Recognizing and Addressing Substance Misuse in Residence Hall Settings

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Learning Outcomes

- To gain understanding of how alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use is categorized
- Reflect on the Fall semester regarding ATOD use
- Review resources for supporting students with ATOD concerns
According to the 2011 National College Health Assessment, at Emory:

- 40% of students consumed 5+ drinks at least once in a two week period
- 38.1% experienced at least one consequence from drinking
- 12% of students have used marijuana in the last 30 days
- 5.4% of students have used an illicit substance aside from marijuana in the last 30 days
For Your Consideration

When it comes to alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) misuse in your residence halls, what things do you know now that you wished you knew back in August?
Substance Misuse

- When a drug is used outside of its intended/prescribed purpose, or any illicit substance is used:
  - Taking 4 Advil instead of the recommended 2
  - Alcohol consumption under age 21
  - “Borrowing” Rx meds from a friend or family member
  - Adderall during finals week
  - Not a habitual use pattern, but serious negative outcomes can develop
Substance Misuse/Abuse/Dependence

What do you know?
Substance Abuse

Detrimental pattern of substance use marked by:

- Recurrent use resulting in failure to fulfill major role obligation at work, home or school
- Recurrent use in physically hazardous situations
- Recurrent substance related legal problems
- Continued use despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by substance
Substance Dependence

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Substance taken in larger amount and for longer period than intended
- Persistent desire or repeated unsuccessful attempt to quit
- Important social, occupational, or recreational activities given up or reduced
- Use continues despite knowledge of adverse consequences (e.g., failure to fulfill role obligation, use when physically hazardous)
Spectrum of Substance Use

Casual/Non-problematic Use
- recreational or other use that has negligible health or social impact

Chronic Dependence
- use that has become habitual and compulsive despite negative health and social impacts

Beneficial Use
- use that has positive health or social impact
- e.g. medical psychopharmaceuticals; coffee to increase alertness; moderate consumption of red wine; sacramental use of ayahuasca or peyote

Problematic Use
- use that begins to have negative consequences for individual, friends/family, or society
- e.g. impaired driving; binge consumption; harmful routes of administration

Recognizing and Addressing Substance Misuse
A proposed process

- Notice
- Addressing the difficult conversation
- Know when (and to whom) to outsource
What are the signs that might indicate that your resident might be struggling due to their misuse of substances?
Key Signs to Look For

- Clear and distinct changes in personality
- Change in friend group, especially if it’s toward a “partying” crowd
- Conflict with parents
- Changing grades, usually worsening
- Isolation and/or withdrawing
Exhibiting these signs does not always mean substance misuse. Many of these signs can indicate other issues, such as:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Homesickness
Address

What are some ways that you have engaged your residents in AOD related conversations?
Use Counseling Skills

- Approach with respect, concern and unconditional respect
- Talk about the behavior, not your interpretation
  - Talk about what you’ve noticed
- Talk about their context
  - Do they see what they’re doing as an issue?
Remember your scope and limits within your position
  • Your job is to identify, address, and refer to resources
  • Don’t feel like you need to fix the problem
Keep your supervisor informed of the situation
Refer to the appropriate resources
Confidentiality

- How does your college or university handle confidentiality?
- You should always keep your supervisor as informed as possible
Who are your on campus resources for ATOD concerns?

How can students connect with those resources?
Questions??