent as a person's voluntary agreement to "engage in the sexual activity in question."

Understanding what consent is can create healthy boundaries in intimate relationships. Talking with teens about consent, sexuality and relationships can help them make more informed, mature decisions in the future. It is not easy to talk with your teen about consent; however it is very important to do so.

How to use this resource:


- Use the "[Introduction to Consent](#)" video developed by the Ontario Physical & Health Education Association (OPHEA) during an assembly or for class discussion (5:55 minutes in length).
- Educators can review the [Sexual Violence Prevention Education Resources](#) developed by OPHEA and incorporate information into lessons.
- Other resources that can be shared with students and families include [Teen Talk-Content and Sexual Assault](#) and [Teaching Sexual Health: Consent](#).

Protect Yourself Against Sexual Violence: Tip Sheet

Sexual violence includes unwanted touching up to and including rape. Sexual violence is a serious problem that can have lasting, harmful physical and mental health effects on victims, their families, friends, and communities. This resource highlights tips on how to prevent sexual violence (see [Appendix C](#)).

How to use this resource:

- Review it with students who are attending prom, and promote it using various communication platforms.
- Use it to facilitate discussion in class or at assemblies.
- Turn the tips in the resource into content that can be used during announcements, or communications going out to the school community about prom (see [Announcement Section](#) of the toolkit).

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- Use adapted materials for social media posts and display monitors at school (see [Social Media Section](#) of the toolkit).
 - Refer to it while discussing the White Ribbon & Draw the Line Campaigns.

White Ribbon & Draw the Line

The white ribbon is a symbol used by the White Ribbon Campaign to symbolize a commitment to ending gender-based violence. [White Ribbon & Draw the Line](#) provide resources for students, parents/caregivers, and school staff around gender-based violence and tools, including lesson plans and promotional materials, to end gender-based violence.

How to use this resource:

- [The White Ribbon & Draw the Line website](#) contains lesson plans & promotional materials that can be used with students at school.
- [Share the parent portal](#) of the White Ribbon & Draw the Line website with parents/caregivers through your school's communication portal.
- Share White Ribbon resources with the prom committee and allow them to incorporate messaging as they see fit:
 - For example: purchase pins and a white ribbon to pin on the prom attendee's coat/shirt/dress.
- Send to students ahead of time and encourage them to save resources to their phones so they can access them on the night of the prom if they need a safe ride home.

The Power of the Bystander

Individuals have the power to protect others who may be in a difficult situation. The Sexual Assault Crisis Centre has developed information about how to "[Use Your Power as a Bystander](#)" to learn more.

How to use this resource:

- Share the "Power of the Bystander" resources on the school and school council's social media platforms.
- Use the "Power of the Bystander" resources for the morning announcement.
- Use the "[GAME ON: Because Stepping in Should be Everyone's Game](#)" video (8:14 mins in length) during an assembly or for class discussion.



How to Talk to Your Teen About Prom: Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Parents/caregivers talking to their teens about their party plans can be tough, but those conversations have been shown to have an important influence when it comes to teens' use of alcohol and other drugs. Supporting them with information can help them to make safer and responsible decisions. This resource provides some starting points for parents/caregivers to have a conversation with their teen (see [Appendix D](#)). Many teenagers are attending parties, so it is important for them to feel confident in making safe and responsible decisions. Alcohol and other drug use affects decision-making abilities and can contribute to many preventable outcomes. A parent party pledge is included with this resource. This promise provides parents with a method to improve communication and trust with their teenagers by promising their teens that they will be there to ask questions or help them when they get in difficult situations.

How to use this resource:

- Share with parents/caregivers of your school communities before prom using your communication platforms and social media.
- Use sections of this resource to share as social media messages.
- The [links in the Resource section](#) can be shared with parents/caregivers to support conversations with their teens.

Communications for Schools and Prom Committees

Messages have been developed for social media and school wide announcements to reinforce the harm reduction strategies provided in this toolkit and encourage students to celebrate safer on their prom night.

How to use this resource:

- Post on social media accounts managed by your school and school committees (the target audience for these accounts can be both students and parents/caregivers).
- Display on school monitors.
- Read during morning announcements.

Social Media Messaging

For Students	
Message	Graphic
<p>It's almost prom! Check out our #SaferPartyng tips and make it a night to remember.</p> <p>Learn more: Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng</p>	<p>Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng Toronto Public Health</p>
<p>Have you found a Party Partner for prom?</p> <p>Pick a friend that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be around for the whole night ✓ Be responsible for you & you for them ✓ Step in if something doesn't seem right ✓ Make sure you both get home safely. <p>Learn more: Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng</p>	<p>Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng Toronto Public Health</p>
<p>You don't need to drink alcohol or use drugs to enjoy yourself at a party!</p> <p>If you choose to consume, follow these #SaferPartyng tips to reduce your risks.</p> <p>Learn more: Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng</p>	<p>Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng Toronto Public Health</p>



For Parents/Caregivers

Message

Graphic

Is your teen heading to prom?
 Help them make a #SaferPartyng plan that includes:

- ✓ A safe ride home
- ✓ Sticking with friends they trust
- ✓ Understanding consent
- ✓ Keeping an eye on their drink

Learn more: [Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng](https://toronto.ca/SaferPartyng)



Spring is here! Prom & grad parties are just around the corner.

Here are some #SaferPartyng talking points to help you & your teen prepare before they head out.

Learn more: [Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng](https://toronto.ca/SaferPartyng)

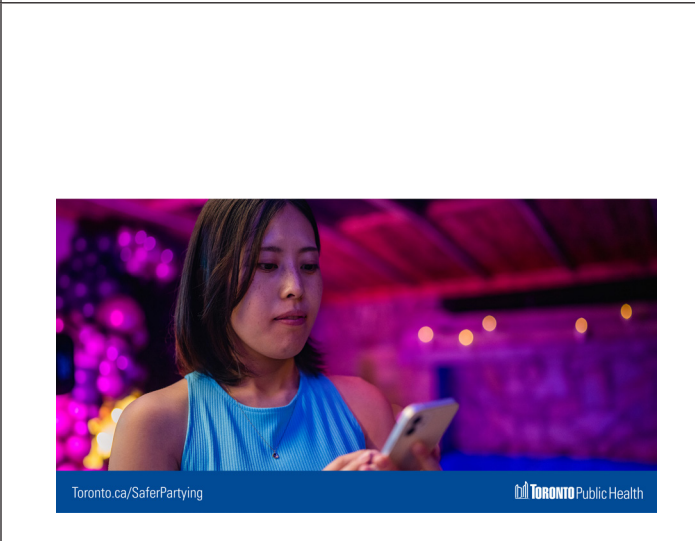


#SaferPartyng tip for parents/ caregivers:

Check-in by text with your teen throughout the night & come up with a safe code (something they can text you if there's trouble).

Some kids simply text an "x" to let you know they need to be picked up.

More tips: [Toronto.ca/SaferPartyng](https://toronto.ca/SaferPartyng)





Announcements

- It's almost prom! Let's watch out for each other. Come up with a code word you or your friends can say or text to let each other know when needed. Uncomfortable situations can happen. Let's have each other's back.
- Sadly, impaired driving is real! Alcohol is involved in almost 1/3 of teenage car accident fatalities. Don't crash your memories on prom night. Make a plan to get home safely!
- Prom is coming up! Never feel obligated to do more with someone if you don't feel right or comfortable. Set your boundaries and respect others boundaries.
- Know your limit and draw your line. Know that when alcohol/drugs are consumed, it makes it more difficult to:
 - Think clearly
 - Set limits and make good choices
 - Think about long-term consequences and control impulses
 - Determine when a situation is dangerous
 - Say "no"
- Using the True & False Questions from the Sexual Violence Tip Sheet (see [Appendix C](#)) to create announcements.



Links to Resources

For students/youth

- Canadian Association for Mental Health (CAMH), [Partying and Getting Drunk](#)
- CAMH, [Lower-Risk Cannabis Guidelines for Youth](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)
- [Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Centre \(SA/DVCC\)](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

For parents/caregivers

- Canadian Centre on Substance Use & Addiction (CCSA), [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol & Health](#)
- Drug Free Kids Canada, [Cannabis Talk Kit](#)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), [Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), [Information for Parents](#)
- Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH), [Talking with Your Teen About Sexuality](#)
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), [Parents Matter: Strategies for Parents to Prevent or Delay Alcohol and Other Drug Use](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

For teachers/staff

- CCSA, [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol & Health](#)
- Ontario Physical & Health Education Association (OPHEA), [Sexual Violence Prevention Resources](#)
- PHAC, [Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#)
- [White Ribbon](#)

Appendix A: PROMise Pledge

PROM Pledge

I PROMise to...

- find a party partner to help keep me safe.
- stay with a group so we can take care of each other.
- have a plan in place to get home safely.
- keep my parents/caregivers informed of my whereabouts.
- make sure my phone is fully charged and with me in case of an emergency.
- set limits if consuming any alcohol or drugs.
- not accept any drinks from someone I don't know, and to never leave my drink unattended.
- not allow someone who is under the influence of drugs/alcohol to get behind the wheel.
- step in if someone's safety is at risk.
- call my parents/caregivers if I need a safe ride home.



Appendix B: Safer Partying Tip Sheet



CELEBRATE SAFER ON PROM NIGHT MAKE WISE CHOICES

You can have a fun night without using alcohol and substances. This information is to guide you and help you make wise choices. Remember it is illegal for individuals under 19 years of age to use and possess alcohol and cannabis. The safest way to celebrate is to avoid using alcohol and substances.

Above all
think about the consequences
before you act, and be safe!

Kids Help Phone
kidshelpphone.ca
Call: 1-800-668-6868 | Text: 686868

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health, Public
Summary: Drinking Less Is Better
ccsa.ca/canadas-guidance-alcohol-and-health-public-summary-drinking-less-better-infographic

Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines
camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---reports-and-books---research/canadas-lower-risk-guidelines-cannabis-pdf.pdf

Follow the rules set by your school/prom committee. Think about the consequences of your actions, have fun, and make this a night to remember!

Make a plan, set limits, and stick to it. If you don't plan to use substances don't let your peers influence you.

Have a Party Partner, a friend that will: be around for the whole party, be responsible for each other, step in if something is happening that doesn't seem right, and make sure that you both get home safely.

Keep it fun, have some mocktails or non-alcoholic champagne, along with some water. If you are drinking, **keep track of your intake and drink slowly**, and for every alcoholic drink have one non-alcoholic drink.

Avoid using multiple substances. Mixing alcohol with cannabis, vapes, or other substances can increase your level of impairment, impact your decision making abilities, and increase your risk of harm. Avoid combining substances if you are on any type medication. *A drug's legality does not mean that it is better or worse, they all change the way you think, behave, and act.*

Know what's in your drink and substances. It's impossible to know what is in substances just by looking at them so be cautious and don't take something from someone you don't know.

Save a life, carry naloxone. If you or someone else is having a party make sure there is a naloxone kit on hand. Learn more at wecoss.ca

Consider your physical condition (your body weight, mood, health, amount of sleep you've had, and the amount of food in your stomach) as it plays a role in determining how substances will affect you, and know everyone responds to the same substances differently.

Make a plan to get home safely, don't drive or get in a car with someone who has been using substances. Call for a ride if you need one.

Alcohol and substance use affects your decision-making abilities. Be cautious of getting into sexual situations when you've been drinking. Alcohol and substance use may lead you into situations you might have avoided if you were sober.

Appendix C: Protect Yourself from Sexual Violence Tip Sheet

PROTECT YOURSELF from Sexual Violence

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Sexual violence means that someone forces or manipulates someone else into unwanted sexual activity without consent.	T	F
2. One in four girls and one in eight boys have been sexually abused by the time they are eighteen.	T	F
3. Male students have higher rates of physical and sexual violence than female students.	T	F
4. You can ALWAYS say no to a kiss, a touch, or whatever, even if you said yes before.	T	F
5. Lack of consent turns sexual contact into an act of sexual violence.	T	F
6. Once a consent is given it cannot be withdrawn.	T	F

TIPS on how to avoid Sexual Violence

- Be respectful towards each other.
- Draw the Line. Set your boundaries and respect others boundaries.
- NEVER feel obligated to do more with someone if you don't feel right or comfortable.
- Don't use force, threats or violence in your relationships.
- Get consent. Only a sober 'yes' means yes.
- If you feel uncomfortable exit the scene as quickly as possible.
- Stand up for yourself, trust your instinct and get help when things don't feel right.
- If you see someone that may be at risk for sexual assault: intervene, if you can do so safely, or get help.
- Let's work together and **STOP** sexual violence.



Every choice we make and every action we take has the power to make a difference!

Answers to True and False questions: 1. True 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True 6. False

Appendix D: How to Talk to Your Teen About Prom: Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet



PARENTS & CAREGIVERS OF TEENS

Your teen may be going to many parties, from house parties to prom. Before your teen and their friends head out, talk with them about making safe and responsible decisions.

DISCUSS YOUR TEEN'S PLANS WITH THEM; IT MAY BE UNCOMFORTABLE BUT IT HAS TO BE DONE.



CONSIDER THESE POINTS TO HELP GUIDE YOUR TALK

- Setting a curfew.
- No after-parties in rented hotel rooms/homes.
- Discuss the importance of being reachable, that is keeping a cell phone turned on and charged.
- Discuss having a Party Partner. A friend that will: be around for the whole night, be mutually responsible for each other, step in if something is happening that does not seem right, and make sure that the other gets home safely.
- Plan transportation options and offer non-judgemental support to get home safely. Stress to your teens to never get into a car with a driver who has been using substances.
- Remind your teen to always keep an eye on their drink to make sure nothing is slipped into it.
- Discuss consent including knowing and respecting their own boundaries as well as the boundaries of others.

ARE YOU AN ADULT HOSTING THE PARTY? HERE ARE SOME FACTS FOR YOU.

- It's not the role of the police to monitor parties on behalf of parents.
- If an adult/ parent provides alcohol/drugs to those who are underage, they can be charged.

Commit; take the Parents' party pledge . . .

I promise you the unconditional option of calling me at any time for help or advice. That includes picking you up at any time of the day or night, with a promise not to shame or embarrass you in front of others. I always welcome the chance of being part of your smart and safe decisions.

You may feel like your teen is tuning you out but, the truth is, they are listening more than you think. In fact, parents have been shown to have an important influence when it comes to teens' use of alcohol and other drugs. Visit MADD's [Parent Action Pack](http://madd.ca/media/docs/parent-action-pack.pdf) (<http://madd.ca/media/docs/parent-action-pack.pdf>) for stats and info for your talk.

For more information visit the following websites:

[Sexual Assault Crisis Centre-Party Safe Tips](https://saccwindsor.net/party-safe/safe-partying-tips-1/)
<https://saccwindsor.net/party-safe/safe-partying-tips-1/>

[Prevnet.ca- Addressing Youth Dating Violence](https://youthdatingviolence.prevnet.ca/#:~:text=As%20Canada's%20Healthy%20Relationships%20Hub,and%20reduce%20youth%20dating%20violence.)
<https://youthdatingviolence.prevnet.ca/#:~:text=As%20Canada's%20Healthy%20Relationships%20Hub,and%20reduce%20youth%20dating%20violence.>

Appendix E: Social Media Images

Safer partying tips for PROM NIGHT

- Stick with friends you trust
- Know what's in your drink
- Have your phone fully charged & on you
- Get consent - only a sober 'yes' means yes
- Make a plan to get home safely

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Safer partying on Prom Night
IF YOU CHOOSE TO CONSUME, REDUCE YOUR RISKS:

- Make a plan, set limits & stick to it
- If you choose to drink, pace yourself & drink water
- If you choose to smoke cannabis, start low & go slow
- Avoid using multiple substances together
- Plan a safe Ride Home

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Safer Partying TALKING GUIDE

- Know your teen's plans – where & who they will be with
- Discuss having a Party Partner (a trusted friend to stick with)
- Remind them to always keep an eye on their drink
- Talk about consent – knowing & respecting boundaries

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