College is a time when your adult child is presented with endless opportunities and challenges. At California University of Pennsylvania, we are constantly striving to ensure that our students have a positive experience that allows them to take advantage of new opportunities while also staying safe. The transition to college life can be stressful; however, you can help prepare your college student for a successful transition. One of the most influential steps that you can take when preparing your adult child is to have regular communication about topics that they will be faced with on the college campus, such as alcohol and drug use.

Discussing the topic of alcohol and other drugs with your student is not always easy. But it is important to do so because whether you are talking with them about it or not, your child is receiving powerful messages about alcohol and drug use from their peers, the media, and even your behavior. Keep in mind that not all topics should be covered in one setting. Rather, ongoing conversation underscoring positive safety messages, choices, and consequences is key.

Concepts to consider when talking to your student about drugs and alcohol:
VALUES – What values are important to your family? Discuss what they mean.
PRIORITIES – What are your expectations for your student’s academic and social behavior? Balance is important.
SECURITY – Underscore important safety messages.
HAVE FUN – Remind your student that not all students are drinking. Encourage him/her to seek out events and activities that are not alcohol-related.
BE CLEAR – Make sure your message is understood.
COMMON SENSE – Encourage your student to use it.
CONSEQUENCES – Decisions have consequences. Help your student to consider the laws, his/her health, and future.

Parents should also take appropriate steps to become knowledgeable about current laws and trends and share the information with their student. Information about laws related to alcohol and other drugs can be found at http://www.lcb.state.pa.us/PLCB/Education/AlcoholandtheLaw/index.htm and http://statelaws.findlaw.com/pennsylvania-law/pennsylvania-drug-possession-laws.html.

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**Based on Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board’s brochure entitled “A Guide for Parents of First Year College Students”**