

COLLEGE: The Possibilities are Endless...

College is an opportunity for intellectual and social growth. College students' personal experiences, extracurricular activities and social development are as significant as academic growth.

College students are young adults living in an independent setting in which they are responsible for their own structure and lifestyle. The first year may be particularly challenging for students as they experiment with "their newly acquired status of adulthood."

In high school, substance abuse prevention emphasized the important role parents and guardians play in helping their children deflect peer pressure. Now you have an even more important obligation—to help your child deal with the environmental expectation that substance abuse is a presumed rite of passage on college campuses.

Media coverage of recent alcohol-related deaths among college students focused the spotlight on collegiate substance abuse. However, research indicates that college high-risk drinking has been a public health dilemma for decades, and only recently has been given the attention necessary to foster discussion and change.

"We've all seen and heard horror stories about deaths and injuries caused by excessive drinking on campus," President of the College Parents Association Richard M. Flaherty says. "As parents, you are frightened by these stories. You have every right to be. Student alcohol abuse can be addressed, just as we have reduced drunken driving on our nation's roads. This fight will require college parents, students, universities and their communities to work together." It is imperative that parents talk to their students about the personal and community impact of high-risk drinking.

"Every child in America is at risk of using drugs", says Joseph A. Califano Jr., President of The National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) and former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. "The issue isn't whether our children are going to be tossed into this sea of drugs; the issue is how well we can teach them to swim. The more parents take responsibility, the less at risk of using drugs their children are."



Entering college is an important time of transition for students as well as their parents.

This time of change brings with it some challenges that students may face concerning decisions they will be making regarding alcohol and drug use while attending college. This publication summarizes the impact alcohol and drug use may have on a student during his or her college years. It highlights the importance of the role that you play in the life of your college student.

Research has proven that alcohol and drug use has an impact on sexual behavior and violence. These topics are sometimes difficult to discuss with your child. However, there is so much to be lost, if you do not have a conversation with your child about them.

Often parents and guardians find it difficult to talk about alcohol and other drug use because they may drink or use drugs themselves. Another concern is that discussing subjects as personal as substance use may bring up sensitive family issues. The truth is, virtually every family is affected, directly or indirectly, by substance abuse. There is often personal concern that, in order to discuss alcohol use with their children, parents must model and preach abstinence. This simply is not true. What we need to communicate is that the misuse of alcohol—by underage students and by students over 21—remains a problem for some in spite of laws, campus policies and college programs. So, when talking to your son or daughter about their choices with regard to alcohol, you may want to discuss the differences between low-risk and high-risk drinking, and abstaining.

Source: 1996 survey of teenagers conducted for The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University by the Luntz Research Companies

Lynn University and Parents Partners in Education

Drugs Alcohol and the College Student



LYNN UNIVERSITY
3601 North Military Trail
Boca Raton, Florida 33431
561-237-7000
www.lynn.edu

LYNN UNIVERSITY
Boca Raton, Florida

A conversation you must have with your student

What is the profile of college students today?

- ◆ 58% have a friend who has used LSD, cocaine or heroin;
- ◆ 62 % have friends who are marijuana users.
- ◆ 43% have one friend with a serious drug problem; 28% have more than one.
- ◆ 34% know someone with a serious drinking problem.
- ◆ 43% say marijuana is easier to buy than either cigarettes or beer.
- ◆ 58% have been solicited to buy marijuana.

What do their parents think?

- ◆ Nearly half of baby-boomer parents believe their teens will try illegal drugs.
- ◆ 46% know someone who uses illegal drugs.
- ◆ 32% have friends who use marijuana.

Source: 1996 survey of teenagers conducted for The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University by the Luntz Research Companies

Use vs. Abuse: Take a Closer Look

Substance use turns to abuse when the use of alcohol or other drugs is detrimental to the health of the individual as well as the health of others. Since the university is a community, the behavior of each student affects the health, safety and behavior of other students.

Alcohol Use and Academic Performance

This table describes the relationship between the average number of drinks consumed per week by college students and grade point average.

GRADES AND DRINKING

A	3.6 drinks per week	C	7.6 drinks per week
B	5.5 drinks per week	D	10.6 drinks per week

Source: 1996 National Core Survey

Spectrum of Substance Use and Addiction

Abstinence: Not using alcohol or any other drugs

Experimentation: Alcohol and other drug use is influenced by curiosity and is experimental. It is limited to only a few exposures with no pattern of use and the student experiences limited negative consequences.

Habituation: Regardless of how frequently students use alcohol or other drugs, a definite pattern of use indicates that the craving for the effect of the substance controls the user.

Drug Abuse: Students use alcohol and/or other drugs despite negative consequences in relationships, school, finances, health, work, emotional well-being or with the law.

Addiction: Students have lost control of their use of alcohol and/or other drugs. The substances have become the most important things in their lives.

Marijuana Use and Academic Performance

Consider the following facts:

- ◆ Marijuana impairs short-term memory and the ability to concentrate, which are recognized by educators as important to academic success.
- ◆ Marijuana use can have lingering effects on the ability to learn. Studies show that college students who regularly used marijuana had impaired skills related to attention, memory and learning as many as 24 hours after they had used the drug.
- ◆ Marijuana slows reflexes and coordination, impairing the user's ability to judge distance, speed and time.
- ◆ Regular use of marijuana commonly causes such respiratory problems as bronchitis, sore throat and coughs—conditions that may significantly affect school attendance and concentration in class.
- ◆ While not addictive in the same way as cocaine and other harder drugs, long-term use can lead to psychological dependence on the drug.

Source: 1997 The American Council for Drug Education.

Minimizing the Risks Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs

Substance use presents such obvious immediate health risks as alcohol poisoning and death from overdose. Substance abuse also presents immediate health risks that are not so obvious:

- ◆ A decrease in the ability to make safe and healthy decisions (e.g. using a condom as protection from the risk of infection with HIV).
- ◆ The increase in violence associated with all drugs, including alcohol.
- ◆ Date rape: The vast majority of rapes reported by young adults involve the use of alcohol or other drugs by one or more of the persons involved.

Colleges and universities across the country look to parents as “partners” in this fight against the increasing use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

The Parent/University Partnership

Colleges and universities across the country look to parents as “partners” in this fight against the increasing use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs. We understand students are adults and need to assume a new level of responsibility for their behavior. We also believe college is a time of trial and error. In some cases, parental involvement discourages students from coming forward to admit a problem or seek counseling. Some students avoid admission of a problem for fear of “disappointing a parent or loved one.” However, we also understand persons have a legitimate right to know about issues of safety on campus. More frustrating than learning your child was just suspended from college is finding out about a drug problem in the very same phone call.

We hope the contents of this brochure will allow you to talk with your child before a crisis necessitates it. Ultimately, dealing with a drug or alcohol problem is up to your child and you, with Lynn University health professionals as mere facilitators in the discussion. Please act now if you have not already had this very important conversation with your student; there is no time like the present.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health's college alcohol study (2002), “the net total effect of alcohol consumption on GPA is negative for the sample of college students, and that the main effect is via a reduction in the hours spent studying. This finding confirms that high levels of alcohol consumption have an overall negative consequence for academic achievement, and hence future labor market outcomes.”

How and When to Talk to Your Son or Daughter Before you begin...

- ◆ Avoid contradictions between your words and actions.
- ◆ Be prepared to establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time talk. The first discussion is likely to be the toughest to initiate.
- ◆ Assess and review your own feelings about alcohol and other drug use.
- ◆ Talk with other parents of college students who learned by experience. They may have information to share on successful conversations they have had with their college student. They may also have advice on conversations they wish they had or actions they might have taken.

How to begin the conversation...

- ◆ Be prepared to initiate the discussion.
- ◆ Exchange information face to face rather than over the phone.
- ◆ Look for and create “teachable moments” such as television news, dramas, books or newspapers that deal with substance use in college settings.
- ◆ If the teachable moment seems to arise because your child is intoxicated, do not try to talk while your child is intoxicated. Wait until the next day.

When you communicate...

- ◆ Communicate calmly and openly. You do not need to exaggerate. Facts speak for themselves.
- ◆ Listen actively and try to understand each other's point of view.
- ◆ Allow your child to express fears and concerns without interrupting or preaching.

Contents of this brochure have been used by permission: “Alcohol, Drugs, and Your College Student” Dessa Bergen-Cico, The Associate Dean of Students, Syracuse University.