

April 2007

# University of South Carolina Alcohol & Drug Programs



## Mark Your Calendar:

### Alcohol & Drug Programs Action Committee (ADPAC)

The monthly ADPAC meeting will be resume in the fall semester with special meetings to be scheduled during the summer.

All are welcome to come and participate in this open forum of discussion regarding substance use on campus.

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### HELPING STUDENTS IN NEED

Around this time of year, matriculating at a large university like USC can be very stressful for our students. Students may be overwhelmed by the combination of finals, group projects, term papers, family responsibilities, and social expectations. Many may react to their stressful situations in a counter-productive manner. Research shows that many students enter college with pre-existing emotional conditions and addiction problems. In teaching or advising students, you are in a unique position to observe students cope with these changes and difficulties first hand. Whatever the case, it may be helpful for you to know signs and symptoms of psychological distress and substance misuse in order to offer help to students who may be in need.

- Failure to fulfill major work, school, or home responsibilities
- Poor attendance, low grades, and/or recent disciplinary action
- Drinking in situations that are physically dangerous
- Having recurring alcohol-related legal problems
- Continued drinking despite having ongoing problems worsened by drinking
- Mood changes such as temper flare-ups, irritability, and defensiveness
- Physical or mental problems such as slurred speech, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes
- Noticeable change in personal hygiene and appearance
- Marked decline in class attendance, grades, assignments, etc...

### SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN NEED

1. Be available to students! Let them know you are interested and concerned about their welfare. Try to listen to students from their perspective and put them at ease by reducing the interpersonal distance that typically exists in an authority figure/student relationship.
2. One way to bring up these issues with students is to relate those behaviors, which

have triggered your concern (e.g., declining grades, chronic absenteeism, etc.), to their academic performance. Ask the student if s/he knows what could be contributing to these problems. The goal is not to pry into students' personal lives but to confront their difficulties in a constructive fashion and encourage them to take appropriate action.

3. If a student is willing to talk to you about problems, listen attentively, show genuine concern and try to avoid judgmental responses. If it appears that a referral to the Counseling & Human Development Center is appropriate, make that suggestion after you have heard the student's story and expressed your concern.
4. If students feel uncomfortable about being referred to the Counseling Center because they feel it implies that they are "crazy" or "weak", reassure them the majority of people who use the center have very typical college student concerns which have become burdensome. Also, seeking counseling is actually seen as a sign of strength, not weakness.
5. If you are confronted with an EMERGENCY situation (e.g., student informs you s/he has taken a drug overdose, is threatening violence or actually acting-out physically, etc.), call the First Responders, Campus Police and the Counseling & Human Development Center if it is a psychiatric/psychological problem. The First Responders & Campus Police are trained and equipped to take students to the hospital in the event of an emergency.

### LAST LATE NIGHT CAROLINA EVER!!!!!!!!!!

On Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, from 10pm – 2am, USC students will take part in the last Late Night Carolina ever. Attendees will hear music by the Zack Brown Band and see special "Found Footage" from dozens of odd and hilarious clips of weird television shows, commercials, and training videos from around the country. We will also be providing students the opportunity to create their own Street Sign, make their own Trucker Hat, and keep their very own postcard from the last "Late Night Carolina" ever. We might add that Late Night Carolina is changing its name, so look out for more late night events in the fall.

## National Update

### Young Alcoholics Less Likely to Seek Treatment

#### Research Summary

Researchers from the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) (NIAAA) report that people who become dependent on alcohol before reaching age 25 are less likely to seek treatment for their addiction and more likely to experience multiple periods of dependence, be addicted longer, and meet more of the diagnostic criteria for dependence than those who develop drinking problems later in life.

The conclusions were drawn from thousands of responses to the 2001-2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. Of the 12.5 percent of survey respondents who said they had been dependent on alcohol sometime in their lives, "our analyses found that almost half of these individuals became alcohol dependent before age 21 and about two-thirds before age 25, while about 20 percent became alcohol dependent at age 30 or older," according to study author Ralph Hingson, formerly of the Boston University School of Public Health and now director of NIAAA's Division of Epidemiology and Prevention Research. "The odds of ever seeking help were lower among those first dependent before ages 18, 20, and 25 compared with those who first became alcohol dependent at age 30 and above, regardless of the number of dependence criteria they met."

Younger alcoholics may be less likely to seek treatment because they have fewer work, family or marital responsibilities that can be disrupted by problem drinking. They also may be less likely to recognize a drinking problem because so many of their peers engage in episodes of heavy drinking.

Hingson called for more counseling aimed at adolescent drinkers. "Early onset of drinking predicts early onset of dependence, which in turn is associated with chronic, relapsing dependence," he said. "Screening and brief motivational counseling can reduce alcohol-related problems among adolescents and college students who are heavy drinkers, and needs to be expanded."

The research appeared in the Sept. 1, 2006 issue of the journal [Pediatrics](#).

The University of South Carolina is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution.

### Study: Bad Grades for Binge Drinkers

-- March 23, 2007

University of Iowa students who self-reported recent and frequent binge drinking had significantly lower grades than students who were not binge drinkers, the [Des Moines Register](#) reported March 22.

A school [study](#) found that binge drinkers had grade-point averages (GPAs) about a quarter-point lower than non-bingers; bingers were defined as students who drank five or more alcoholic drinks at a sitting more than six times during a two-week period.

"In the fall, I taught a [class about] college transition," said Associate Provost Tom Rocklin. "To be able to show to students that binge drinking hurts your GPA helped the conversation."

The findings were based on an online survey of 1,477 first-year students and 1,676 seniors, as well as interviews with more than 100 freshmen and seniors. About 70 percent of the freshmen said they had engaged in binge drinking at least once during a two-week period in college, and 46 said they had binged in high school.

#### OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

##### Campus Law Enforcement and Safety

Your resource for assistance with campus emergencies and safety information. (777-8400)

##### Carolina Campus Ministries

A network of USC-affiliated chaplain or counselor members. Consult the USC directory for a specific chaplain or counselor. (777-5782)

##### Counseling and Human Development Center

The Center offers free individual and group counseling, marital and relationship counseling, crisis intervention, psychological assessment, and more to the USC community. Psychiatric services are also available. (777-5223)

##### Employee Assistance Program

A resource for faculty and staff. Contact the System Personnel Division at 900 Assembly Street for further information. (777-3824)

##### Thomson Student Health Center

A resource providing treatment of illness or injury in the student community, preventive medicine and health education. (777-3174) The Open Door Health and Wellness Programs offer many services, including "Stop Smoking Clinics." (777-8248)

### GAMMA Highlights

- GAMMA has elected new officers for the 2007 – 2008 academic school year. (Congratulations to Latasha Kennedy, Amanda Gradits, Tramier Brown, LaNice Ravenel, Brandon Gates, & Demond Elliot)

### Get Involved

- Encourage new students to join GAMMA and engage in substance free activities by:

→ Promoting Late Night Carolina's

→ Promoting Cocky Thursdays

→ Call 7-7716 or e-mail - [adprog@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:adprog@gwm.sc.edu) for more information

### A & D Highlights

- Alcohol and Drug Programs completed its first ever National Problem Gambling Awareness Week