

Recognizing Alcohol or Other Drug Problems

Most students will drink during their college career and some will have negative consequences as a result of their drinking. When drinking (or drug use or both) interferes with school, work, relationships, self-esteem, health or is causing financial or legal trouble it is PROBLEM DRINKING. Problem drinking is defined not so much by the amount and/or frequency of drinking, but in the existence of negative consequences in any aspect of one's life.

Even one of these signs may indicate that someone has a problem controlling his or her alcohol use and might need professional help. When in doubt, always consult your AC or a Dean.

❖ **Academic Problems:**

- ❑ Drop in grades
- ❑ Class absenteeism or tardiness due to drinking/drug use or hangovers
- ❑ Difficulty studying or working due to alcohol/drug use

❖ **Personal Problems:**

- ❑ Mood and/or personality changes
- ❑ Avoidance/denial when confronted
- ❑ Damage to family and friend relationships due to alcohol/drug use
- ❑ Excessive amounts of money spent on alcohol/drugs
- ❑ Drinking/drug use results in problems that wouldn't usually arise if sober
- ❑ Using alcohol/drugs as an escape or to cope with problems, including stress

❖ **Behavioral Change**

- ❑ Switching peer groups and finding other heavy drinkers/drug users as friends
- ❑ Needing alcohol/drugs to socialize and feel comfortable with others
- ❑ A tendency to continue drinking/using drugs after companions have finished
- ❑ Drinking/using more than peers: gulping, drinking between rounds, arriving earlier at bar or party, encouraging friends to "drink up" or use other drugs
- ❑ Changing lifestyle to accommodate high risk drinking or drug use practices, i.e., scheduling only late classes, or no Friday classes so as not to interfere with drinking/drug use
- ❑ Loss of control – unable to consistently control amount of alcohol or drugs consumed and how long the drinking/drug use episode lasts

❖ **Disciplinary Problems:**

- ❑ Property damage while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, especially more than one incident
- ❑ Vehicular arrest for DUI or other alcohol/drug-related arrests
- ❑ Repeated violations of University alcohol/drug policy

❖ **Health Problems:**

- ❑ Injuries to self or others while under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- ❑ Experiencing alcohol poisoning/overdose
- ❑ Occurrence of blackouts (person appears to be coherent, but later has no memory of events)
- ❑ Family history of chemical dependency
- ❑ Frequent or severe hangovers
- ❑ Increased tolerance for alcohol/drugs
- ❑ Withdrawal symptoms ("shakes") after prolonged heavy drinking or drug use (may not occur with all drugs)