

Christian Psychiatrist Issues Warning About Binge Drinking

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported last week that binge drinking among young women aged 18 to 34 continues at steady levels, with one in eight women consuming four or more drinks in a single sitting. That is nearly 14 million young women who engage in binge drinking. This rate has remained steady over an approximately 15-year period.

Addiction and mental health helpline provider Lighthouse Network () offers parents hope for healing while shedding light on warning signs that may point to a binge drinking problem in their daughters.

“Binge drinking is a significant problem for young people: It clouds the mind and decision-making, bringing harmful emotions strongly to the surface and leads to strong impulsive behaviors,” says Dr. Karl Benzio, psychiatrist, founder and executive director of Lighthouse Network. “So many unintended consequences result, such as relationship strain, academic or employment struggles, financial difficulties, teen pregnancy, cutting, drug use, STDs, or legal problems including DUIs can result from binge drinking.

“Unfortunately, depression, full-blown addiction and suicide attempts are the most dangerous outcomes,” he continues. “We strive to show parents warning signs, as well as to help teens and young women learn to make better, healthier decisions that lead to bright, hopeful futures—an outcome to which sustained binge drinking never leads.”

Benzio states that alcohol poisoning is a major sign of an alcohol binge, and that parents should be aware of the symptoms as some can be life-threatening, which include:

- Vomiting while awake or passed out.

- Confusion.
- Unable to stand up or remain standing without assistance.
- Unresponsive to talking or shouting but still conscious (stupor).
- Clammy or cool skin, or bluish to purplish skin that appears very flushed.
- Hypothermia—colder body temperature.
- Not responsive to any physical contact, i.e., shaking, poking, pinching.
- Passed out, especially if unresponsive to any attempt to wake.
- Slow, irregular breathing.
- Irregular pulse or a pulse rate slower than 40 beats per minute.

Benzio has developed his unique SPEARS decision-making process and the “Rewind Life” curriculum that can help young people make better decisions in all aspects of life, including decisions about substance use in social situations.

“We teach young people that God has so much more planned for their lives, and alcohol derails the plan and makes it hard to achieve,” concludes Benzio. “By showing people through our unique curricula and treatment programs that there is true purpose and joy to be found in life, we are often able to achieve a more lasting recovery from alcohol use than patients achieve using the traditional, more medically oriented programs, alone.”

In addition to guidance and treatment referrals, Lighthouse Network’s *Not Alone* short radio feature is designed

specifically for parents of addicts, and offers insight, advice and encouragement for parents of addicts who feel alone or as though their situation is unique.

“In addition to our unique, free, national Addiction and Counseling Helpline, we’re so pleased to offer *Not Alone* to parents of addicts, who often feel alone, isolated, and as though they’ve failed their child,” said Benzio. “Between the book *Hit By a Ton of Bricks*, resources and information in *Not Alone* and our ‘Parenting Addicts’ section on our website, and a professional counselor who has parented addicts himself, we can offer parents a beacon to help them navigate the storm of having an addicted child while using sound psychological and Biblical principles to guide the process.”