

# HERE ARE THE FACTS

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, MORE THAN 70% OF TEENS SAY THEY HAVE CONSUMED AN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BY THE AGE OF 18

Sure, they say drinking is bad, but maybe it's just a little bit more complicated than that. According to NIAAA, 34.4% of teens (12-20) have participated in underage drinking. Officer Scott Gillespie has multiple thoughts and opinions about underage drinking; he explains the cons of it and how it could be beneficial for kids to have a drinking experience before going to college.

"Colorado has kind of a unique law and I, I appreciate it. What it allows for is if you're supervised by your parents in your home, you are allowed to consume alcohol as a teenager, but it has to be within your house and within supervision of your parents and it can't be too excessive to where you're injuring yourself," Gillespie said.

"So I feel like what that allows is parents to coach their children on what it looks like to responsibly consume alcohol or even like eliminate some of the novelty of the curiosity of what it tastes like or what it feels like and that kind of stuff."

Underage drinking has been an issue for decades, but not nearly as big of an issue as it is today (NIAAA). There are a lot of factors that make underage drinking a bigger problem than it needs to be.

"Alcohol, in general, lowers your inhibitions and when you're a teenager, you already suck at judgment and so when you drink something that also modifies your judgment. I've seen anything from car accidents that you expect to health consequences like ulcers, things like that. Then the worst part is when you're dealing with

sexual assaults or physical fights that take place on the tail end of drinking. So a lot of times the actual substance itself isn't horrible, it's more of a combination of lack of a frontal lobe and bad judgment. Plus, alcohol translates to injuries and all kinds of horrible things," Gillespie said.

Partying over the weekends or getting 'lit' before football games or homecoming all involve our school. Finding a solution to this issue is essential to our generation because it only going to get worse from what it is like today.

"A program called DARE [took] the approach [to] 'just say no.' What that kind of taught adults in their conversations with teenagers was, that all you have to do is say no. I don't think that actually works. I don't think it's simply saying no and refusing to talk about it does any favors for anybody. I feel like the more that you can have conversations about this [the better]," Gillespie said. "For example, in my office, sometimes we're talking about peoples' experiences with it. I can just talk about it and be like, 'hey, well what was that experience like? Was that awesome? Was that great? You're going to do that again this weekend?' I can coach people into that."

In 2021, 1,573 people died from a motor vehicle accident due to alcohol under the age of 21 (NIAAA). To put this into perspective, there are 1,854 students enrolled at Castle View High School. That is almost our entire school's worth of death. So is drinking really worth it?

**59%**  
**OF TEENAGERS HAVE USED ALCOHOL BY THE END OF HIGH SCHOOL**

**3.2M**  
**OF YOUTH AGES 12-20 REPORTED BINGE DRINKING AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST MONTH**

**46%**  
**OF 16-17 YEAR OLDS REPORTED USING ALCOHOL AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFE**

**72%**  
**OF YOUTH REPORTED THAT THEY OBTAINED ALCOHOL FOR FREE THE LAST TIME THEY DRANK**

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