BIA-MA Partners with Massachusetts High Schools for Prepare for Prom Program; Offers Safety Tips for Parents and Teens

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts is adapting its Think A-Head school-based brain injury awareness program to prom season and conducting an interactive program for 9-12 grade students called Think A-Head: Prepare for Prom.

*Prepare for Prom* is a dynamic course designed to educate students about the risks and dangers of prom season. The 60-minute *Prepare for Prom* program teaches students how to stay safe, avoid risk-taking behaviors and fight peer pressure. The Program features engaging visuals and incorporates best practice strategies for injury prevention during prom season.

“Teenagers not only need to know the risks and consequences of drinking and using illicit substances, but they also need to know what strategies they can use to get themselves out of situations in which alcohol and drugs are involved,” says BIA-MA’s Manager of Prevention Programs, BJ Williams. “We hope the students take away tactics and strategies they can use during pressure-filled situations to keep themselves and their friends safe.”

Think A-Head: *Prepare for Prom* also offers a course for parents, which focuses more on communication with their teens and tips to keep their kids safe during out-of-school activities where their children might feel peer pressure. “Our presentation will hopefully help parents understand that even if their children have never used illegal substances before, prom season gives students an opportunity to try something new,” says Williams.

Think A-Head has been teaching students to avoid risk-taking behavior and develop healthy living habits for nearly 20 years. The program is tailored to the age of the students and to the specific requirements of the school and community. Teachers and administrators are able to choose from a variety of modules that can be incorporated into the program, depending on the specific needs of their students and school.

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, a private, non-profit organization, provides support to brain injury survivors and their families, offers programs to prevent brain injuries, educates the public on the risks of irresponsible behavior and the impact of brain injury and advocates on behalf of brain injury survivors and their families.

To reserve a Think A-Head: *Prepare for Prom* program for students or parents at your school, e-mail Thinkahead@biama.org or call (508) 475-0032.

*See following page for Prom Safety Tips for Teens and Parents.*
Prom Safety Tips from
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts

BIA-MA’s Prom Safety Tips for Teens:

- Discuss plans with your friends and prom date ahead of time; know your agenda.
- Provide the information to your parents.
- Discuss with your parents any after-curfew or after-prom possibilities.
- Plan ahead what you will say or do if someone offers you alcohol or another illegal drug. Phrases such as “No, thanks,” “Are you kidding?” “I want to remember this night!” or “Actually I’d rather have soda. Do you have one?” often work, even if you think they won’t.
- Promote a safe prom beforehand by planning events such as seatbelt awareness drives and a mock car crash at your school.

BIA-MA’s Prom Safety Tips for Parents

- Take an inventory of the alcohol in your home and secure it if needed.
- Know who is driving. If it’s a rented limousine, check their policy on allowing alcohol in the vehicle.
- Discuss the school’s prom rules with your teen and the consequences for violating them.
- Stress the importance of seat belt use.
- Do not rent hotel rooms for prom-goers.
- Offer a substance-free after party at your house.
- Communicate with other parents and school officials.

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