

**Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company &
HighWater Theatre Company**

Who's Holding My Dream

**OUT OF CONTROL:
DRINKING, DRUGS, ETC**

Discussion starters, activities.



An Australian Government Initiative

Partly funded under a grant from the Australian Government

Out of Control – Drinking and Drugs

TEACHER FACT SHEET:

Did you know?

- that accidents and illnesses related to its alcohol cost more than \$15 billion a year and claim more than 3000 lives in Australia
- hospitalisation rates for teenagers 14 -17 years due to alcohol poisoning has doubled in past 10 years
- 2 in 3 teenagers reported they had “experienced seeing violence by someone who was drunk and aggressive” and “had to look after a friend after they drunk too much.”¹
- binge drinking for both young males & females has reached epidemic proportions. 35% of teenage males (14 - 19 years) admitted to drinking between 11 and 30 alcoholic drinks in one session. The figure for teenage females is 22% drinking between 9 and 30 drinks. ²
- research from the Boston University has found that drinking before the age of 14 significantly increases the risk of alcoholism in later life.
- male and female teenagers aged 15–19 years have the highest hospitalisation rates for alcohol poisoning among all Australian age groups.³
- 18% of Australian secondary school students aged between 12-17 years had used cannabis at some stage in their life.⁴
- In Victoria, it has been estimated that 80% of women enter prison with a drug or alcohol dependency.⁵
 - 92% of women serving second or subsequent sentences are there for offences relating to drug abuse
 - 85% are victims of multiple abuse – sexual and physical
 - 52% had their first arrest before the age of 15
 - 80% are mothers – most separated from their children

Yr 7, 8 and 9 Students at local schools including YOURS were very recently surveyed about whether or not they thought binge drinking other drugs and violence. Here are the results.

- Approx 72% of all students felt binge drinking to be a significant local issue.
- Less than 4% thought it wasn't an issue at all.
- Approx 70% of all students felt drugs other than alcohol to be a significant local issue.
- Less than 6% thought it wasn't an issue at all.
- 72% of all students had seen someone drunk in the past month.
- 62% of students had seen physical violence in the past month

1 Age 2008

2 Morgan, R Alcohol Awareness Study for Salvation Army, 2008

3 State of Australia's Young People report 2009

4 2005 Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey

5 "The Health and Wellbeing of Women in Prison" *Focus on Women*, 2005

Issues surrounding drinking and drug taking feature in *Who's Holding My Dream*. Sammi's mother just out of jail, is still struggling with her heroin addiction, Bo has a drug problem including using and dealing cannabis, Sammi is picked up on Dean Street Albury for being drunk, Grace – Kellie and Jacks' mum –has a drinking problem, Rikki's mother's boyfriend kicks her out of home when he's drunk and so on.

Teachers may wish to get students to read this aloud or do their own audio recording.

Extract From SCENE 3: HOMECOMING

(STELLA, JACQUIE – just out of jail, and SAMMI arrive at the new house)

STELLA She wants her mother.

JACQUIE And her mother's a hopeless junkie – I'm just going to hurt her.

STELLA You're going to hurt her a lot more if you don't even give it a try.

JACQUIE Give it a try so I can stuff up again! God how many times have I tried – I've been in and out of jail for 10 years – all I ever do is stuff up! Other people can do this - I can't.

STELLA Other people struggle.

JACQUIE They still manage.

STELLA Who?

JACQUIE You.

STELLA And....? Ten years you've been in and out of jail and you can't come up with anyone else. Most women don't manage. They just keep chasing broken promises their whole lives. How many women do we know who've OD'd – gone, dead – too many, and too often it's in days or weeks of being released. Released to what?

JACQUIE The street, the drugs and all the violence and shit that goes with it. I know there's all those tapes going around in your head/

STELLA /And I don't know how to stop them. I come out and I promise myself I'm not gonna use. I say it over and over and then as soon as I can I have one. I tell myself that just one hit won't matter, just the one...then comes the next ...Stella I hate myself.

JACQUIE So do we all.

STELLA I don't even know where to begin.

JACQUIE You already have – you're here and so am I.

STELLA Seven years ago I was you and for me it wasn't quick and it wasn't easy. Seven years of trying and mucking up and trying again. There's no quick fix for something that's had a hold of you for so long. It's nonsense to think the nice little house and the get out of jail card is happy ever after. You take the breath of each moment till the next.

Extract from SCENE 16: STREET DRUNK

(BO is dealing down Dean St. SAMMI rocks up drunk)

- BO: *(on phone)* Hey man, got the stuff - meet me down QE 2
(BO is about to receive cash for goods when SAMMI interrupts)
- SAMMI: Hey Bo!
- BO: Sammi what are you doin'? I just lost money!
- SAMMI: Are you dealing?
- BO: No. Hey come back!
- SAMMI: You're dealing!
- BO: Shut up!
- SAMMI: You're game there's a cop shop right up there. They can see you when they go outside for a smoke.
- BO: I didn't do nothing.
- SAMMI: Green or powder? They can see you
- BO: Piss off Sammi - you're drunk.
- SAMMI: I am NOT drunk!
- BO: Alright you're not. So what you been up to?
- SAMMI: I'm not! How much did ya lose? Huh?
- BO: Nothin. How's your mum?
- SAMMI: More like where's my mum. She didn't even bother to rock up to the meeting today, 's' not like it was important or anything. She doesn't care about anyone but herself ...

Discussion Starters

1. Which of the characters in *Who's Holding My Dream* have a 'problem' with alcohol and/or other drugs?
2. For each one you name – note what you believe the 'problem' to be and why you think it is a problem.
3. Who has the biggest problem? Why do you think that?

Stereotypes

Individually or in groups -

1. What image comes to mind when someone is labelled as a 'druggie' or a 'junkie'?'
 - a. Note down a number of single words and phrases to describe this person.
 - OR
 - b. Do a quick sketch of a 'junkie.' Don't think too much, just do it.
2. What image comes to mind when someone is labelled as a 'drunk'?'
 - a. Note down a number of single words and phrases to describe this person
 - OR
 - b. Do a quick sketch of a 'drunk' person. Don't think too much, just do it.

3. Report back & discuss.
4. Do you think young people now drink more than their parents did at this age?
5. "He/ she has had *too much to drink*." Think of your friends. When would you say this?
 - Describe a **female** of your age group who has had *too much to drink*. How are they behaving? What do they look like?
 - Describe a **male** of your age group who has had *too much to drink*. How are they behaving? What do they look like?
6. Many teenagers in a recent survey⁶, describe the major reason they drank alcohol at parties and other social events was to 'have fun.'
 - a. Describe what is meant by 'fun'.
 - b. When does it stop being fun or doesn't it?
7. NOVEMBER, 2009 THE Australian Drug Foundation is calling for new laws in Victoria that will potentially hit adults with \$6000 on-the-spot fines if children drink alcohol at parties in their homes. "As the law currently stands, anybody could give your kid a drink or 10 and not be responsible for the consequences," Mr Rogerson said.
 "If this legislation was in place years ago, lives could have been saved."
 The Australian Drug Foundation will send letters to the parents of every secondary student warning of a binge-drinking epidemic among adolescents and calling for support for the tough new penalties.⁷
 - a. Do you agree with these proposed new laws?
 - b. Do you think they will make a difference to binge drinking in teenagers? Why? Why not?
 - c. Write a letter to the newspaper giving your point of view.

Group Scenario

In small groups discuss the following scenario:

You are at a party with a friend where there are heaps of people – half of whom weren't invited. Your parents think you are at your cousin's place watching DVDs. Your friend gets absolutely smashed and has collapsed in the front yard of the house where the party is. He/she is vomiting and very ill, perhaps in danger of choking.

1. What do you do? Outline your options (at least 2) and the pros and cons of each one.
2. In terms of ensuring your friend doesn't choke, explain or find out what you NEED to do.
3. Devise a way to present your group's response to the situation to the rest of the class. You may wish to just give a verbal report or you may want to role play the situation.

Each small group is to report back to the whole group or class. After each presentation, discuss the course of action presented.

Group Discussion Questions

Report back on the group's responses to each question. Keep a list of points that everyone tends to agree on and points where there are different viewpoints.

1. Are there different standards which are used to judge when a male has had too much to drink and when a female has had too much to drink? Does it differ according to how old you are? What is 'acceptable'?
 - a. When would you say a teenage male has had too much to drink? How does he behave? What does he look like?

⁶ Carroll T, Taylor, J Youth Alcohol Consumption: Experiences and Expectations National Drug and Alcohol Strategy, 2003

⁷ The Age, Nov 15, 2009

- b. When would you say an adult middle aged male has had too much to drink? How does he behave? What does he look like?
- c. When would you say a female has had too much to drink? How does she behave?
- d. When would you say an adult middle aged female has had too much to drink? How does she behave? What does she look like?

These different viewpoints might generate a range of other areas for class or group debate.

2. "The vast majority of Australian children grow up in a culture where alcohol plays a central role in almost every aspect of formal and informal social events. As adult Australians, we celebrate, commiserate and mark our social occasions as significant, through the use of alcohol. Ongoing significant change in adolescent drinking is unlikely to occur unless there are real changes in adult attitudes and drinking behaviour."
 - a. What is your view on this? Should we be worried about the Australians 'drinking culture'? Should adults set a better example? Would it make a difference?

Activities

1. There has been a lot of publicity given to drinking safely and responsibly.
 - a. Locate current resource material aimed at teenagers on 'Party Safe'; drugs and alcohol. (Ask a Health Ed teacher; Student Welfare Teacher; local Drug & Alcohol Counsellor; Youth Worker or local police)
 - b. Examine them carefully and in small groups discuss how effective they are in getting the message across. Note down – what is their message? Is it effective or not? If not, why not? What is missing?
 - c. Design *your own* "Party Safe" campaign for teenagers in your local area.
2. Recent research suggests that teenagers drink more in country areas because of boredom and a lack of things to do compared to their city counterparts. Do you agree? Disagree?
3. Choose one of the following:
 - Survey your peer group about their leisure time – what they do with it; whether they are bored; what they think about levels of drinking and drug-taking and its relationship to being bored and also – what suggestions they have for leisure options they would like available to them. When you have the results – write them up and present to your Local Council.
 - Draw a cartoon which represents your feelings about the issue.
 - Devise a few simple questions to ask local young people about their leisure time and go out and about with a video camera and record their responses. Edit & show your results to another group.
 - Design a poster which for young people your age, which is designed to put people off drinking until they vomit