

## **Binge Drinking**

### **You may have a drinking problem if:**

- ✓ You are unable to control your drinking and wind up drunk.
- ✓ You are using alcohol to escape your problems.
- ✓ You change from your usual reserved character to the "life of the party".
- ✓ Your personality changes from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde.
- ✓ You can drink everybody under the table.
- ✓ You don't remember what happened when you were drinking.
- ✓ You have problems at work or in school as a result of drinking.
- ✓ Your friends and family are concerned about your drinking.

### **Alcohol is involved in:**

- ✓ 60% of college student suicides
- ✓ 90% of campus rapes
- ✓ 95% of other violent crimes on campus
- ✓ 50% of all motor vehicle fatalities

## **Binge Drinking**

Binge Drinking is currently the number one substance abuse at colleges. It is defined as the "consumption of 5 (4 for women) or more drinks in a row, on at least one occasion."

When you choose to drink, you are putting yourself at risk physically and emotionally. Binge Drinking can make you relax, become reckless or foolish. You may be friendlier with people you don't know, or romantic with someone you don't know or like. You may say yes to sex without thinking about the consequences, which increases your chance of getting an STD or HIV. Binge

drinking can also lead to drunk driving arrests and/or motor vehicle accidents, date rape, and some long term difficulties such as; liver damage and alcoholism.

**If you choose to use alcohol, make sure you drink responsibly. The following are some tips to help keep your risk of impairment as low as possible.**

- ✓ Eat before you drink. The food will slow down the absorption of the alcohol.
- ✓ Don't try to quench your thirst with alcohol drinks, this only makes you thirstier. Plain old water is best when you're really thirsty.
- ✓ Sip. Don't gulp. If you're a guy, you'll look cool. If your a women, you'll look refined. And no matter who you are, you'll probably feel better the next morning.
- ✓ Choose drinks with food-based mixers such as vegetable and fruit juices, which lower the risk of impairment; water or carbonated mixers increase impairment. Also, choose drinks with low alcohol content.
- ✓ Limit you drinking. No more than two drinks per day if you're a man, one if you're a woman. Don't drink every day, and not more than four days in a week.
- ✓ Don't "panic drink." In other words, slow the rate at which you put away the alcohol. It's not a race. Try to limit yourself to one drink per hour.
- ✓ Give yourself a break; alternate booze with non-alcoholic beverages.
- ✓ Be strong and don't give in to those immature jerks who use "peer pressure" to get you to drink more than you want.
- ✓ Make sure you have a way to get back home - designated driver.

**If you choose not to drink you should consider the following:**

- ✓ What will you drink instead of alcohol?
- ✓ How will you refuse offers of alcohol drinks?
- ✓ How will you take care of yourself if others get drunk?
- ✓ How will you get home?

**Under certain circumstances alcohol use can be dangerous. The following is a list of when abstaining from alcohol consumption is the best choice.**

- ✓ On certain medications or if you have certain illnesses (check with your doctor). Mixing medicines with booze may give you a buzz you didn't bargain for.
- ✓ Behind the wheel, or engaged in tasks requiring full mental or physical functioning. Drinking is one of the most dangerous things anyone can do. But you already knew that.
- ✓ Stressed out or tired. Drinking doesn't relieve stress, it only complicates things further, and it could lead to depression. Talk to a friend instead, or do some relaxation exercises, or maybe go shopping.
- ✓ Either the son, daughter or sibling of someone with alcoholism. As we mentioned earlier, alcohol problems are often a family affair.
- ✓ Recovering from alcoholism or drug dependency. If you've worked hard to get yourself off alcohol or drugs, the last thing you want is to fall off the wagon. Stay clean.
- ✓ Violating laws, policies or personal values. If drinking may mean legal trouble or expulsion from school, don't do it. It's not worth it.
- ✓ Expecting, nursing or considering pregnancy. Remember, now you're abstaining for two.