

Some Facts Psychologists Know About...

Alcohol & Substance Abuse

Alcohol and other substance abuse is a significant problem on college campuses. Many students experiment with their newfound freedom by using alcohol and other chemicals, but many find it difficult to control their use. Just at the time that many students are endeavoring to improve their lives by gaining an education, many are beginning or exaggerating a severe alcohol or substance abuse problem that may ruin their chances of an education and/or career of their choice. If you picked up this fact sheet, then either you or someone you care about may have a problem in this area. It is never too soon to do something positive about it.

How do I know if I'm abusing substances?

- ◆ increased frequency of use
- ◆ loss of control over frequency, duration and/or amount of use
- ◆ drinking or using when you don't intend to
- ◆ substance use interferes with life activities (i.e. school, relationships with family and friends)
- ◆ increased spending money on substance of choice
- ◆ personality changes noted by self and others
- ◆ getting into risky/dangerous behaviors
- ◆ other people express concern about your use/ your behavior
- ◆ grades dropping
- ◆ missing classes and appointments
- ◆ legal trouble (i.e., DUI)

When chemical abuse becomes severe...

- ◆ loss of friends (except perhaps other chemical abusers)
- ◆ negative changes in appetite with possible weight loss
- ◆ possible reduction or loss of libido (sex drive) ...and/or only able to perform when using
- ◆ extreme mood swings, including anger and depression

- ◆ obsessions about using or procuring substance when not under the influence
- ◆ lying about substance to use to friends and loved ones
- ◆ loss of memory for times when under the influence
- ◆ uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms when not using
- ◆ involvement in crime to support habit
- ◆ loss of energy and general health
- ◆ you are increasingly unable to believe your own denial and excuses

How can psychological therapy help?

- ◆ help clarify your pattern of abuse
- ◆ identify how your life has been affected
- ◆ help create strategies to decrease your use
- ◆ identify related issues that may contribute to your abuse
- ◆ if necessary, referral to more intensive treatment resource

Frequent use and abuse of substances can have a serious effect on one's academic and personal lives. If you think that you are having difficulty controlling your use of alcohol or would like to talk to someone about your use:

Your Counseling Service: Timely, confidential, and professional assistance is available for U.C. students at the University *Psychological Services Center* (8:00am – 5:00pm, M-F) located at 316 Dyer Hall. Phone (513-556-0648) or stop in for a no charge screening interview.

**Psychological
Services
Center**

UNIVERSITY OF
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This fact sheet is provided as a service by the University of Cincinnati Psychological Services Center and the Division of Student Affairs and Services. Contents of the fact sheet were prepared by Dr. Joy McGhee and the professional staff of the Psychological Services Center. Please contact our office (513-556-0648) or our Web site at <http://www.psc.uc.edu> if you would like additional copies.

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