



# The Advisor Advocate

## Substance Abuse and College Students



Underage drinking is a fairly common problem throughout American universities. It's no surprise that students seek out parties that have alcohol or illegal substances for the "experience." While the pandemic has changed our reality, substance abuse is still a large issue for college-age adults.

### Prevention

- ❖ Challenge conceptions of substance use (party culture, "real" college experience)
- ❖ Avoid language that encourages or condones underage drinking
- ❖ Don't change scheduled class, testing, or due dates around times known for heavy drinking (St. Patrick's Day, Homecoming, Halloween, etc. )

Support efforts to curb drinking and substance use: share campus events, reference resources, invite professionals to speak in class. See more from the [Student Wellness and Engagement Program](#).



### Identifying

Students are experiencing higher levels of stress (personal, social, and financial); they may have limited access to campus resources if they do not live in a supportive home environment. Increased isolation and difficulty dealing with current events can lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

#### Some common signs of substance abuse:

- Appearing under the influence
- Missing coursework or changes in academic performance
- Changes in mood or behaviors
- Drinking and drug use as a priority

### Confronting a Student at Risk

I'm concerned about you.

Set aside time and a safe, comfortable location to express your concern for a student. No matter where you talk to students, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Speak in an objective, non-judgemental manner
- Have resource information ready (including contacts for appropriate offices)
- Realize that a student will likely make excuses, deflect, or divert the conversation to argue that "it's not a problem"

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