**TEEN BRAINOLOGY**

**MAY 2019**

**WEEK 1**

**Situation:** Your child has just passed the boating test and is now able to take the boat out with no adults. His/her weekend plans include a trip to Sand Island with 4 best friends and they are all so excited! The first trip was fabulous, but the next day your child shares that one of the friends wants to bring beer the next time they go out. You know you need to be prepared!

**Fact:** Alcohol and Boating**.** Just as Alabama law bans anyone from drinking and driving a vehicle (DUI), the law also prohibits anyone from boating under the influence (BUI). It is illegal to be in physical control of any vessel (including jet ski) if the operator has .08 BAC or is under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substance impairing his mental/physical ability. Penalties include fine from $600 to $1200, possible jail time and suspension of operator’s certification/license for 90 days. There is a “zero tolerance” for a minor operating a vessel under the influence and minor can be charged with a BUI. If there is alcohol, open or unopened on the boat and the passengers are all under 21 years of age, they are in violation of the Minor in Possession law.

**Solution:** Before the summer begins, review the rules and consequences of all safe boating practices from ensuring there are enough life jackets for each passenger to awareness of all the alcohol laws in place. Be certain that the person operating the vessel is knowledgeable, responsible and properly licensed. Have consequences in place for breaking your rules before the first voyage – making sure everyone is on the same page.

**WEEK 2**

**Situation:** You find CBD oil in your child’s room and when you ask about it, the response from your teenager is that my buddies at school are using it to help with muscle pain or soreness. It is no big deal. But you know that this is one of the components in the marijuana plant and you are concerned.

**Fact:** Confusing messages are circulated about CBD. The simple fact is that CBD products are not regulated. There have been some products tested that have more CBD than what is listed on the label and other products tested that have less CBD than what they claim or even no CBD. Another concern - CBD can be derived from the marijuana plant or from the hemp plant and again there is no oversight to guarantee its origin. Finally, there is the risk that THC, the psychoactive component in marijuana and in parts of the hemp plant could be a component in the purchased CBD product.

**Solution:** Talk to your child using facts about these risks. Research shows that CBD does show medical promise, but everyone should realize the risk. The FDA has not approved the oils or affirmed claims of the medical benefits of many CBD products.

**WEEK 3**

**Situation:** Summer is just around the corner and your teenagers keep assuring you they will be fine left at home all day. You know they can take care of themselves – warm up leftovers and put the dishes away… but you are more concerned about what they may decide to do when they truly have too much time on their hands. Trust them or your gut feelings?

**Fact:**  One of the awesome bonuses of summer is that life is not so hectic and scheduled. However, our children have a bit more freedom, which could provide time for risk-taking opportunities. Kids will be kids and we should all know that the risk-taking part of the brain (nucleus accumbens) is completely developed in the early teens. There is truly a biological reason they are taking risks. The challenge is that they are not always able to determine a good risk from a bad one. It becomes incumbent on us as the adults in their lives to teach them the good risks from bad ones

**Solution:** Research shows that parents have the greatest influence on their child’s decision on whether to use alcohol and other drugs. Have those important conversations before the opportunity for risk-taking happens. You can send an even stronger message by using tools such as the Breathalyzer. Even in summer, teens need some structure and boundaries. Help them plan positive ways to spend free time, and remind them about your expectations regarding alcohol and drug use. Take action, set consequences and enforce them.

**WEEK 4**

**Situation:** Your child is hosting a bonfire on the beach one Friday night. You offer to provide hot dogs for roasting and everything needed for smores! He/she thanks you and asks that once everyone arrives, would you (and other adults) please stay up at the house – and not the beach, explaining it is really a party for young people. Assuring you everything is fine, and that no one is going to do anything wrong. You are concerned more about your child being put in a situation in which he/she feels peer pressure if someone brings alcohol, vape devices/products or marijuana. You are not sure how to set these rules.

**Fact:** Social hosting laws are in place to protect our community and particularly our youth. There are both civil and criminal liabilities for failure to comply with the laws in place. As an adult, you are responsible for the activities that transpire on your property as well as knowing about the activities that transpire on your property.

**Solution:** Monitor and provide adequate supervision for your teens and their friends during the summer. Talk to your child before summer arrives and lay the ground work for specific rules and consequences. Social hosting laws apply to more than just parties. They also apply to situations when one or two teens are involved and drinking or abuse of other substances at your home occurs, regardless of whether you are present or not.