Healthy Decisions:
Talking with Your Student about Alcohol and Drugs

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The Office of Prevention and Education at Northeastern

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Agenda

Alcohol and Marijuana’s Impact on College Students

What Students Get at OPEN

How Substances Affect the Body and Reducing Risk

Parents and Families as Partners in Prevention

Resources
Consequences of College Student Drinking

• Heavy drinking in college associated with negative impact on academic success:
  – Reduced quality sleep
  – Lower likelihood of being engaged with faculty
  – Lower GPA

• Other consequences:
  – Blackouts, physical injuries, accidents, fights, unwanted or regretted sex, and conduct violations

(Singleton & Wolfson, 2009); (Porter & Prior, 2007); (Pascarella, et al, 2007)
Relationship Between Cannabis Use and Academic Success

- Marijuana use is associated with lower GPA
- More frequent use is associated with:
  - Skipping classes
  - Discontinuous enrollment
  - Lower likelihood of graduating on time

What Interferes with Academics?

• Top student-identified factors affecting academic performance:
  – 29% Stress
  – 19.1% Anxiety
  – 19% Sleep Difficulties
  – 13.7% Cold/Flu/Sore throat
  – 11.7% Internet use/computer games
  – 11.5% Work
  – 11.3% Depression
  – 10% Participation in extracurricular activities
  – 9% Concern for a troubled friend/family member
  – 7.6% Relationship difficulties

  – 3.2% Alcohol use (16th out of 31 possible factors)
  – 1.9% Drug use (21st out of 31 possible factors)

n= 1,318 undergraduate and graduate students at Northeastern University (NCHA, 2016)
Substance Use, Academic Success & Retention

- Effects of excessive drinking/drug use can be understood as a “cascade” of interrelated problems

(Arría, et al, 2013)
Social Norms: Perception vs. Reality

• People are influenced by their subjective interpretation of situations rather than by the actual situation (Lewin, 1943)

• We are influenced by our perception of others’ attitudes, behaviors, and expectations rather than by their actual attitudes, behaviors, or expectations

• Our perceptions and interpretations are often inaccurate

(Neighbors & Kilmer, 2008)
Social Norms: Perception vs. Reality

- 30% of Northeastern students have **NOT** used alcohol in the past 30 days
- 76% of Northeastern students have **NOT** used marijuana in the past 30 days

n=1,425 undergraduate and graduate students at Northeastern University (NCHA, 2018)
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Traditional Messages
“Just Say No” is a Disconnect…

• Don’t want to encourage substance use…
• If you do say yes, ways to do so in a less dangerous or less risky way
OPEN provides evidence-based prevention and education services on the topics of alcohol and other drugs, sexual violence, and sexual health.
Confidential and non-judgmental assessment and personalized feedback meetings

To schedule a confidential check-in:
open@northeastern.edu

For more information and resources:
studentlife.northeastern.edu/open

On campus location: 307 Ell Hall
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A Standard Drink is...

- ...a drink containing \( \frac{1}{2} \) ounce of ethyl alcohol
A “drink” of alcohol equals…

• 12 oz of beer
• 8-10 oz malt liquor
• 4-5 oz of wine
• 1.5 oz 80 proof liquor
  – 1 oz 100 proof liquor
  – .5 oz Bacardi 151
Some considerations around blood alcohol content
Factors Affecting BAC

- Time
- Body Weight
- Alcohol Consumption
- Gender
5 Drinks Over 3 Hours…

160 lb. male: BAC=.069

120 lb. female: BAC=.140

“Buzzed”
Relaxation; euphoria, lowered inhibitions; minor impairment of reasoning & memory; exaggerated emotions

“Drunk”
Physical & emotional depressive effects; more pronounced; gross motor impairment; judgment & perception severely impacted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Alcohol Level</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.01 – 0.05</td>
<td>Relaxation; sensation of warmth; “high”; minor impairment, lower inhibitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.06 – 0.10</td>
<td>Legally impaired (starts at .08 in most states) – Euphoria; fatigue; impairment in balance, speech, vision, reaction time, hearing, judgment, and self-control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.11 – 0.15</td>
<td>Depressive effects (both physical and emotional) more pronounced; judgment and perception severely impaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.16 – 0.19</td>
<td>Strong state of depression, nausea, and disorientation; dizzy; increased motor impairment; blurred vision; judgment further impaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20 – 0.24</td>
<td>Gross disorientation to time and place; increased nausea and vomiting; may need assistance to stand/walk; impervious to pain; blackout likely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Absorption of Alcohol
What One is Drinking
Rate of Consumption
Effervescence
Food in Stomach
Sobering Up
Time to Get Back to .000%:

**BAC = .08%?**
5 HOURS (5 AM)

- .080% ...
- .064% ...
- .048% ...
- .032% ...
- .016% ...
- .000%

**BAC = .16%?**
10 HOURS (10 AM)

- .160% ...
- .144% ...
- .128% ...
- .112% ...
- .096% ...
- .080% ...
- .064% ...
- .048% ...
- .032% ...
- .016% ...
- .000%

**BAC = .24%?**
15 HOURS (3 PM)

- .240% ...
- .224% ...
- .208% ...
- .192% ...
- .176% ...
- .160% ...
- .144% ...
- .128% ...
- .112% ...
- .096% ...
- .080% ...
- .064% ...
- .048% ...
- .032% ...
- .016% ...
- .000%
Sleep...
REM sleep is important for immune system effectiveness, memory, muscle growth and development.
Alcohol and Marijuana *Both* Increase Likelihood of...

waking up during the night and feeling unrested, groggy, tired, less sharp, more irritable next day
1 night of REM deprivation requires at least 1 night of REM rebound...maybe 2-3 nights sleep is impacted
How Students Can Reduce Risk
Figure out your personal green zone at bloodalcoholcalculator.org
Set Limits
Keep Track of How Many Standard Drinks You Consume
Space Your Drinks

Only time will sober you up
Alternate Any Alcoholic Drinks with Non-Alcohol Drinks
Avoid Mixing Alcohol with Caffeine
Avoid Alcohol and Other Drug Interactions

\[1 + 1 \neq 2\]

Risk \[\uparrow\]

Predictability \[\downarrow\]
Talk About Warning Signs

✓ Inability to
  • Answer basic questions
  • Remain conscious
  • Trouble walking or standing

✓ Vomiting

✓ Slow or shallow breathing

NUPD’s Emergency Number
617-373-3333
Changes in Cannabis Potency
1995 - 2014

How Marijuana Affects the Body

Marijuana impairs coordination, reaction time, and problem solving, and negatively impacts perception and attention.
How Marijuana Affects the Body

Research with college students shows impact on attention, concentration and memory at 24 hours after last use.

(Pope & Yurgelun-Todd, 1996)
Deficits in:

• Verbal learning (at day 3, not 2 weeks)
• Verbal working memory (at day 3, at 2 weeks, not at 3 weeks)
• Attention (still present at 3 weeks)

Hanson et al. (2010)
Motivation

Marijuana impacts the hippocampus, which impacts motivation. Marijuana’s negative impact on REM sleep.
Mental Health Considerations

(Hall & Degenhardt, 2009, p.1388) (Hall 2013)
Risk with Consuming Edibles

- No standard serving sizes, which makes it hard to know how much you consumed
- It takes longer to feel the effects
- Effects can last longer, even into the next day
- Greater risk of temporary acute psychosis, panic, and vomiting

(NIDA, 2017) & (Volkow et al, 2014)
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Resources
Parents and Families as Partners in Prevention

• Although peer behavior is found to be strongly correlated with alcohol consumption…

• Parents also have an impact on the behaviors of their children in college

(LeBrie & Cail, 2011)
Parental Engagement

- High parental engagement has been linked to less alcohol use in adolescent and college student populations

(LaBrie & Cail, 2011)
(SAMHSA Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2010)
(Wood & Laird, 2012)
Parental Permissiveness

- Parental drinking permissiveness:
  - The degree to which parents are lenient regarding alcohol use
- Low parental drinking permissiveness is associated with less risky drinking

(Mallett, et al, 2019)
Parental Influence Extends into Early Adulthood

• Communication throughout college years
  – “Parents who maintain effective communication with their teen, and through this communication, reinforce expectations regarding alcohol use can provide protection during this vulnerable transition, when most young people increase their drinking behaviors.”

(Turrisi et al, 2013)
Parent Handbook

Find the handbook and more information about how to support your student on OPEN’s website:

studentlife.northeastern.edu/open

Talking with College Students About Alcohol

Rob Turrisi, Ph.D.
Prevention Research Center
The Pennsylvania State University
DON’T WAIT TO TALK WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT MARIJUANA

Marijuana use is still illegal for anyone under 21 and can affect memory, motivation, and learning. Kids who use marijuana have an increased risk of lower grades, dropping out of school, and addiction – which can result in future health problems.

TALK WITH YOUR KIDS TODAY. THEY REALLY DO LISTEN.
RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

PARENTS AND FAMILIES AS PARTNERS IN PREVENTION
Learn and access resources about how to speak with your student about alcohol and marijuana, sex and consent, and healthy relationships.

SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT
Access resources related to concerns of substance use, sexual assault, or domestic violence.

Learn More »
Stay Connected (OPEN)

Location: 307 Ell Hall
Email: open@northeastern.edu
Phone: 617.373.5549
Website: studentlife.northeastern.edu/open
Abby Meszaros: a.meszaros@northeastern.edu
Stay Connected (Family Programs)

Phone: 800.696.6516

Website: northeastern.edu/parents

Email: parents@northeastern.edu

Message Board: northeasternparents.proboards.com

Family Portal: my.Northeastern.edu

Facebook: facebook.com/nufamilyprograms