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## Parent Discussion Guide

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We believe that it is important to engage your son or daughter in a conversation about the choices and challenges they may encounter regarding alcohol and tobacco consumption. Believe it or not, your advice and example mean a lot to your student. Communication is key to helping your son or daughter make responsible, healthy, life enriching decisions and successfully transition into both college and adulthood. The following are some tips and talking points to help you get started with this important conversation.

### Talking points for your discussion with your student

- What is your perception of alcohol use at UST? What have you heard or seen that has led to that perception?
- There is a big gap between student perceptions and what is really happening on campus. How do you think these misperceptions are created and perpetuated? What can you do to challenge and resist myths like "college students drink and party all of the time" and "it is necessary to drink in order to meet people and make friends."
- What are some ways that you can resist peer pressure to make decisions about drinking or smoking that don't fit with your personal values?
- What are some things you can say or do if other students' choices regarding alcohol use interfere with your studying or sleeping?
- The majority of students make wise decisions about drinking and driving. What are some ways that you can help prevent DWI?

### Tips in discussing alcohol and tobacco consumption with your student

- Encourage your student to assert his/her right to a safe college environment. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment placing students at increase risk, jeopardizing their safety and personal health.
- Remind your student that he/she is part of a large, sensible majority that makes healthy choices regarding the use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Help your student challenge assumptions and myths about the drinking scene at UST. Remind them that many students choose to be alcohol free and the majority of students make healthy decisions regarding their use of alcohol.
- Refrain from glamorizing "fun" connected with the use of alcohol.
- Let your student know that you are available to "listen" when ever they want to talk or have a concern about their academic or social life. Keep up communication with your student via letters, phone calls or e-mail while they are at college.
- Engage your student in dialogue about his or her goals, your expectations and how you can help.
- Discuss issues relating to parties, such as being careful not to attend events that are notorious for excessive drinking or other drug use. Help them strategize how to refuse offers alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Explore safe alternatives to riding with an intoxicated person or driving under the influence.
- Remind your student that it is illegal for persons under age 21 to drink or possess alcohol or a fake ID.
- Have this conversation more than once and do not wait for your student to initiate it.

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Information provided by:

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