

Alcohol Awareness Month

Occurs every April as a dedicated time to focus on the importance of preventing and treating alcohol-related issues.

Together, we can better understand the difference between healthy drinking habits and alcohol abuse or excessive drinking habits. Below are common reasons behind students' drinking habits, the signs and symptoms of excessive drinking, and solutions and resources available.

Common Reasons Students Drink

At HSC, 35% of our students have reported that they refrain from drinking alcohol, making it a common practice for a majority of our students. Our goal in the Office of Care and Civility, is to decrease excessive drinking and other harmful behaviors that may result from consuming alcohol. Considering that HSC students often face more stressors than they did as undergrads, they may also find themselves drinking for one of the reasons outlined below.

- Celebrating accomplishments
- Coping with negative emotions
- Easing social anxiety or managing social isolation
- Relieving academic pressure
- Peer pressure

Excessive Drinking

While understanding the nuances between drinking patterns is a helpful starting point, problems with alcohol cannot just be measured by the number of drinks a person consumes per hour or within a given week. If you're still unsure whether your drinking habits are impeding your life read through the following indicators of excessive drinking and consider:

- Concealing drinking from others
- Declining academic performance or neglecting responsibilities
- Inability to limit drinking
- Increased irritability
- Isolation or withdrawal
- Fatigue, tremors, memory loss, tolerance

Understanding the Risks

Now that you've considered your drinking habits in relation to warning signs, it's important to understand the risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

Short-term risks

- Accidents and injuries
- Impaired decision-making
- Brownout, blackout, or memory gaps
- Unsafe situations

Long-term risks

- Drinking and driving
- Cognitive impairment and exacerbation of depression and anxiety
- Health complications

Combatting Unsafe Drinking Habits

You may have even experienced some of the short-term risks that can come along with drinking too much alcohol, perhaps waking up with a few mystery bruises or a foggy memory of the night before. If you feel you may have some unhealthy drinking habits, consider implementing some of the following tips:

- Establish a support network
- Enjoy the moment without making drinking the focus of the "fun"
- Drink water and eat before or while drinking
- Pace yourself and only drink one alcoholic substance at a time
- Stay aware of your consumption and those around you
- Seek help when needed



**Scan for
recovery
resources**

