



Facing Addiction
with NCADD

**33rd Annual
Alcohol Awareness Month
April 2019**

ORGANIZER'S GUIDE

THEME:
“Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow”

Facing Addiction with NCADD, Inc.

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C O N T E N T S :

Alcohol Awareness Month Kit

Organizer's Guide includes the following materials:

- History, Theme
- Instructions on Use of Organizer's Guide
- Sample Proclamation
- Media Advisory & News Releases
- :30 Radio PSA Scripts
- Op-Ed Newspaper Article
- Letter to the Editor
- Suggested Grassroots Activities for States, Communities, Schools, Students, Colleges, Media, Religious Organizations and Parents
- Links to Additional Resources
- Thoughts on Stigma, by Marty Mann

About Facing Addiction with NCADD:

By unifying the voices of the 45 million American families directly affected by addiction Facing Addiction with NCADD is turning the tide on addiction. The recent merger between Facing Addiction and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) brought together the rich, nearly 75-year history of NCADD and the unparalleled coalition that launched Facing Addiction on October 4, 2015. Our board and our staff are working every day to bring together the best resources to reduce the human and social costs of addiction, every year, until this public health crisis is eliminated.



A Brief History of Alcohol Awareness Month:

Founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (now Facing Addiction with NCADD), Alcohol Awareness Month was established in 1987 to help reduce the stigma so often associated with alcoholism by encouraging communities to reach out to the American public each April with information about alcohol, alcoholism and recovery. Alcoholism, or alcohol use disorder, is a chronic, progressive disease, genetically predisposed and fatal if untreated. However people can and do recover. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 20 million individuals and family members are living lives in recovery!

An integral part of Alcohol Awareness Month is **Alcohol-Free Weekend**, which takes place on the first weekend of April (April 5-7, 2019) to raise public awareness about the use of alcohol and how it may be affecting individuals, families, businesses and our communities. During Alcohol-Free Weekend, Facing Addiction with NCADD extends an open invitation to all Americans to engage in three alcohol-free days. Those individuals or families who experience difficulty or discomfort in this 72-hour experiment are urged to contact local Facing Addiction with NCADD Affiliates, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Al-Anon to learn more about alcoholism and its early symptoms.

About the Theme:

The 2019 theme, “**Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow,**” is designed to draw attention to the pervasive impact that alcohol, alcoholism and alcohol-related problems have on young people, their friends, families and communities -- and to highlight the reality that help is available and recovery is possible.

Facing Addiction with NCADD is often the first call people make when difficulties with alcoholism and drug dependence strike. Uniquely positioned in communities across the country, Facing Addiction with NCADD and its network of local affiliates provide direct help and assistance to millions of individuals and families through education, prevention, intervention, information/referral, treatment and recovery support services.

Facing Addiction with NCADD’s Network of Affiliates and other Alcohol Awareness Month-supporting organizations across the country will use this theme as a way of addressing the Nation’s #1 public health problem through a broad range of media strategies, awareness campaigns, programs and events in their local communities.

**April 2019:
ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH
“Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow”**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
FOR USING FACING ADDICTION WITH NCADD ALCOHOL
AWARENESS MONTH KIT**

- 1) **Adaptation and Reproduction Permission:** All of the materials may be reproduced or adapted to your own needs and distributed within your community without permission. An acknowledgment of Facing Addiction with NCADD as the founder and sponsor of Alcohol Awareness Month and identification of our website (www.facingaddiction.org) as an information resource is required.
- 2) **Distribution:** Distribute materials to other organizations and local print media to begin generating early community interest in Alcohol Awareness Month.
- 3) **Localize Materials:** Add local information to the sample proclamation and press materials to greatly increase their appeal for officials and media in your community.
- 4) **Time Line:** The following time line may be helpful in using this kit:

FEBRUARY: Customize materials for use in your community; identify public official to issue proclamation; begin planning suggested grassroots activities or develop your own activities; place camera-ready advertisements.

LATE FEBRUARY: Submit live copy PSAs to radio stations.

MARCH: Adapt sample proclamation and press materials for local use; plan proclamation ceremony or press event to kick-off Alcohol Awareness Month; distribute media advisory and news release; make follow-up phone calls to media.

APRIL: Publicize each of your Alcohol Awareness Month activities to target audiences; submit letter to the editor and op-ed piece.



PROCLAMATION: Alcohol Awareness Month

Issuing a proclamation on behalf of your city, county, town, or State is an important tool in raising awareness for Alcohol Awareness Month. A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative such as Alcohol Awareness Month. Proclamations are typically signed and issued by Federal officials, governors, State legislators, or other government officials at the local level. By issuing a proclamation designating April as Alcohol Awareness Month, your community will bring attention to the problems of underage drinking, alcoholism/alcohol-use disorder and spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and that people can and do recover.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Select Officials:** Make a list of top public officials and other leaders in your community who have expressed concern about alcohol problems. Decide who would attract the most press coverage.
- 2) **Local Relevance:** Make the proclamation as relevant to your community as possible by adding local statistics to the sample below. You will have a much better chance of enlisting the support of a local public official.
- 3) **Who to Contact:** If anyone in your organization knows the person you want to issue the proclamation, have that individual send it directly to the official, then follow up with a phone call. If you don't have a personal contact, send the proclamation to the individual's press representative or community affairs liaison with a cover letter explaining your request and the activities that you have planned for Alcohol Awareness Month.
- 4) **Other Community Organizations:** Contact other concerned organizations in your community and ask them to participate in Alcohol Awareness Month. Ask them to send letters to the official urging him/her to issue a proclamation.
- 5) **Final Draft and Reproduction:** Once an official agrees to issue the proclamation, work with his/her office on a final draft. Reproduce the proclamation as large as possible for use as a prop on television.
- 6) **Electronic Copy:** Request a digital or electronic copy for use on your website, newsletter, with press releases, etc.
- 7) **Press Conference and Photos:** Schedule a press conference and/or photo opportunity with the official for the last week in March to announce Alcohol Awareness Month in your community. Use the event to highlight a successful local prevention program for youth and to publicize other activities you have planned. Invite local health, law enforcement and educational professionals to participate. Have someone take photos and post photos on your website, add to your newsletter.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 **HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

WHEREAS, excessive drinking is responsible for more than 4,300 deaths among underage youth each year; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States; and

WHEREAS, more than 1.6 million young people report driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year; and

WHEREAS, young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21; and

WHEREAS, drinking by persons under the age of 21 is linked to 189,000 emergency room visits; and

WHEREAS, the typical American will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18; and

WHEREAS, kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic crashes, and to have serious school-related problems; and

WHEREAS, a supportive family environment is associated with lowered rates of alcohol use for adolescents; and

WHEREAS, kids who have conversations with their parents and learn a lot about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50 percent less likely to use alcohol and drugs than those who don't have such conversations.

THEREFORE, I, (INSERT NAME OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL) now join Facing Addiction with NCADD and do hereby proclaim that April 2019 is Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA GOVERNED BY LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL). As the (INSERT TITLE OF LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIAL), I also call upon all citizens, parents, governmental agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, hospitals, schools and colleges in (REPEAT NAME OF AREA) to support efforts that will provide early education about alcoholism and addiction and increase support for individuals and families coping with alcoholism. Through these efforts, together, we can provide "**Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow**" for those in our community who are facing challenges with use of alcohol.

May it be so decreed.



MEDIA ADVISORY: Alcohol Awareness Month

Conducting media outreach and securing media placements are valuable ways to spread awareness about Alcohol Awareness Month and build interest in your event. Any form of media coverage for your event will highlight your efforts within the community and draw attention to the participants, volunteers, and sponsors of your event. Through media support, the local community is exposed to the Alcohol Awareness Month message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

Instructions for use of Media Advisory:

- 1) **Localize Media Advisory:** Substitute local information in the media advisory below, reproduce copies on your letterhead or news release paper and use it to alert the media to your Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation ceremony.
- 2) **Distribute Advisory:** Send the media advisory to the city desks of your local newspapers and to the assignment editors at your local radio and television stations. Be sure that they receive the advisory at least two days before the event.
- 3) **Media Follow-Up:** Call the media before your event to make sure that they received the advisory and try to persuade them to cover the event. Call the day before to remind them and answer any last minute questions.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY:

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW

For More Information, Contact:
(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)
(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

MEDIA ADVISORY

(INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL) TO PROCLAIM ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH IN (INSERT NAME OF AREA) AS PART OF A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE OF ALCOHOLISM AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

WHO: (INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL)
(INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION)
(INSERT NAMES AND TITLES OF ONE OR TWO OTHER NEWSWORTHY PARTICIPANTS)

WHAT: (INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL) will proclaim that April is Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA) and join Facing Addiction with NCADD in a national call to action to help individuals, families and communities coping with alcohol-related problems and alcoholism. Hundreds of communities across the country will participate in

this grassroots effort to highlight the effects of alcoholism and to highlight prevention, treatment and recovery resources, including help that is available.

WHERE: (INSERT LOCATION)
(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)

WHEN: (INSERT DATE)
(INSERT TIME)



NEWS RELEASE: Alcohol Awareness Month

Instructions for use of News Release:

1) **Localize News Release:** Substitute local information in the news releases below, reproduce copies on your letterhead or news release paper to inform media that your local public official has proclaimed that April is Alcohol Awareness Month in your community.

2) **Distribution of Release:** Give the news releases to press covering the proclamation ceremony. Send copies to the city desks of your local newspapers and to the assignment editors at your local radio and television stations. They should receive the releases shortly before the events take place. Even if they don't send a reporter, a story can be written.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 **HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

TO ANNOUNCE: Alcohol Awareness Month

For More Information, Contact:
(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)
(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

For Release (INSERT DATE AND TIME OF EVENT):

(INSERT NAME OF OFFICIAL) PROCLAIMS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH IN (INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY) AND JOINS NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE OF ALCOHOLISM AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

(INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL) today, (INSERT DATE), proclaimed that April

is Alcohol Awareness Month in (INSERT NAME OF AREA) and joined Facing Addiction with NCADD in a national grassroots campaign to highlight the critical public health issue of alcoholism and its impact on individuals, families and the community, while highlighting resources available to help.

“(INSERT QUOTE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM AND THE FAMILY FROM PUBLIC OFFICIAL)” said (INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL).

“(INSERT QUOTE DESCRIBING LOCAL EFFORTS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN COPING WITH ALCOHOLISM FROM REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION)” said (INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION).

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT LOCAL ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH ACTIVITIES).

Alcohol Awareness Month, sponsored by Facing Addiction with NCADD since 1987, encourages local communities to take action to help individuals, families and children affected by alcoholism.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING YOUR ORGANIZATION)

(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW

TO ANNOUNCE: Alcohol-Free Weekend

For More Information, Contact:

(INSERT NAME & TITLE OF LOCAL CONTACT)

(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

For Immediate Release:

ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND TO BE OBSERVED APRIL 5-7, 2019

Alcohol-Free Weekend, traditionally observed during Alcohol Awareness Month in April, is scheduled for April 5-7, 2019.

Alcohol Awareness Month, founded and sponsored by Facing Addiction with NCADD since 1987, is a national grassroots effort observed by communities throughout the United States to support prevention, research, education, intervention, treatment and recovery from alcoholism and alcohol-related problems.

During Alcohol-Free Weekend (April 5-7, 2019), Facing Addiction with NCADD and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) ask parents and other adults to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages for a 72-hour period to demonstrate that alcohol isn't necessary to have a good time. If participants find it difficult to go without alcohol during this period, they are urged to call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER) for information about alcoholism.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION IS DOING TO HELP THE COMMUNITY OBSERVE ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND)

Alcohol Awareness Month offers community organizations concerned about individuals, families and children an opportunity to work together to not only raise awareness and understanding about the negative consequences of alcohol, but to highlight the need for local action and services focused on prevention, treatment and recovery.

(INSERT PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION)

(INSERT DATE OF DISTRIBUTION)



:30 RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS: Alcohol Awareness Month

Public service announcements (PSAs) encourage individuals in need of treatment and recovery services to seek help. Distribute the live-read PSA scripts to local radio stations to promote Alcohol Awareness Month. You can identify which stations are most appropriate for your target audience, considering demographic data such as age, gender, race, and location.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Localize PSA:** Adapt any or all of the “live copy” radio scripts for local use.
- 2) **Finalize Script:** Type each script, double-spaced, on your letterhead with the name of a contact person from your organization.
- 3) **Distribution of PSAs:** Try to submit scripts to radio public service directors in your community by mid-late February. Your chances of getting them aired may increase if you give each radio station a different set of scripts.
- 4) **Media Follow-Up:** Follow up with a phone call to the public service director 3-5 days after you submit the scripts asking if they have arrived and if broadcast during April will be possible.

5) **Media Reminder:** If the public service director was receptive to your first phone call, follow up with an additional call in late March to remind him/her of the PSA.

6) **Thank You:** Send a thank you note to the manager of any radio station that airs one of your PSAs.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 **HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

FOR PARENTS:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want parents to know that with your help, progress is being made in the struggle to address underage drinking in our community. To join us in providing “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Call and help us to prevent underage drinking.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and if you think your child is drinking just to “have a good time,” think again: many kids drink alone because they are bored or depressed. This puts them at greater risk for developing alcoholism. To provide “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). You can make a difference.

FOR YOUTH:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want young people to remember that you don’t have to drink if you don’t want to. Who says party animals have to set the agenda? For more information about finding “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow,” (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER).

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want to remind you of several tragic reasons, besides the law, to take alcohol-related problems and alcoholism seriously: highway death, drowning, suicide, violent injury, disrupted families and unwanted pregnancy. For more information about getting “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Call today and help us save a life.

FOR SCHOOLS:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that despite the legal drinking age of 21, people age 12 to 20 years drink 13 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S., more than 90 percent of which is in the form of binge drinking. For more information about underage drinking in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). You can make a difference.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that drinking is associated with the leading causes of death among young people, including car crashes, murder and suicide. Get involved. Join us in providing “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” in (INSERT NAME OF AREA). Call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Don’t wait till it’s too late.

ALCOHOL-FREE WEEKEND:

During Alcohol-Free Weekend (April 5-7, 2019), Facing Addiction with NCADD and (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) ask parents and other adults to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages for a 72-hour period to demonstrate that alcohol isn’t necessary to have a good time. If participants find it difficult to go without alcohol during this period, we urge them to call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER) for information about alcoholism. That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER)

DRINKING AND DRIVING:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that even though most teenagers know that you should not drink and drive, nearly a third still accept rides from drivers who have been drinking. For more information about how to keep our kids safe in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Help save a life.

GENERAL USE:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) remind you that if your drinking has caused problems in your relationships, at work, at home, financially, physically or legally, it’s time to get “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow.” For more information about alcoholism and recovery in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Help is available right now.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want you to know that if you are concerned about your own use of alcohol or that of a friend, family member or child, help is available. For more information about alcohol problems in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That’s (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER). Call today for the information you need.

IN THE WORKPLACE:

April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Facing Addiction with NCADD and the (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) want to remind employers that alcohol-related problems and alcoholism cost employers billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, accidents and poor job performance. For more information about alcoholism and recovery in (INSERT NAME OF AREA), call (INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER). That's (REPEAT PHONE NUMBER) to provide "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow."



OP-ED NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: Alcohol Awareness Month

Writing and placing an op-ed or bylined piece in a print or online media outlet can be critical to raising awareness for Alcohol Awareness Month. An op-ed is a way for you to express your opinion and perspective on a certain subject or initiative. To gain additional attention for your op-ed, reach out to well-known organizations in your community and offer to co-write an op-ed or online article with them. Having an established partner might catch the eye of an editor and increase the chances that your op-ed is published.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Contact Person:** Call the editorial page of the most widely circulated newspaper/media outlet in your city. Ask if they accept "op-ed" pieces and find out the name of the person to whom they should be directed.
- 2) **Write Op-Ed:** Type the sample cover letter, on your organization's letterhead, for signature by one of your board members or the head of your organization. Type the sample op-ed double-spaced on blank paper. Submit both the cover letter and the op-ed to the appropriate person.
- 3) **Follow-Up:** Follow up with a phone call to the appropriate person several days later. Ask if the op-ed has arrived and whether it is being considered for publication.
- 4) **Denied, Try Again:** If your initial attempt is unsuccessful, repeat the process with other newspapers/media outlets in your area, but make sure that no more than one newspaper/media outlet at a time is considering your op ed. If one does not agree to publish it, submit the op-ed to other newspapers/media outlets.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW

Dear Editor:

April 2019 is Facing Addiction with NCADD's 33rd Annual Alcohol Awareness Month. Following the leadership of Facing Addiction with NCADD, thousands of communities throughout the country are joining together to focus on the number one public health issue -- alcohol-related problems and alcoholism and their effect on individuals, families and communities. (INSERT NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION) is leading that effort locally.

And the news is not all bad.

We hope that you will consider publishing the enclosed op-ed piece to stimulate discussion about one of the most important public health issues in (INSERT NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME & TITLE)
(INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION)

SAMPLE OP-ED:

Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

All around us in (ADD NAME OF COMMUNITY), it is estimated that (XX) people are in recovery from alcoholism. You may not see them or know them, but they are contributing to our businesses, connecting with their families, and giving back to the community. They have struggled with their own personal nightmares and have set their feet solidly on a path toward hope. Yet, for others to join them and be a part of building a stronger, healthier community, we need to take action – now. By working together, we can make a difference in the life of someone in need and help fulfill the promise of a more hopeful tomorrow for generations to come.

Alcoholism does not discriminate – it affects people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, geographic regions, and socioeconomic levels. And too many people are still unaware that alcoholism is a disease that can be treated, just like we treat other health disorders such as diabetes and hypertension. An estimated (NUMBER) people needed treatment last year in (COMMUNITY/CITY/TOWN/STATE), and we need to address this real issue.

Having (BEEN IN RECOVERY FOR XX YEARS / WORKED IN THE RECOVERY FIELD FOR XX YEARS / OTHER STATEMENT OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE), I have seen firsthand the benefits of recovery. Individuals who embrace recovery achieve improved mental and physical health, as well as stronger relationships and a sense of self-worth.

Alcohol is a drug – a powerful, mood-altering drug – and alcoholism is a chronic disease, from which people can and do recover. Over the past two decades, scientific research has revolutionized our understanding of how alcohol and drugs affect the body and the brain. We now know that prolonged, repeated alcohol and drug use can result in fundamental, long-lasting changes in the body including brain structure and functioning.

Alcoholism and alcohol-related problems touch all Americans, directly or indirectly, as our nation's number one public health problem. Currently, nearly 15.1 million Americans have alcohol use disorder (AUD) or are alcoholic. People age 12 to 20 years drink 13 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S. and more than 90 percent is in the form of binge drinking. And, in purely economic terms, alcohol- use problems cost society more than \$249 billion per year due to lost productivity, health care costs, business and criminal justice costs.

Research indicates that alcohol use during the teenage years could interfere with normal adolescent brain development and increase the risk of developing alcohol use disorder. In addition, underage drinking contributes to a range of acute consequences, such as injuries, sexual assaults, and even deaths – including those from car crashes. Alcohol and drug use is a very risky business for young people and parents can make a difference. The longer children delay drinking and drug use, the less likely they are to develop problems associated with it. It's important to help your child make smart decisions about alcohol and drug use.

We all have an investment in reducing the devastating impact that alcohol has on us as individuals, family members and members of our communities. We need to educate ourselves – as parents, teachers, clergy, employers, counselors, friends and neighbors – about the devastating power of alcohol misuse and the healing power of recovery.

The good news is that we are making progress, and it is now estimated that more than 20 million Americans are living lives in recovery. These individuals have achieved healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally, and contribute in positive ways to their communities.

To this end, every April, people across America celebrate Alcohol Awareness Month, an initiative sponsored by Facing Addiction with NCADD. The theme of this year's celebration is "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow."

During Alcohol Awareness Month, we recognize the damaging effects of alcohol and alcoholism and renew our support for individuals battling to overcome addiction. "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow" urges all Americans to promote treatment and recovery options and to support all those whose lives have been affected.

(NAME OF ORGANIZATION) is celebrating Alcohol Awareness Month by holding a variety of informational and educational events (OR NAME SPECIAL EVENT) to raise public awareness and to reduce the stigma often associated with alcoholism -- stigma that prevents millions of individuals and families from seeking help. A huge turn-out at these events will send a signal that (NAME OF COMMUNITY) embraces recovery and wants to provide much-needed support. I urge local businesses, community organizations, colleges, schools, administrators, and government agencies to get involved in these activities. These are small and easy steps to take, and they can make a tremendous difference in the lives of many in our community. We must continue our efforts to reach out to those who are suffering and to help our next generation avoid the many problems associated with alcohol use disorder.

It's our kids we're talking about.

(INCLUDE AUTHOR NAME, TITLE, AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS THAT MAKE HIM OR HER AN EXPERT ON THIS TOPIC)



LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Alcohol Awareness Month

Media research shows that the letters to the editor section is one of the most widely read parts of the paper. It's a natural forum for sharing your opinion and story with your community.

Instructions for use:

- 1) **Write Letter:** Use the sample letter below to create your own letter, with local information, on your own letterhead and have it signed by the head of your organization.
- 2) **Submit and Follow-Up:** Submit the letter to the editor of the most widely read newspaper in your area. Follow up with a phone call to the letters department to ask if the letter has arrived and whether it is being considered for publication.
- 3) **Denied, Try Again:** If the letter is rejected, submit it to the editors of other daily and weekly newspapers, one at a time, in your area.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2019 **HELP FOR TODAY, HOPE FOR TOMORROW**

Dear Editor:

April is the 33rd Annual Alcohol Awareness Month. Founded and sponsored by Facing Addiction with NCADD for 33 years, the theme this year is: "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow."

No other substance is more widely used by America's youth than alcohol, making alcoholism and alcohol-related problems the number one public health problem in the United States.

Addressing this issue requires a sustained and cooperative effort between parents, schools, colleges, community leaders, and our youth. The widespread prevalence of underage drinking and the negative consequences it creates remain a stubborn and destructive problem despite decades of efforts to combat it.

Yet, there are four areas that have proven to be effective in prevention of this problem:

- 1) Curtailing the availability of alcohol to underage populations;
- 2) Consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations regarding alcohol purchase;
- 3) Changing cultural misconceptions and behaviors about alcohol use through education; and
- 4) Expanded access to treatment and recovery support for adolescents and their families.

But, time is running out. Studies reveal that alcohol consumption by adolescents results in brain damage – possibly permanent – and impairs intellectual development.

So, let's get started providing "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow." We can't afford to wait any longer.

Sincerely,
(INSERT NAME & TITLE)
(INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION)



SUGGESTED GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES: Alcohol Awareness Month

Organizing an event for Alcohol Awareness Month is a great way to celebrate people in recovery, their families, and others throughout the community who make living in recovery possible. Events help unite those already in recovery and can broadly spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

FOR STATES:

- Issue an Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation utilizing the theme, “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” (see sample proclamation) from the Governor’s Office.

FOR COMMUNITIES:

- Issue an Alcohol Awareness Month proclamation utilizing the theme “Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow” (see sample proclamation) from the Mayor’s Office.
- Offer public recognition to young people and community members who lead alcohol and other drug-free lifestyles.
- Observe “Alcohol-Free Weekend” (see sample news release). In some communities, family-oriented businesses provide discounts or free admission to members of the community who have signed a pledge to remain alcohol-free with an organization that works to prevent alcoholism and other drug addictions.
- Partner with local businesses (including fast food restaurants, book, video and music stores, movie theaters, skating rinks, bowling alleys and miniature golf courses) for alcohol-free youth events or promotions.
- Hold a “Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking” in your community.
- Schedule “Parent Empowerment Workshops” to raise awareness and understanding of issues of family recovery; to teach how adult role models both within and outside the family influence young people; to look at the effect of advertising; and to show how every parent can do his/her part to change social attitudes. The workshops will help parents maintain standards of conduct, let participants know that other parents support their standards and encourage community members to support and encourage recovery. They can be hosted by the PTA, churches, service clubs, and taken to local business. Hold them during the day, at lunch, at night or on weekends.
- Review school rules regarding the use of alcohol, paying particular attention to athletic codes, and determine if the rules are adequately enforced.
- Organize an Alcohol Awareness parade or rally.
- Counter the pressures on young people to drink alcohol through after-school programs, good recreational facilities, alternative programs for potential school drop-outs, job training, confidential health services and community service opportunities.
- Insert a list of self-help groups and local resources with public utility bills.
- Plan an Alcohol Awareness Month luncheon at a local hospital with guest speakers who represent the health community.

FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS:

- Organize alcohol-free extracurricular activities, sporting events, dances and rock concerts, using promotional items such as t-shirts and hats, and promote them to other students as alcohol-free activities.
- Use liners in school cafeteria trays to promote Alcohol Awareness Month.
- Ask local grocery stores to provide quantities of grocery bags to schools and ask students to illustrate these bags with Alcohol Awareness Month messages. Return the illustrated bags to the grocery stores for use with customers during April.
- Raise money to support Facing Addiction with NCADD or for Facing Addiction with NCADD Affiliates, or for alcohol prevention curricula and public education campaigns through school walk-a-thons, raffles, athletic events, auctions, concerts, plant and rummage sales, and dinners.
- Guidance counselors can develop a checklist regarding college alcohol policies to assist students and parents in their selection of schools.
- Administrators can examine advertising solicited by the school, including student newspapers and yearbooks, to assure that there is a consistent and appropriate message regarding no use of alcohol. They can also examine policy that is used in the selection of favors for dances to assure that there is a consistent no-use message for people under age 21. If a change in these policies seems advisable, use Alcohol Awareness Month as an opportunity to announce them.
- Teachers can teach critical skills for watching television and understanding selling techniques and commercials during Alcohol Awareness Month. Ask students to clip print ads for alcoholic beverages and bring them to class for discussion. Students can learn that drinking isn't a way to feel or be "independent." Rather, students can learn that they are being "influenced" to drink and that independence from advertising influences really means not drinking. Also ask students to prepare a list of other "pro-drinking" influences, including sponsorships of sporting events and rock concerts, and promotional items such as t-shirts and hats.

FOR STUDENTS:

- Remember that use of alcohol is your decision and that drinking is not necessary for having a good time. • Know that "Drinking Too Much Too Fast Can Kill You" and that alcohol poisoning, a drug over-dose, is more common than many people think.
- Avoid situations where someone else's alcohol consumption or other drug use may put you at risk.
- Always respect another person's decision not to drink alcohol.
- If you are concerned about yourself, a friend or family member, call Facing Addiction with NCADD and our Network of Affiliates TODAY! We will connect you to someone who is specifically trained and successfully experienced in helping individuals and families dealing with alcohol-related problems.

FOR COLLEGES:

- Raise awareness of the fact that alcohol, the drug of choice for college students -- and binge drinking are key factors in academic and social problems on American campuses. Recognize the link between serious campus problems and alcohol: vandalism, date rape, poor academic performance, dropouts, injuries and death.
- Appoint a task force of school administrators, faculty, students, Greek system representatives and others to make recommendations for a broad range of policy and program changes to reduce alcohol- and other drug-related problems, and provide the resources necessary for implementing and promoting such changes.
- Provide maximum opportunities for students to live in an alcohol-free environment and to engage in stimulating, alcohol-free recreational and leisure activities. Increase programming and social activities at the beginning of the academic year when students may be more susceptible to high-risk drinking.
- Enforce a “zero tolerance” policy on the illegal consumption of alcohol by students both on and off campus and take steps to reduce the opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumni to legally consume alcohol on campus by limiting places and times for drinking; prohibiting drunkenness; regulating conditions of use; and not sanctioning a “bar” on campus.
- Establish alcohol education programs on college campuses that include information on alcoholism prevention and treatment, and stress the non-use of alcohol as a healthy and viable option. Support programs and services, including housing for students in recovery is essential.
- Ban alcohol sales at sporting arenas, or establish alcohol-free seating sections.
- Eliminate alcoholic beverage advertising and promotion in all forms from university and college campuses, including alcohol industry sponsorship of college activities.
- Form “Town/Gown” alliances with community leaders to encourage commercial establishments that promote or sell alcoholic beverages to curtail illegal student access to alcohol and adopt responsible alcohol marketing and service practices.
- Encourage prevention efforts by having students and faculty direct studies in their discipline toward college drinking problems.
- Organize and promote alcohol-free activities during spring break.

FOR FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES:

- Sponsor non-alcoholic rush or membership recruitment activities.
- Ban alcohol from events where minors are likely to be present.

FOR MEDIA:

- If you work for a radio or television station, do what you can to urge the owners to follow the leads of the major television networks who have agreed not to accept advertising for distilled spirits.
- Broadcast or publish relevant information about alcohol, alcohol problems, alcoholism and recovery (see radio PSAs, op-ed piece and letter to the editor).
- For a week-long period during Alcohol Awareness Month analyze all news stories for mention of alcohol. Aside from such obvious stories as alcohol-related traffic fatalities, pay particular attention to violent crime, domestic violence, sexual abuse, suicide and other social issues where use of alcohol is likely to be involved. Then do a “round-up” story about the negative consequences of alcohol consumption illustrated by the evidence in your community.
- Counter and challenge stereotyping and glamorization of members of the journalism and entertainment professions as hard-drinking “heroes” by identifying leaders of your profession who do not engage in these practices, and by reporting the lost health, careers and lives of those who do.
- Run a three-part series, run on successive days, starting with Sunday, focused on alcoholism and looks at the impact on the individual, the family and the community. The series must include first-hand stories of recovery from individuals and family members.

FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS:

- Integrate alcohol issues into the ongoing religious education of young people.
- Encourage role models who have achieved success without using/misusing alcohol to participate in congregation-sponsored events.
- Allow use of your facilities for alternative youth activities, mentoring programs, parent training, stress management seminars, healthy lifestyles workshops and substance use prevention education sessions.
- Assemble an “Alcohol Awareness Month” bulletin board. Ask members of your congregation to bring in news clippings of alcohol-related incidents in your community. Tell them to look for mentions of alcohol, particularly in crime stories.
- Conduct a candlelight vigil or sponsor an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast that focuses on the healing effects of treatment for all family members.
- Publish information about recovery programs in church bulletins.
- Religious groups can establish an “Amnesty Day/Week” at their houses of worship for youth who need help but are embarrassed, afraid or don’t know where to get it. Help and/or referrals can be provided confidentially and without fear of reprisal.

FOR PARENTS:

- Teach your child that abstinence from alcohol is an acceptable lifelong decision and that they have a right to stand up for a safe academic environment.
- Teach your child that drinking can be risky and to intervene when they see that their classmates are in trouble.
- If your child is of legal age to drink (21 in all states), explain to them how to use alcohol moderately (no more than two drinks per day for men, no more than one per day for women) and appropriately (as a complement to a meal and at social gatherings or during family celebrations).
- If you drink, be sure to set an ongoing healthy example regarding adult alcohol use and never brag about your use of alcohol or other drugs during your own college years.
- When helping your children to select an appropriate college, be willing to question officials about campus alcohol policies. The Best Colleges, an annual guide published by the Princeton Review, groups schools by categories (“Lots of beer,” “Lots of hard liquor,” “Major frat and sorority scene” and “Stone-cold sober schools”).
- When your children go to college, set clear and realistic expectations regarding academic performance, and continue to be as interested and involved in their lives as you were when they were in high school.
- If you are concerned about yourself, a friend or family member, call Facing Addiction with NCADD and our Network of Affiliates TODAY! We will connect you with someone who is specifically trained and successfully experienced in helping individuals and families dealing with alcohol-related problems.



SOME HELPFUL INTERNET LINKS:

- **Facing Addiction with NCADD:** www.facingaddiction.org
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):** <http://www.aa.org/>
- **Al-Anon Family Groups:** <https://al-anon.org/>
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA):**
<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>
- **College Drinking: Changing the Culture (NIAAA):**
<https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/>
- **Stop Underage Drinking: Portal of Federal Resources:**
<https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Alcohol and Public Health:**
<https://www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/>
- **Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth:** <http://www.camy.org/>
- **Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS):** <https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/>



Thoughts on Stigma From Our Founder, Marty Mann:

“Few among you consider alcoholism a proper subject for open discussion, few among you would willingly label yourself, or a friend or colleague, an alcoholic, and even fewer would be able to recognize alcoholism early, when there is the best chance for recovery.

“All of this is the result of stigma, a state of mind which is essentially mindless since it overlooks all the things which have been learned; a state of mind which produces public attitudes that are anti-therapeutic to say the least. In bold language, Stigma Kills.

“Stigma manifests itself in many ways; in false beliefs, such as that alcoholism is a moral problem and alcoholics moral delinquents; or that alcoholism is simply a matter of will power and alcoholics are weaklings; or that alcoholism is a deliberate self-degradation and alcoholics are simply letting themselves slide downhill—‘throwing their lives away,’ or that alcoholism is only found among homeless indigent derelicts—‘Skid Row bums’; or finally, that alcoholism is a hopeless condition and alcoholics are all ‘hopelessdrunks’ (spoken as one word).

“The results of stigma are also many, and all are destructive. The family that has an alcoholic in its midst goes to great lengths to conceal this, and the fellow workers of the alcoholic—often including his immediate superiors—cover up for him, keep giving him ‘one more chance to straighten up.’ The friends, neighbors and others in more casual contact with the alcoholic carefully look the other way. All are participating in a great conspiracy of silence, many of them in the mistaken belief that they are protecting the alcoholic when actually they are preventing him from getting help.”

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