



Discussion Guide

**Sponsored by Home Box Office (HBO), HBO Family and
Recording Artists, Actors and Athletes Against Drunk Driving (RADD)
in partnership with**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)

National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS)

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)

BACCHUS & GAMMA Peer Education Network

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Documentary SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol.....	1
Who Should Participate	2
Using This Guide	2
Notes to Facilitators	3
Discussion Ground Rules	5
Before-Viewing Activities	5
Before-Viewing Test.....	5
Before-Viewing Audience Participation Questions	5
Introducing the Documentary.....	5
After-Viewing Activities	6
After-Viewing Audience Participation Questions	6
After-Viewing Audience Participation Exercises.....	7
After-Viewing Test.....	7
Individual Action Plan.....	7
Facts and Stats	8
Resources and Opportunities for Long-Term Involvement	8
Organizations and Reports	9
Community Action Ideas	10
Peer-to-Peer Activities for Youth	10
Encouraging Medical Screening and Brief Intervention	10
Strong Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Policy and Enforcement	10
Joining or Establishing a DWI Task Force or a Similar Institutional Body	10

Introduction

Alcohol use by young people is dangerous—as well as illegal. Underage drinking is associated with physical and emotional violence, suicide, sexual assaults, and academic failure. Because an adolescent’s brain is still developing in crucial ways, using alcohol makes teens more vulnerable to impairments in memory and learning. Yet alcohol remains the most widely used drug among teens.

Driving while intoxicated (DWI) is a major cause of injury and death on the nation’s highways, no matter what the age of the driver. However, the *leading* cause of death among young people between 16 and 20 years old is traffic crashes—and alcohol is implicated in one-third of those deaths. But death may not be the worst-case scenario. Hundreds of thousands of teenagers each year suffer long-term injuries—sometimes lifetime injuries—from crashes that are alcohol-related. These injuries have an impact on everyone: the teen, the teen’s family and friends, the teen’s community, and society in general, costing billions of dollars each year.

Despite years of changes in the law and educational campaigns by government and private entities, too many young people still get behind the wheel while impaired or ride in a car with an impaired driver. Moreover, many parents mistakenly believe that they are promoting safety by allowing their children and the friends of their children to drink at home. This practice is dangerous and suggests to teens by implication that their parents do not take underage drinking seriously. In addition, parents who allow this behavior at home may not understand that it is illegal in many areas of the country—adding a liability issue to the ethical concerns. For teens, the combination of driving inexperience, impulsive behaviors, and functional impairment due to alcohol use, is frequently tragic. For parents who are permissive about underage drinking, the tragedy can be compounded.

That is why we are turning to community leaders for assistance with this totally preventable problem. We believe that awareness levels can be raised, behavior can be changed, and young lives can be saved—but only if the information reaches into every neighborhood across the country. Some of the startling statistics about underage drinking and driving can be found in Facts and Stats on page 7.

This package contains an HBO documentary, a discussion guide, a lesson plan for teachers, and supplemental materials. You *can* make a difference in your own community. We believe this Kit provides the material to help you do it.

The Documentary

SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol

HBO Family created this documentary to heighten awareness of the underage drinking and driving problem in the United States. The network sought out the award-winning team of Kirk Simon and Karen Goodman, who proposed the concept of filming whatever “came through the door” as young people involved in underage drinking and driving collisions were brought to the University of Maryland’s R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

HBO courageously agreed to embrace the Simon/Goodman approach, which, by its very nature, came with no script and no plot. The resulting footage—more dramatic and compelling than anyone expected—was assembled in a manner that teaches without preaching about the toxic mix of underage drinking and driving.



To expand the reach of this compelling film, HBO contacted RADD: The Entertainment Industry's Voice for Road Safety (Recording Artists, Actors, and Athletes Against Drunk Driving). Impressed by the film's potential to have an impact on teens, the internationally-recognized nonprofit incorporated **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol** into its underage drinking prevention campaign and HBO responded by generously donating to RADD limited educational distribution rights to the documentary.

With HBO's support and a small grant from the National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) (www.NOYS.org), RADD formed a coalition and selected as its lead partners two fellow NOYS members—Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). SADD and FCCLA, both national membership organizations with chapters in middle schools and high schools throughout the country, are distributing more than 14,000 copies of **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol** to their affiliates.

SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol offers an unvarnished look at the results of underage drinking and driving as its consequences are brought to the shock trauma center by ambulance and helicopter. Thanks to the vision of the Simon/Goodman team, and the willingness of HBO to make its documentary available through RADD, your community now has the opportunity to have an unvarnished look at the results of underage drinking through **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol**.

Who Should Participate

The HBO documentary, **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol** (rated TV-14) is intended for viewing by a general audience, age 13 through adulthood. While having teenagers themselves view the film is important, much can be gained by having the participation of parents, teachers, clergy, and other community members. Indeed, some of the questions and the activities delineated later in this Discussion Guide might have a greater impact if opinions were expressed by people with differing (generational and other) points of view.

Thus, the methods used to announce the showing of the documentary—and the discussion to follow—should make clear who is invited. Flyers, posters, notices in newsletters and in local newspapers, for example, might ask teens to “bring their parents,” or students to “bring their teachers.” See samples at radd.org. Also, please note that all flyers, posters and other screening collateral must acknowledge that **this film was produced by HBO-Family and made available to RADD and the RADD Youth Coalition through the generosity of HBO.**

Using This Guide

This discussion guide has been developed as a tool to help facilitators create the most effective, most personal experience for viewers of the HBO documentary, **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol**. In each community where the documentary is shown, audience members should be able to take away from the ensuing discussion knowledge and resolve that is unique to the circumstances in their own environment.

If possible, discussion leaders should view the documentary and the trailer before it is shown publicly, so facilitators are not processing their own reactions while they are trying to lead a discussion. Leaders should also consider whether they wish to provide handouts to participants—for example, the list of resources found at the end of this Discussion Guide.



To help people get the most from viewing **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol** and the trailer that accompanies it, the discussion guide provides the following tools.

- *Introduction*, offering a brief description of the problems associated with underage drinking and driving
- The HBO Documentary: **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol**, a brief description of how the documentary came to be produced and the commitment of HBO and RADD to the issue of underage drinking and driving
- *Who Should Participate*, suggestions for involving teens, their parents, their teachers, and other community members
- *Discussion Ground Rules*, to help people engage in open and thorough inquiry
- *Before-Viewing Activities*
 - ▶ *Before-Viewing Test* administration, to put on paper what participants know (or think they know) prior to viewing the documentary and engaging in the discussion. The results of this and the *After-Viewing Test* (see below) can be used in your community to spur additional activity
 - ▶ *Before-Viewing Questions*, designed to explore what audience members believe *before* they see the documentary so that facilitators can tailor the discussion to promote an experience that will be of specific value in each community
- *Introducing the Documentary*, to prepare audience members for what they are about to see
- *After-Viewing Activities*
 - ▶ *After-Viewing Questions*, to explore what audience members believe *after* they view the documentary
 - ▶ *After-Viewing Exercises*, to gauge what participants have learned
 - ▶ *After-Viewing Test* administration, to put on paper what participants have learned since viewing the documentary and engaging in the discussion. The results of this and the *Before-Viewing Test* (see above) can be used in your community to spur additional activity
- *Individual Action Plan*, to begin effecting behavioral change
- *Facts and Stats*, some of the data that speak to the causes and costs associated with underage drinking and driving
- *Resources and Opportunities for Long-Term Involvement*
 - } *Organizations and Reports*, delineating information available online and offering Web site addresses
 - } *Community Action Ideas*, for individuals who wish to continue their support for these issues by becoming involved with others in ongoing advocacy.

Notes to Facilitators

We have made suggestions throughout the discussion guide about actions the facilitator might take for a successful project. To simplify the facilitator's role, we have gathered all of those suggestions and listed them below.



- **This DVD is licensed to RADD by HBO for screenings to non-paying audiences in chapters and schools for educational purposes only.** Any duplication or form of transmission via broadcast, cable, closed-circuit television or any other media is forbidden.
- A range of methods can be used to publicize your event, including articles in local media, appearances on local radio and television programming, articles in newsletters, and flyers posted in local retail establishments. Please note:
 - ↳ All publicity must acknowledge that this film was produced by HBO-Family and made available to RADD and the RADD Youth Coalition through the generosity of the Home Box Office Network. Furthermore, you may not make any separate use of the HBO name or logo or any music in the film.
 - ↳ You may not take clips or stills from the film and make them available on the Internet or via any other media. If any local media covering your screening request clips of the documentary, please direct them to email RADD at radd1@aol.com to arrange for permission from HBO.
 - ↳ For more information on reaching out to local media, sample media releases and sample press releases, please visit www.radd.org
- Consider promoting your event so that it attracts multigenerational groups—for example, parents as well as teens, teachers as well as students.
- We recommend that facilitators view the documentary and the trailer before it is shown publicly, so that discussion leaders are not processing their own reactions while they are trying to lead a discussion.
- Decide whether you wish to provide handouts to participants—for example, the list of resources found at the end of this Discussion Guide.
- Provide name tags so that people participating in the discussion will be able to refer to each other by name.
- Have the participants complete the Before-Viewing Test attached to this discussion guide. When everyone is done, collect and review the tests while your audience is viewing the documentary, so that the responses can be used in the discussion that follows.
- The Before-Viewing and After-Viewing questions and exercises are suggestions designed to get discussion started. Facilitators do not necessarily have to use them all, or even use them in the order they are listed. Rather, facilitators should allow participants to contribute to the conversation and, if needed, move the discussion forward by using the suggestions in this Guide.
- To enable the activities and results of this nationwide program to be tracked, the Before-Viewing and After-Viewing tests should be forwarded to:

Cheryl Neverman, Youth Team Leader
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street SW
NTI-111, Room 5118
Washington, DC 20590

However, facilitators may wish to keep copies of these documents so that the results can be used to spur interest for additional community efforts.

- When your event has concluded, consider using local media again to talk about what you did and what came out of it; and any long-term efforts that will be launched as a result. Media outlets interested in including clips of the documentary in a news story must contact RADD's communications agency, BLU MOON Group at 310.403.1221 or 310.245.1166 for a clip of the documentary and release form.

Discussion Ground Rules

- If the group is small enough, have all participants introduce themselves so that facilitators and other attendees know who is there.
- Create discussion procedures so that everyone understands they will be heard and no one can dominate the discussion or silence others.
- Use "active listening"—that is, repeat comments back to the individuals who said them to be sure that they were heard correctly and that everyone understands.
- Invite people to participate, especially those who may not have contributed to the conversation.

Before-Viewing Activities

Before-Viewing Test

Have the participants complete the Before-Viewing Test attached to this Discussion Guide. When everyone is done, collect and review them while your audience is viewing the documentary, so that the responses can be used in the discussion that follows.

Before-Viewing Audience Participation Questions

Pose the following questions to the members of your audience without judging the responses. This activity is designed to see what people think before they view the documentary.

- What do you think is the biggest problem associated with underage drinking?
- What do you imagine is the worst thing that can happen as a result of a drunk-driving collision?
- Do you think that some kinds of alcohol do not have the same impact on the drinker as other kinds of alcohol? Describe what you mean and what the differences are.
- Why do you think the laws of every state in the country make it illegal for people under age 21 to drink alcohol?

Introducing the Documentary

Please introduce the film by first letting the audience know that **the HBO documentary, *SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol* was produced by HBO-Family and made available to RADD and the RADD Youth Coalition through the generosity of the Home Box Office Network.** Explain to your audience that this documentary describes the tragedy of underage drinking and driving through the eyes of medical personnel, family members, friends, and the teens themselves. The film focuses on the devastation that occurs when a crash does *not* kill, describing instead what happens to everyone when young people survive a collision—and the far-reaching consequences of impaired survival.

The documentary was filmed at the University of Maryland's R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore. It was not staged. The producers filmed events that actually occurred while they were at Maryland Shock Trauma—and some of what occurred is graphic. You will see distraught family members and friends, and bloody victims as they are brought into the unit. We want you to be prepared—to understand what you will be seeing—because, even when you know what to expect, the impact of it can be powerful.

SHOW THE HBO DOCUMENTARY, *SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol*.

After-Viewing Activities

After-Viewing Audience Participation Questions

The following questions are intended to generate a discussion among audience members. Whether all of them are covered is not as important as having participants discuss what is significant to them and how they see the documentary having an impact on their own lives.

- What is your reaction to HBO's **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol**?
- Now that you have seen the film, what do you think is the worst thing that can happen as a result of a drunk-driving collision?
- In the documentary, Warren says "I never thought it would happen to me, not in a million years." Do you feel this way? Why?
- A man in the film says,

"Everybody thinks they are invincible—nothing can happen to me—and you just make that one dumb mistake and then that's it, your life changes forever."

Has your life ever changed in a matter of moments? Have you ever done something that you regretted immediately or even much later? What happened? How did it feel?

- At the end of the film one of the teenagers interviewed seems willing to make destructive choices again. Why do you think he has that attitude? What would you say to him? What would you say to his parents? Why do you think many young people don't take drinking all that seriously? Why do you think that some parents may not take their teen's drinking all that seriously?
- Would you call your parents or a trusted adult if you were someplace where people were drinking alcohol and you were worried about how to get home safely? What do you think your parents would say? Would you be willing to ask them? Why or why not?
- What would you do if your friend's parents allowed your friend to drink at home and, while visiting your friend, you, too, were offered alcohol? How do you think your own parents would react if they knew?

After-Viewing Audience Participation Exercises

The following exercises are suggestions to continue the discussion or to move it into an area the facilitator feels has not been covered.

- List all of the excuses you have heard, given, or can think of why someone would choose to drive after drinking. Write a response and offer an alternative to each excuse.
- List all the ways you have heard or seen where people have been physically hurt after drinking alcohol.
- Make a list of destructive decisions you have made and then write down why you made each of them. Indicate how many of these decisions were made because of peer pressure. How about boredom? Laziness? Fear? Make a list of responsible decisions you could have made in the same circumstances.
- Make a list of things you might do or say if you were at a place where people were consuming alcohol and you didn't want to drink. Can you see yourself saying or doing these things? Why or why not?
- Make a list of people who do *not* make decisions based on peer pressure. Describe the personal characteristics of these people.
- Make a list of people who make destructive decisions. How are those people different from the individuals you described who do not make decisions based on peer pressure?
- Make a list of people who will support you in making responsible decisions. Would your name appear on anyone else's list?
- Make a list of ways in which you think you can take action to deal with this problem in your own community.

After-Viewing Test

Have the participants complete the After-Viewing Test and collect them when everyone is done. Ask participants to discuss the differences between their Before-Viewing and After-Viewing answers. So that NHTSA can track responses across the country, the Before- and After-Viewing Tests should be forwarded to:

Cheryl Neverman, Youth Team Leader
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street SW
NTI-111, Room 5118
Washington, DC 20590

Note: Schools and groups that mail Before-Viewing and After-Viewing tests and Action Plans to NHTSA at the address above may be eligible to receive rewards from RADD (Supplies are limited. Specific items to be awarded will vary at the sole discretion of RADD.) For more information, please visit the *SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol* area at www.radd.org.

Individual Action Plan

Close the loop by asking each participant to develop an action plan to reduce underage drinking and drinking and driving. Some potential partners and activities are listed here and on the following pages. Include each level that applies.

- *Community Level:* Task forces involving parents, media, faith-based groups, police, schools, civic leaders, hospitals/EMS, chapters of national student organizations like FCCLA and SADD
- *School Level:* Clubs, SGA, students (diverse voices), awareness-raising activities, enforcement policies, educate/learn about safety and health risks (physical, mental)
- *Family Level:* Family meeting to discuss rules, rules enforcement, and available help (Alateen, Alanon and others)
- *Individual Level:* Reach out to a friend who is using; attend an Alanon or Alateen meeting with a friend or alone; participate in school or community activities listed above

Facts and Stats

The following statistics have been provided by the National Academies of Science report, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and *Teens Today 2003*, a study conducted by Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Liberty Mutual Group.

- Although young people between the ages of 16 and 20 account for only seven percent of the population, 15 percent of drivers involved in fatal crashes and 13 percent of drivers who had been drinking fall into that age range
- Young males account for 77 percent of alcohol-related youth fatalities
- Approximately 20 percent of eighth graders, 35 percent of tenth graders, and 48 percent of 12th graders report having consumed alcohol recently
- About 12 percent of eighth graders, 22 percent of tenth graders, and 28 percent of 12th graders report binge drinking (five drinks in a row) in the last two weeks
- Young people between ages 12 and 20 who responded to the National Academies of Science questionnaire indicated that the average age for first use of alcohol was 14
- Individuals who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol dependent than those who begin drinking at age 21
- Younger teens are more likely than older teens to drink alcohol because of peer pressure
- Teens who have a low “sense of self” are more likely to feel stress and depression and are more susceptible to peer pressure
- The costs to society of underage drinking are conservatively estimated to be \$53 billion annually
- In 2002, 2,442 young people ages 15 to 20 died in alcohol-related traffic crashes.

Resources and Opportunities for Long-Term Involvement

Individuals who are willing to come to an event such as the showing of the HBO documentary, **SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol**, tend to be a self-selecting group. That is, those who willingly attend such an event may already have an interest in the subject. Attracting the attention of those who do not have a preexisting interest in preventing underage drinking and driving may require longer-term commitment.

Many opportunities exist to help teens reject destructive decisions and develop reasons to make positive choices. For example, young people are less likely to participate in high-risk behavior if they are involved in community service, youth leadership, and other activities offered through youth-led organizations. Similar opportunities exist for adults to help teens avoid the heartbreak that can come from underage drinking and driving. Yet every community has young people who are already drinking and driving, and parents who don't know or don't want to know what their children are doing.

For those who are interested, the following organizations can provide information about programs that can be used effectively in schools and communities, and the suggested activities can provide opportunities for continuing involvement—and continuing success—in this important community issue.

Organizations and Reports

Alateen, <http://www.al-anon.org/alateen.html>.

American Academy of Pediatrics, <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/chm98dnd.htm>

FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America), through its FACTS (Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety) program, which has a CD available, www.fcclainc.org

Focus Adolescent Services, providing drug and teen substance abuse self-help and support groups, www.focusas.com/Alcohol.html.

Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, www.alcoholfreechildren.org.

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), www.madd.org and www.youthinaction.org.

Marin Institute, The (works to reduce alcohol problems through improving the physical and social environment and by advancing public health and safety), <http://www.marininstitute.org/Youth>.

National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA). The NCSA Web site can be accessed by going to www.nhtsa.gov and clicking on Crash Information.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>.

National Commission Against Drunk Driving, http://www.ncadd.com/youth_reso_center.cfm.

NOYS (National Organizations for Youth Safety), www.noys.com. The Web site offers tools for the NOYS *Speak Out and Make NOYS* program and a new NOYS program, *Project U-Turn*.

RADD (Recording Artists, Actors, & Athletes Against Drunk Driving), the entertainment industry's voice for road safety, www.radd.org.

Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility, National Academy of Sciences Report, <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309089352/html>.

SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), www.sadd.org.

Stop Impaired Driving Web site, <http://www.stopimpaireddriving> of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol>.

Web site for Teens, Office of National Drug Control Policy, http://www.freevibe.com/Drug_Facts/alcohol.asp

Youth and Underage Drinking: An Overview, Highlights from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, <http://www.health.org/govpubs/RPO990>.

Community Action Ideas

We have listed below some suggested areas of activity that participants might wish to pursue. These are only suggestions. To find out what is going on in your community, or whether your community is addressing an issue you think is important, contact your local police department or sheriff's office, the state police, and the schools. If these agencies cannot help you, try the Web site of the Governors Highway Safety Association, www.ghsa.org, and click on State Info to learn what your state's Highway Safety Office is doing.

Peer-to-Peer Activities for Youth

As peer leaders in your community, we encourage you to visit the NOYS Web site (National Organizations for Youth Safety, www.NOYS.org), and use one of the peer educator tools developed by NOYS youth to help you plan to make NOISE for positive change in your own school or community. Host a discussion group, plan ahead for a *Project U-Turn* teachable moment, create a *Make Your Parties Rock...Substance Free* event, or raise your voices to opinion leaders by conducting a *Speak Out & Make NOYS* session. All of these youth-developed resources are available free through the NOYS Web site and more resources are available from NOYS partner links.

Encouraging Medical Screening and Brief Intervention

Data compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that more than 50 percent of alcohol-involved drivers in fatal crashes have blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) at or above .16—twice the legal limit in most states. NHTSA data also show that a significant portion of dependent drinkers will seek treatment if it is recommended by health care professionals and that the behavior of a significant percentage of at-risk drinkers can be positively changed by receiving counseling from a credible source, such as a health care professional.

Thus, emergency physicians, nurses, trauma surgeons and other health care professionals in emergency department and trauma settings can have an immediate and direct impact on this high-risk population by using the “teachable moment”—when a drunk driver is brought in—to assess, counsel, and refer individuals to treatment. However, many physicians are reluctant to screen patients for an alcohol problem or take a blood alcohol measurement.

What is the procedure in the emergency room at your local hospital?

Strong Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Policy and Enforcement

State and local ABC laws and regulations govern, among other things, who may serve or be served alcohol, which alcoholic beverages may be sold, and under what circumstances. By strengthening and promoting enforcement of ABC laws and regulations, states and local communities can reduce the incidence of service to underage and intoxicated persons.

What kind of job is being done by the agency or agencies in your community that are responsible for enforcing ABC laws?

Joining or Establishing a DWI Task Force or a Similar Institutional Body

A task force devoted to the subject of impaired driving can be an effective tool to focus public attention on the problem, identify needed improvements to state and local systems, and garner public and political support to implement and fund such improvements. Since the early 1980s,



DWI task forces across the country have resulted in concrete measures designed to combat the impaired driving problem. For example, a New Mexico task force resulted in enactment of a major statewide legislative package that included the following:

- A law making it an offense to drive with a BAC level of .08 percent or higher
- Zero tolerance laws for underage drivers, making it an offense for those under 21 to drive with a BAC level of .02 percent or higher
- Increased severity of DWI penalties.

Is there a DWI task force where you live? What is it doing? Has someone from your community been appointed to the task force?