



# Stay Dry!

## Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention Newsletter

November 2012

Issue 3

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## Best Practices: Implementing BASICS

Drinking, particularly high-risk drinking among students, continues to be a problem at colleges and universities. Administrators across the U.S. struggle to find effective strategies that can be utilized at their institutions. One such strategy, the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS), employs both survey data and motivational interviewing to help students better understand their personal alcohol consumption as compared to their peers. The program also details certain protective factors, which can reduce the risk of negative consequences when drinking. BASICS is an NIAAA Tier 1 intervention, and a recent study by DiFulvio, Linowski, Mazziotti, and Puelo (2012) sought to examine its effectiveness among the high-risk drinking population.

Researchers utilized BASICS to implement a large-scale intervention to reduce alcohol abuse among adjudicated college students. DiFulvio et al. (2012) compared those students who received the intervention to a randomly selected group of students identified as high-risk drinkers. Both groups participated in a baseline and six month follow-up. However, the group of adjudicated students was given BASICS while the comparison group completed surveys which were similar. To ensure fidelity in the implementation of BASICS, researchers provided ongoing training in motivational interviewing techniques to master's level prevention specialists with both group and individual supervision (DiFulvio et al., 2012). Drinking measures examined included typical, peak, and heavy episodic drinking. To determine typical drinking patterns, students were asked the average number of drinks they consume per social drinking occasion and the total number of drinks they had in a typical drinking week. To ascertain peak drinking levels, students provided a total number of drinks consumed both on their heaviest drinking occasion and heaviest drinking week in the previous 30 days. With regard to heavy episodic drinking, students reported the number of times they engaged in binge drinking (4 or 5 drinks in a single sitting) in the two weeks prior to taking the survey.

As a result, males who participated in BASICS showed a decrease in typical and peak estimated blood alcohol content, the typical number of drinks per occasion, and typical and peak numbers of drinks consumed per week. They also showed a significant decrease in their drinking at a six month follow-up, compared to the group of randomly selected males whose drinking increased. Additionally, women in the intervention group reported decreased drinking across all variables, whereas women in the comparison group only demonstrated a decrease in peak and typical blood alcohol content measures (DiFulvio et al., 2012, p. 278). At the six month follow-up, there was a 10% reduction in the number of adjudicated women who reported frequent binge drinking, compared to a 7% heavy bingeing increase in the randomly selected group of females (DiFulvio et al., 2012, p. 275).

DiFulvio et al. (2012) concluded that, when implemented with fidelity, BASICS is generally effective at reducing drinking among college students, including high-risk drinkers, as well as those who experience mild to moderate drinking problems. However, an alternative intervention should be found to educate and prepare lowest-risk drinkers for the challenges they face with alcohol in college.

**DiFulvio, G.T, Linowski, S.A., Mazziotti, J.S., & Puelo, E. (2012). Effectiveness of the brief alcohol and screening intervention for college students (BASICS) program with a mandated population. *Journal of American College Health*, 60(4), 269-280.**

## Timely Topic: Hosting a Safe Holiday Party...

In the October *Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS) Newsletter*, the staff included "TIPS for Hosting a Responsible Holiday Party." This information is great to share with students in the form of a display, program, or an ad in the campus newspaper.

1. Control access to the alcohol you provide.
  - Avoid serving from common sources, such as kegs or punch bowls.
  - Consider hiring a trained professional to serve drinks at your party.
  - Be sure that whoever pours the drinks is not consuming alcohol and monitors other guests' consumption.
2. Offer soft drinks, fruit juices, water, and coffee so that your guests have an alternative to alcohol.
3. Allow guests to have only one drink at a time. Discourage competitive or rapid drinking.
4. Provide plenty of appetizers, snacks, and other food.
5. Plan entertainment and other activities so that drinking alcohol is not the primary focus of the party.
6. Request identification from anyone who appears 30 years of age or younger. Guests who cannot present a valid form of ID should not be given any alcohol.
7. Model appropriate behavior for your guests, and be sure to communicate that becoming intoxicated is not the goal of the party.
8. Stop serving alcoholic beverages at least one hour before the party ends. Encourage guests to stay for a while and enjoy a soda or coffee.
9. Make sure anyone who is visibly intoxicated does not receive any more alcohol and is not left alone. Even if the guest is not driving, an impaired guest can still be injured or can injure others.
10. When necessary, provide alternate transportation for impaired guests. Either call a cab, or enlist the help of sober friends to take the impaired guest home.



For more information, please visit <http://www.gettips.com/home/news/newsletters/index.shtml>

## Experiential Avoidance and Alcohol Use Disorders

Recently, Levin et al. (2012) sought to explain the relationship between experiential avoidance and alcohol problems among first-year college students. Their research adds to the literature by exploring mental health issues as they co-occur with alcohol use disorders. Below is a summary of the article:

- The study included a convenience sample of first time, full-time freshman students. It was designed as a two-part assessment process, which included a semi-structured diagnostic interview and an online battery of self-report questionnaires.
- Experiential avoidance is defined as the tendency to avoid, suppress, or otherwise control internal experiences even when doing so causes behavioral harm.
- Though efforts to implement evidence-based programs on college campuses are wide-spread, problematic alcohol use is still prevalent. These interventions are lacking in the consideration of co-occurring mental health issues.
- Experiential avoidance predicts coping motives, which are related to psychological distress and problem drinking.
- Levin et al. (2012) found that experiential avoidance is a significant predictor of alcohol related problems. This suggests that higher levels of experiential avoidance play a role in problematic drinking and alcohol use disorders among college students.
- In addition, patterns of experiential avoidance may make it difficult to be aware of and deal with unconscious motivations to drink.
- Therefore, interventions that target experiential avoidance may be helpful in reducing problematic drinking among college students.



Levin, M.E., Lillis, J., Seeley, J., Hayes, S., Pistorello, J., & Biglan, A. (2012). Exploring the relationship between experiential avoidance, alcohol use disorders, and alcohol-related problems among first-year college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60(6), 443-448.

## What's Happening at Your School?

### DSU: Drunk Driving Simulation

This fall, DSU conducted a Drunk Driving Simulation with approximately 60 students in the General Studies for Freshman courses. Participants wore drunk goggles while attempting to drive a golf cart through an obstacle course.



*Simulation Participants*

### MSU: Drunk Olympics

Hosted by Health Education and Wellness at Mississippi State, an event to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol was held on the Drill Field on October 16 during Homecoming Week. The outdoor event featured several stations where students could try their luck at attempting to accomplish various tasks while wearing "drunk goggles," which simulate the influence of alcohol on the body. The "Drunk Olympics" event turned out to be a resounding success, as over 100 students and staff participated.

### MVSU: Arrive Alive



*Arrive Alive Tour Simulator*

The Student Counseling Center at Mississippi Valley State University hosted a drunk driving and distracted driving education program for students on October 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Charles R. Lackey Recreation Center on the campus of MVSU. The "Arrive Alive Tour" from UNITE, visited the campus to conduct its program, which uses a high-tech simulator, impact video, and a number of other resources to educate students about the dangers of drunk driving and texting while driving. The simulator allowed students to experience the potential consequences of drunk and distracted driving in a controlled environment.

The Counseling Center had several tables with pamphlets and other information on the dangers of alcohol and drinking and texting while driving. The program was geared towards athletes in recognition of National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week but was opened to the campus community. In addition to Ms. Yolanda Jones, MVSU's Athletic Director, and a representative from UNITE addressed the students.

UNITE brings health and wellness programs to high school and college campuses across the nation. Their programs are designed to heighten awareness to the dangers and consequences of drunk driving and distracted driving.

### MUW: Night Owl Run

The MUW Night Owl Run provided students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to gather in support of enhanced physical activity, in an alcohol-free setting. The race, which included eight teams, was held October 29 at 9:30 p.m. on the MUW campus. The total distance of the race was four miles, with each participant covering one mile. The event coordinator, MUW graduate student Shobal Johnson, affirms the importance of being physically active and indicates that, "a mile is short enough that non-runners can complete it but also long enough to help people understand that running requires discipline." Because the event closely preceded Halloween, the participants were encouraged to attend in costume.

In addition to providing participants the opportunity engage in an alcohol-free night of physical activity, door prizes, donated by local businesses, were awarded. As the semester end draws near, MUW is adamant in providing students with fun, alcohol-free activities that also aid in enhancing overall health.



*Night Owl Run Participants*



## Suggestions?

If there is a specific topic you would like us to address in the next edition of this newsletter, please email Michelle. Also, please share with us the ways in which you address the issues covered in this edition on your campus. We want to use this newsletter as an informal way to share ideas with one another, and we'll publish your feedback (anonymously) in the next edition!