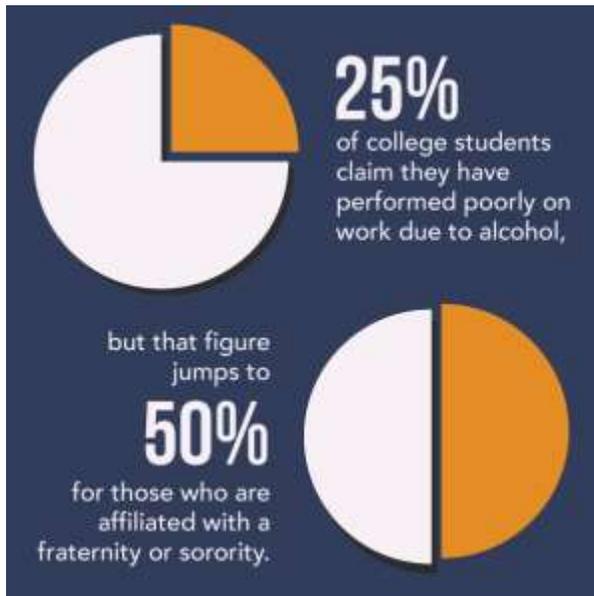


Alcohol Abuse on College Campuses

By Skywood Recovery

College life in America is nearly synonymous with things like weekend parties and alcohol. For most students, it can be difficult to abstain from alcohol when your friends are taking part. It's even harder though, for those who have grown dependent on alcohol.



Approximately 10.8 million individuals between 12 and 20 years old reported drinking alcohol in the past month in 2005.[1] Almost 18.8 percent of these individuals admitted to binge drinking and six percent to drinking heavily.[2]

Fraternities and sororities have long been labeled with stereotypes of heavy substance abuse and hazing practices. While most college campuses have formally banned such activities, many incidents still continue to occur. A quarter of college students claim they have performed poorly on schoolwork due to alcohol, but that figure jumps to 50 percent for those who are affiliated with a fraternity or sorority.[3] College is a fun time in life, but it's also stressful. Students attempt to balance all the obligations on their plates with exams and school projects, sustain good grades, participate in extracurricular activities and maintain a social life. It's easy to want to let loose on the weekend, or even a weeknight, with this kind of schedule, but letting loose doesn't have to mean going too far. Each year, about 20 percent of freshmen drop out of school, and officials say substance abuse is a factor for some.[4]

Resources for Students

A number of college campuses across American offer specific resources to students who are struggling with substance abuse and addiction. A 2005 survey of American undergraduate students showed that 84 percent of them were past-year drinkers.[5] Many college campuses across the United States work with local chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous and have brought meetings on campus for those battling substance abuse. Penn State boasts its own Collegiate Recovery Community that is geared toward encouraging sobriety and helping those with dependency issues stay clean. The school offers the following four types of meetings on its University Park main campus:

- Friday's first AA meetings
- Yoga and meditation for those in recovery and their loved ones
- Sober Sunday's AA meetings
- Adult Children of Alcoholics meetings[6]

A reported 10 percent of members belonging to Alcoholics Anonymous are under the age of 30, and many are college students.[7]

Another popular method of controlling alcohol abuse on campus is alcohol management. This program is not well-suited for those who are dependent on alcohol or require treatment that goes beyond the scope of educational tactics to reduce or stop drinking. Some students are big fans of harm-reduction therapies that teach them to control how much and how often they drink, as well as how to identify which of their drinking behaviors may be dangerous. Behavioral therapies can also assist students who want to learn to drink within reasonable amounts and frequencies.

Moderation Management (MM) is steadily gaining a following, too, and it may be more appropriate for some college students who want to learn how to drink responsibly. Again though, this approach isn't advisable for those who are suffering from alcoholism as it merely aims for a reduction in drinking most of the time. Abstinence rates in one self-reported study utilizing MM techniques increased from 16 percent to 20 percent over the course of quarterly follow-ups spanning the length of a year's time.[8]

Abstinence rates utilizing MM techniques increased from 16% to 20% over the course of quarterly follow-ups in 12 months

Rational Recovery is a self-help based approach aimed at total abstinence, while SMART Recovery works on maintaining abstinence after recovery begins. Many of these groups offer online support groups and software-based educational materials to boost the addict's chance of success following their treatment plans.

These groups are more popular than you think. You are not the only student on campus looking for alternative things to do with your time and better ways to manage your alcohol consumption. As of June 2014, more than 135 programs to deter substance abuse and assist in recovery were in operation on campuses across the nation.[9]

Some campuses also impose strict rules and regulations for the possession and use of drugs or alcohol. The University of California at Berkeley has consequences for alcohol-related incidents posted on the school's website. These consequences include several actions on top of informing school officials and coaches, such as mandated counseling, harm-reduction practices, and suspension from school.[12] Other institutions have banned some types of booze altogether, such as Dartmouth, which no longer allows hard liquor.[13]

Other colleges and universities offering similar programs include:

- Drexel University
- La Salle University
- Villanova University
- Boston College[10]
- Sarah Lawrence College

ALCOHOL ABUSE

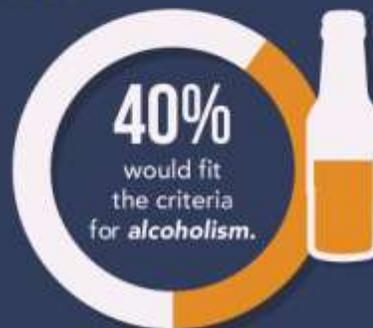
ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

HOW MANY COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE AFFECTED?

If college students were screened for their alcohol consumption alone during their years in attendance...

Characteristics of Alcoholism:

- The need for an excessive number of drinks in order to get drunk.
- Drinking in secret or downplaying the number of drinks.
- The feeling or appearance that every day involves either drinking or recovering from hangovers.
- Drinking early in the day, every day.
- Using any excuse to drink.



A reported **600,000** college students suffered alcohol related injuries



Over **97,000** college students have been victims of alcohol related sexual misconduct



Over **150,000** college students have developed a health problem related to alcohol intake

Alcohol is linked to over



WHAT ROLE DOES HAZING PLAY?

Despite anti-hazing laws, hazing practices still occur in Greek life, most often under the guise of pledging activities. In 2011, hazing crossed the line into involuntary manslaughter when a sophomore died as a result of being forced to drink until he passed out.



82% of deaths from hazing involve alcohol



29% of Greek life leaders are concerned with the overuse of alcohol during pledge activities

SOURCES

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It's important to understand just how many college students are affected by alcohol abuse and alcohol-related issues. This infographic illustrates the criteria for alcoholism and the statistics of how it is linked to fatalities, adverse consequences and injuries in the college community.

Who Can Benefit?

Some resources are applicable for those looking to harness some control over how much or how often they drink. Not everyone is suited for this type of recovery program, because some young people have grown dependent and need help.

The signs of alcohol dependence include:

- You've set drinking limits for yourself but keep surpassing them.
- You have every desire to stop drinking, but you don't feel like you can do it.
- You stopped doing things you used to enjoy to drink instead.
- If you aren't drinking, you're thinking about drinking.
- Although your alcohol abuse has only caused you problems, you keep drinking.[14]

Some people aren't merely in over their heads with alcohol, but they also have another disorder complicating their life. Mental illness affects some 46 million people in the United States.[15] Around one-third of these individuals also have a problem with substance abuse.[16]

Much research points toward a common trend in young people: they just might not know what they want or believe in. In one contradictory set of evidence, high school seniors were surveyed in 2010 and asked if they approved of adults having a drink or two every day — 70 percent did not.[17] Why is that so interesting? Well, several studies have noted the protective health benefits of moderate alcohol consumption, and many more have proven that binge drinking is where the real problem lies, yet fewer students disapprove of binge drinking.[18] This may draw attention to a need for greater awareness. Popular beer manufacturers and the liquor industry will always bend the rules to finesse catering to a younger demographic, and colleges will always be a stomping ground for substance abuse. The best way to combat these measures is with a strong education to our nation's youth on what moderate alcohol use is and the dangers of abusing any substance.

42.3% of college students who required substance abuse interventions or emergency medical attention because of substance abuse were freshmen

The Struggle to Stay Clean

In social environments such as college, being sober can seem like social suicide to some students who are just trying to fit in. There is a lot of pressure on freshmen specifically to find their niche and a crowd to follow during the next four years of their lives. This may very well be why those in the freshman age group are more prone to alcohol abuse than any other college student demographic. In one study of 255 college students who required substance abuse interventions or emergency medical attention because of substance abuse, 42.3 percent of them were freshmen.[19]

One of the best ways to ensure your drinking doesn't get out of control during the college years is to seek out other students who are also interested in abstaining. The crowd you hang around with is going to have a large influence on what you do with your time. Finding roommates to live with off-campus is another option, since it is easier to control the environment than in a dorm.

Many campuses are now home to sober parties, too. If you're struggling to fit in and find yourself using alcohol as a social lubricant to make it easier to warm up to others at parties or simply to find a group of people to hang out with, you're drinking for the wrong reasons. It will always benefit you to take interest in social activities that don't require drinking, such as dinners with friends, sporting events, or concerts. You're far more likely to blend in at one of these events than a party on campus where the only thing that is really going on is drinking.

Of course, drinking doesn't always start in college. Many who attend have had experiences with alcohol before they signed up at their would-be alma mater. However, how early you start drinking may have a serious effect on your future relationship with alcohol. Among young people aged 12 to 20 years old, the average age they start drinking is 16.1 years old.[20] Rates of substance abuse increase from 5.2 percent during the adolescent years to 17.3 percent during early adulthood.[21]

Help for Addiction

The good news is that more college-aged addicts and substance abusers are seeking help than ever before. Between 1999 and 2009, the number of admissions to substance abuse treatment facilities among people aged 18 to 24 in America rose by 141.3 percent.[22] Many will abuse drugs or alcohol during their undergraduate years and go on to become professionals with stable lives that lack any semblance of binge drinking, marijuana use and other illicit drug use. If college students were screened for their alcohol consumption alone during their years in attendance, 40 percent of them would fit the criteria for alcoholism.[23]

Overdose is a scary reality for many people. Alcohol is linked to the deaths of over 1,800 students annually.[24] Another 600,000 are injured while intoxicated every year.[25] The vast majority of them were living out their college years as they saw fit, just like everyone else. A 19-year-old Lafayette College student died in his sleep in 2012 after passing out following a long night of drinking for his birthday celebration; he died of a heart attack in his room alone.[26]



There are other adverse effects that stem from binge drinking, too. Some 696,000 students aged 18 to 24 are the victims of assault by a peer who has been drinking each year.[27] Over 400,000 students in the same age group engage in unprotected sex due to drinking every year, too.[28]

Thankfully, comprehensive care can help get students who are struggling with drug and alcohol abuse back on the right track. If needed, detox and rehab can address the issues that led to the substance abuse in the first place, so students can move forward in their academic careers and leave substance abuse behind for good.

See more at:

www.skywoodrecovery.com/alcohol-abuse-on-college-campuses

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