

Jackie Nitschke Center: Graduation party season is here; Should parties include alcohol?

Posted on Thursday, Apr 28, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

(Green Bay, Wis.) – Crossing the stage to receive your high school diploma is a memorable moment and significant accomplishment that most often includes celebrations with family and friends. While high school graduation symbolizes a transition to becoming a young adult, should those graduation parties include alcohol?

“Parents should really think twice before hosting a graduation celebration for students that includes alcohol,” said Tina Marie Baeten, Clinical Supervisor, of the Jackie Nitschke Center, which offers addiction treatment, support and education to individuals and families throughout Northeast Wisconsin. “Not only is underage drinking illegal, which can lead to significant liability issues, there are so many other problems associated with it. The risk of accidents and inappropriate behavior increases and can pave the way for long-term alcohol-related problems.”

Baeten explains that the teen brain is still developing and is sensitive to alcohol’s effects on judgement and decision-making. “People who start drinking as teens also greatly increase their chances of becoming addicted to alcohol as adults,” Baeten added. “Many of those that are in treatment at the Jackie Nitschke Center started drinking alcohol while in their teens”

Alcohol consumption can also lead to mental health concerns like low self-esteem, anxiety disorders, antisocial behavior and even an increased chance of addiction to other drugs.

“The best advice for parents is to steer clear of alcohol at graduation parties for students,” Baeten added. “By serving alcohol at a graduation party you may think it’s just a celebratory treat, but you are really putting your teen at risk. There are many other ways to commemorate high school graduation without alcohol.”