

DECISIONS
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OUR COMMITMENT

Hudson Valley Community College is committed to an environment that fosters academic success and personal well-being for all students. Abuse of alcohol or other drugs is not only a harmful practice for the user, but interferes with our goal of maintaining a safe environment conducive to learning.

Aside from the potential legal consequences, the health risks and personal costs of alcohol/drug abuse can be quite extensive. For the user, the risks can range from poor academic performance, to death. Likewise, others may be affected, to various degrees, by someone else's drinking or drug use.

In short, the problem associated with substance abuse are numerous and varied, and can happen to anyone. This brochure will highlight some important facts we think you should consider.

POLICY/LEGAL ISSUES

According to college regulations for students, "Possession, transportation and/or the use of any illegal drug on campus is prohibited." In addition, "no alcoholic beverage may be brought, possessed or consumed on campus... No person who may appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs is allowed on campus." Campus penalties exist that include, in part, "A person who shall violate any of the provisions of these rules shall... if a student, be subject to expulsion, or lesser disciplinary action as the facts of the case may warrant, including suspension, probation, loss of privileges or warning."

Articles 220 and 221 of the Penal Law are directly aimed at unlawful sale of mind-affecting drugs. They are compatible with the Public Health Law and the provisions of the latter are often cross referenced in the Penal Law sections that deal with different drugs. Articles 220 and 221 set criminal penalties for possession or sale of drugs considered harmful or subject to abuse. These penalties include both fines and prison sentences.

The seriousness of the offense and penalty imposed upon conviction depend upon the individual drug and amount held or sold. For illegal activities that involve alcohol, the law varies in accordance with the nature of the offense. One should remember, however, that it is not legal for anyone in New York State under the age of 21 to purchase alcohol.

For more complete information on laws concerning the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and the use of illegal drugs visit our web site or call the College Health Service at (518) 629- 7468 for a copy of the information.

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE CONTROL LAW

Effective 1990, New York State passed into law an act to amend the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Statute. These amendments are:

1. S.2126-C/A.3188-C - An act amending the (ABC) law, in relation to possession of alcoholic beverages with intent to consume by persons under 21 years of age.
 - This law prohibits the possession of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21 with the intent to consume the beverage.
 - This law empowers peace and police officers with authority to confiscate any alcohol in possession of one below age 21 with intent to consume, and destroy it three days after the return date for the first appearance of the summons.
 - If summoned before the court and a determination is made sustaining such a charge, the court may impose a fine not exceeding \$50, and/or require attendance at an approved Alcoholics Awareness Program, and/or require an appropriate amount of community service not to exceed 30 hours.
2. S.3108/A.402 - An act amending the ABC law, in relation to a violation involving purchasing alcoholic beverages through fraudulent means by a person under 21 years of age.
 - Violation is punishable by a fine of up to \$100, and/or required attendance at an approved Alcoholic Awareness Program, and/or community service not to exceed 30 hours.
3. S.935-BN - An act amending the ABC law, in relation to additional penalties for the purchase of alcoholic beverages by persons under the penalties for the purchase of alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21 through fraudulent means when a NYS driver's license is used.
 - This authorizes the suspension of the driver's license for 90 days of anyone who attempts, or succeeds in, making an illegal purchase of alcohol by using an altered driver's license.

“ZERO TOLERANCE LAW”

As of November 1, 1996, New York State has put into effect a new law that pertains specifically to persons under the age of 21. Called “Zero Tolerance,” the law provides the department of Motor Vehicle the power to suspend or revoke the license of a minor who is discovered operating a vehicle with a blood alcohol level (BAC) between .02 and .07 percent. A BAC of .02 can be reached by drinking as little as one beer. Anyone with a BAC of .07 or more is subject to criminal prosecution, under other existing laws relevant to drinking and driving.

For further information regarding drug and alcohol laws visit the reference are of the Learning Resource Center in the Marvin Library.

HEALTH RISKS/ PERSONAL COSTS

To cite all of the possible health risks from substance abuse in a short brochure is not only impossible, but impractical. You are already familiar with many of the risks. However, this brochure will help you conceptualize what you've heard before, while highlighting some facts you may or may not know. It also will direct you on where you can go for further information.

Substance abuse related problems can generally be categorized as either acute or chronic. Acute problems are those that occur from single episode of alcohol/drug use, and very often get much public attention— particularly when those alcohol— or drug-related incidents involve a celebrity. For instance, the fact that cocaine use can cause sudden heart failure became widely known after the tragic deaths of Len Bias and John Belushi. Likewise, the deaths of Kurt Cobain and River Phoenix were also highly publicized, reminding us, once again, that drug use can be fatal.

Accidents and injuries that occur from being drunk or high, also tend to demand our attention. Perhaps less obvious are the acute problems that results from decisions that are made under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. For instance, such impaired decision making (coupled with a lowering of inhibitions) can lead to other problems such as: Unwanted pregnancies; sexually transmitted diseases; violence, acquaintance rape; and other crimes. The important implication here is that acute problems can happen to anyone, at any time, when alcohol or other drugs are misused.

Chronic problems, on the other hand, result from the long-term, habitual use of alcohol or other drugs, and often are not immediately recognized as symptoms of the substance use. For example, regular use of marijuana produces a change in personality or attitude that has become referred to as "amotivational syndrome." The individual with this syndrome typically performs below his/her capabilities, and become increasingly apathetic, unmotivated and introverted. Because the change is gradual, the individual usually doesn't connect it to marijuana use.

Addiction to alcohol or other drugs is obviously another example of a chronic problem resulting from long-term habitual use. Young people can become addicted to alcohol or other drugs in as little as two years of regular use. The symptoms of addiction occur gradually and increase in severity as the individual progresses into the advanced stages of the disease. Once again, the individual doesn't recognize these problems as symptoms of the alcohol/drug use. Denial is the primary symptom of any addiction, because of this distorted view of reality.

SOME EARLY STAGE SYMPTOMS OF ADDICTION INCLUDE:

- Drinking or getting high for relief.
- Increased tolerance.
- Feelings of guilt or remorse (from behavior when drunk or high).
- Anxiety or depression.
- Complaints from family/friends about your drinking or drug use.
- Decline in academic performance.
- Negative attitude or blaming others for your drinking or drug use.
- Not being able to remember what happened when drinking (blackouts).

(Note that physical problems do not emerge until the more advanced stages)

Aside from the risks involved with the use of alcohol/drugs, individuals also can suffer from acute or chronic problems from someone else's drinking or drug use. For instance, being a passenger in an automobile accident when an intoxicated friend is driving would be an example of the acute problem described earlier. Chronic problems, on the other hand, result from long-term exposure to someone's drinking or drug use. Adult children of alcoholics (ACOA's) are particularly vulnerable to this.

EXAMPLES OF CHRONIC PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY ACOA'S:

- Stress related illnesses (i.e: migraines, back pain, ulcers, etc.).
- Chronic low self-esteem.
- Chronic depression.
- "Workaholism," or other compulsive behavior (gambling, shopping, etc.).
- Relationship/intimacy problems.
- Eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, compulsive overeating).
- Substance abuse (ACOA's are four times more likely to become alcoholic).

Once again, these are just some of the potential negative consequences of substance abuse. In spite of these facts, however, many young people will continue to abuse alcohol or other drugs. This leads us to a more pressing question:

WHY DO PEOPLE ABUSE ALCOHOL/DRUGS?

Experts in the field of substance abuse prevention agree that if ignorance was the only problem, knowledge or information would be the solution. But, information alone is not enough. While young people do need to be armed with facts about alcohol and other drugs, they also need the following:

- Awareness of alternatives to alcohol/drugs as a means to have fun.
- An environment conducive to healthy choices.
- Refusal skills when confronted with "peer pressure."
- Effective ways to manage stress and/relax.
- Available resources for personal/emotional problems.
- Positive role models (including other students!).

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

The following is a list of resources that offer assistance with alcohol and/or other substance abuse problems that you may experience either personally or through friendship with someone who experiences problems.

Hudson Valley Community College Services:

Counseling Center.....Campus Center 200
Health Service.....Fitzgibbons 146

Community Treatment Centers:

Albany Citizens Council on Alcoholism465-5470
Brattleboro Retreat Alternatives.....453-3042
Conifer Park.....1-800-926-6433
Hope House482-4673
Hudson Mohawk Recovery Center272-3918
St. Peter's Addiction Recovery Center525-1300
Seton Addiction Services268-5323

Self-Help Groups:

Al-Anon/ACOA.....292-0577
Alcoholics Anonymous.....292-4088
Narcotics Anonymous.....1-888-994-9484