

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

### What is Substance Abuse?

Substance abuse involves the use of alcohol, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter drugs, for reasons other than their intended purpose or in immoderate amounts (National Cancer Institute, n.d.).

### Signs of Substance Abuse in College Students:

- Decrease in personal appearance (less groomed or put together than normal)
- Avoiding responsibilities or loved ones
- Lying about alcohol or drug use
- Mood changes such as being angry, irritable, or depressed
- Withdrawal symptoms (headaches or cravings)
- Increased risky behaviors (driving after substance use or fighting) (Mosel & Sharp, 2024)

### Tips For Addressing Substance Abuse:

#### 01 Take a Self Assessment

Starting with a self-assessment, is a safe way to start thinking about substance abuse if you believe you may have a problem.

Taking a self-assessment can help you to understand more about your alcohol or substance use. It can also give you more information if you are wanting to change your consumption behaviors.



#### 03 Seek Medical Assistance

If you feel like medical assistance is needed, your primary care physician is a good place to start. If you do not have a primary care physician in the local area, you can start by going to a walk-in clinic or talking to a trusted adult on campus who can connect you to local medical resources. Searching the web can also be an easy way to find treatment in your area.



#### 02 Talk to Someone You Trust

Confiding in someone you trust can help you to either confirm that you should seek medical assistance or help to alleviate your worries. People you can talk to include a friend, a trusted adult in your personal life, a trusted adult on campus such as a professor or advisor, or even someone from a hotline.



#### 04 Fill Your Time with Drug and Alcohol Free Activities

Recovering from an existing substance abuse problem, or stopping a problem before it occurs, involves being able to participate in new and healthier activities (Dogu & Ozkan, 2023; Narain et al., 2018). Restoring time spent on previous activities you enjoyed is a good way to combat use of substances (Bell et al., 2015). This may include going to events on campus, making sober friends, crafting, spending time outdoors, or learning a new hobby.

