



HELPS

Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students

Warning Signs of Substance Abuse—How to Know if You or a Friend Should Seek Help

As an educator, researcher and parent of college age sons, Carol J. Boyd, PhD, MSN, is concerned about the most recent trends in substance abuse on U.S. campuses. In her role as Research Professor for the Substance Abuse Research Center at the University of Michigan, Boyd has participated with Sean McCabe, PhD and others to study the prevalence and consequences of substance abuse in college students.

The most recent research reports that alcohol, marijuana, prescription and over-the-counter drugs are the top three categories of substances used by college students.

“One of the major emerging issues in Florida and nationally is the increasing role of poly-substance abuse,” says Jim Hall, Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Substance Abuse,

Nova Southeastern University and up Front Drug Information Center, Inc. “We count in that category individuals who use more than one drug at a time, or combinations of drugs sequentially. They may be using one drug to counteract the effects of another. Or, they may be using a second drug as a booster or for its calming effects as the first drug’s effects wear off. The trend is fueled by non-medical use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs.”

“Fewer college students abuse illicit drugs than their counterparts who are not full-time students,” Boyd notes. “Yet our research finds that if you have students abusing prescription medications, then there are overwhelming odds that they are using another drug, particularly marijuana and alcohol. Often, these are prescription drugs like the stimulants Ritalin or

Adderall, or Vicodin, a narcotic pain reliever.”

“However, alcohol abuse and binge drinking tend to be higher among college students—which really isn’t a surprise,” adds Boyd.

Nationwide, 1400 U.S. college students are killed each year as a result of drinking. More than 500,000 students suffer unintentional injury while under influence of alcohol.

To help students who are of drinking age learn to pay closer attention to their own their own or others’ alcohol use, Boyd developed and recommends the “0123 Rule.”

“My students and my kids know this rule—it’s simple and easy to remember,” she says.

0 = Zero drinks if you are driving, have medical problems or are pregnant.

1 = Don’t have more than **one** drink per hour.

2 = Don’t drink more than **two** days in a row.

3 = Don’t have more than **three** drinks within a 24-hour period.”

“If you have a friend violating the 0123 rule, it’s very possible they aren’t

engaging in moderate drinking, and may have a problem. If you recognize that your own drinking exceeds the 0123 guidelines, that could be a red flag,” Boyd notes.

“I sometimes get asked, ‘What about people who have one glass of wine a night—isn’t that OK?’ My response is that the 0123 rule is still something to consider,” explains Boyd. “Someone who has a nightly drink could be at greater risk for starting to increase their drinking as their tolerance for alcohol increases.”

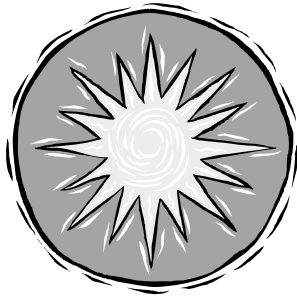
“While most college students will outgrow drug and alcohol abuse, there are about 15 percent who don’t,” says Boyd.

Continued on page 2

***We want you to thrive,
not just survive, at USF***

The Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students program can assist when you’re not sure where to turn.

*HELPS is available for you
24/7: 813-870-0184*



**HELPS 24-hour
phone line:
813-870-0184**

HELPS is administered by:

Gary L. Wood & Associates, P.A.
4700 North Habana Ave.
Suite 300
Tampa, Florida 33614

Substance Abuse Warning Signs, continued

“We continue to look at patterns of alcohol and drug use to provide better tools and information for health professionals working with college students.”

One of the tools Boyd uses in her research is the

DAST-10 (Drug Abuse Screening Test), available at www.drugfree.org/Intervention/Quiz/DAST_10. She recommends it as a good starting point for students who feel they may have

substance abuse problems.

Hall recommends the confidential online alcohol screening quiz available at www.alcoholscreening.org. ■

Resources

Note: while you may find valuable information on the Web sites below, their inclusion here should not be considered an endorsement of all site content. For questions related to substance abuse and how it may be affecting your ability to succeed as a student, your local HELPS program is available 24/7 as a confidential first resource.

Alcoholics Anonymous (www.alcoholics-anonymous.org) Alcoholics Anonymous offers support and fellowship to individuals with an alcohol problem through its Twelve Steps program. A.A. meetings are completely anonymous and open to anyone of any age who wants to achieve and maintain sobriety.

Narcotics Anonymous (www.na.org) Narcotics Anonymous is an international, community-based association of recovering drug addicts.

Secular Organizations for Sobriety (www.cfiwest.org/sos/index.htm) SOS is a non-spiritually-based recovery fellowship that credits the individual for achieving and maintaining his or her own sobriety.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (<http://prevention.samhsa.gov>) Resources include research and public education programs. ■

Helpful Links for a Bright Financial Picture in 2008

Follow these links for resources and information that can help you have a financially healthy new year:

USF College of Medicine application deadlines, award criteria, and forms required. (http://hsc.usf.edu/medicine/studentaffairs/financial_aid/index.htm)

Association of American Medical Colleges site provides the evaluative tools to make financial decisions compatible with students' goals and financial philosophy. (www.aamc.org/students/financing/start.htm)

(MD)² : Monetary Decisions for Medical Doctors offers a comprehensive program to assist premedical and medical students in planning for the financial aspects of their medical education. (www.aamc.org/students/financing/md2/start.htm)

DebtAdvice.org features include budget calculator, a budget and debt test, plus sections on money management, debt management, homeowner counseling and education. DebtAdvice.org is a service provided by the Members of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC). (www.debtadvice.org)

Access Group, a nonprofit graduate loan specialist offers excellent resources including LoanTalk, a free monthly online newsletter. (www.accessgroup.org)

Salary.com offers career resources including salary data for jobs nationwide, negotiating tips. (www.salary.com) ■