

### Inside this issue:

- Best Practices
- Timely Topic
- Energy Drinks
- Your School?

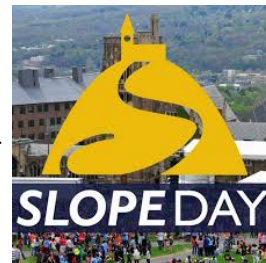


**Find Us Online**

[www.under21staydry.com](http://www.under21staydry.com)

## Best Practices: Environmental Management

Environmental management (EM) is one of several strategies to reduce high-risk college student drinking suggested by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), as well as other experts in the field (Saltz, 2011). However, it is often seen as a daunting task by many administrators, as it requires a great deal of coordination and buy-in between both campus and community members. Marchell et al. (2013) recently published findings regarding Cornell University's attempt to reduce high-risk student drinking on a day of celebration. As many administrators know, special occasions synonymous with increased alcohol consumption include 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, Homecoming, Spring Break, and end-of-semester celebrations (Marchell et al., 2013, p. 324).



Part of an EM approach, whether applied university-wide or specifically to an event, includes increased enforcement of minimum legal drinking age laws (Marchell et al., 2013). This was especially important on the Cornell University campus. The student tradition of end-of-the-year celebrations dates back to 1901 when "Spring Day" (now Slope Day) first marked the end of classes (Marchell et al., 2013). Between 1971 and 1985, Slope Day included a concert featuring a national headline band, a barbecue dinner, and beer served by the university. Throughout the 1990s Slope Day became a popular, unofficial student gathering marked by the open violation of alcohol laws.

Due to many drinking issues often marked by students who needed medical assistance, Cornell began to explore new options for addressing Slope Day. Rather than try to eliminate the event, administrators aimed to actively regain control through a multi-year EM strategy. Four separate plans were undertaken, which included variations of hosting an alternate event at a location close to the "Slope" and a "cans only" policy, but these were not effective. Finally, planners restricted the entrance to the Slope area to control access to the gathering and prevent party-goers from bringing in alcohol. The event now includes a concert, food vendors, games, and limited beer and wine sold only to those with proper identification.

Marchell et al. (2013) hypothesized that the new restrictions would change the culture of drinking at the event over time, resulting in an overall decrease in the total number of drinks consumed and a decrease in the number of students who engaged in high-risk drinking behaviors at the event. One main concern of both university administrators and critics was that drinking prior to the event (pre-gaming) would increase, which occurred in the short-term (Marchell et al., 2013, p. 328).

However, over time researchers saw a decrease in high-risk drinking and campus problems. The findings suggest that enforcing the minimum legal drinking age and controlling the environment are critical to reducing underage drinking and high risk drinking (Marchell et al., 2013, p. 331). Campuses experiencing issues with celebratory drinking traditions may consider implementing similar interventions to decrease risk-taking among students. However, it is important to note that changing the campus culture does not happen overnight. It takes time to evaluate policies and adjust to find what works.

**Marchell, T.C., Lewis, D.D., Croom, K., Lesser, M.L., Murphy, S. H., Reyna, V. F., Frank, J., & Staiano-Coico, L. (2013). The slope of change: An environmental management approach to reduce drinking on a day of celebration at a us college. *Journal of American College Health*, 61(6), 324-334.**

**Saltz, R.F. (2011). Environmental approaches to prevention in college settings. *Alcohol Research & Health*, 34(2), 204-209. Retrieved from: <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh342/204-209.pdf>**

## Timely Topic: Student Stress & Alcohol Use

During this time in the semester the evidence of student stress is very visible on college campuses. The way students choose to deal with stress can greatly impact their health and wellbeing. Bodenlos, Noonan, and Wells (2013) studied the relationship between mindfulness, stress, and alcohol problems among college students. Their findings may help us as administrators in our programming and interactions with students for alcohol education.



Bodenlos et al. (2013) define mindfulness associated with Buddhism as encouraging a state of conscious presence based on an accepting and nonjudgmental attitude and purposeful awareness of one's moment to moment experiences (p. 371). They also noted aspects of mindfulness, which may influence alcohol use: observing inner experience, describing experience, acting with awareness, nonjudging of experience, and non-reactivity to inner experience (Bodenlos et al., 2013, p. 372). The researchers found that mindfulness was negatively associated with stress and alcohol problems while stress was positively associated with alcohol issues (Bodenlos et al., 2013, p. 373). Therefore, Bodenlos et al. (2013) explained that the relationship between mindfulness and alcohol problems can be accounted for by a level of stress, and mindfulness-based interventions may help reduce alcohol problems via a reduction in stress (p. 375). Additionally, if students have an increased awareness of their bodily sensations, this can reduce alcohol consumption as they become aware of changes caused by drinking (Bodenlos et al., 2013, p. 376).

What do you think? Does your department currently conduct any mindfulness-based interventions? How do you help students deal with stress? Below are several tips from Baldwin Wallace University (n.d.) that MSU Health Education and Wellness recently recommended to students as part of a stress reduction session:

- Use a systematic, drug-free way such as meditation, progressive relaxation, breathing and yoga.
- Learn to plan and manage time.
- Exercise.
- Sleep and wake at a consistent time.
- Eat well.
- Talk to someone you trust when you feel stressed.

Perhaps reminding students about some of the above will help reduce end-of-the-semester stress and the desire to binge on alcohol/drugs as a coping mechanism or as a release when the semester is over.

**Baldwin wallace university's coping with stress in college. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.bw.edu/resources/counseling/pic/stress/>**

**Bodenlos, J., Noonan, M., & Wells, S. (2013). Mindfulness and alcohol problems in college students: The mediating effects of Stress. *Journal of American College Health*, 61(6), 371-378.**

## Energy Drinks + Alcohol = More Drinking

In a study published this year, Marczinski, Fillmore, Henges, Ramsey, and Young (2013) examined the effect that alcohol mixed with energy drinks (AmED) has upon 'priming' for college students; 'priming' refers to a beverage's propensity to increase the desire for and consumption of more of the beverage (p. 277). Increased consumption of AmEDs elevates risk-taking for drinkers, which may be a reason for high incidences of intoxication, intention to drive while intoxicated, riding with someone who is intoxicated, physical injury, emergency room visits, and alcoholism (Marczinski et al., 2013, p. 276).



The Marczinski et al. (2013) study is comprehensive in its methods by utilizing four dosage groups, including a dose of alcohol with a vehicle (a non-caffeinated soda), a dose of AmED, a dose of energy drink alone, and a vehicle alone. This study found that AmEDs increased desire to drink more of the beverage for a longer period of time compared with alcohol alone. Since previous research has found a positive correlation between desire for a substance and the risk for the development of substance use disorder (Arria et al., 2011), these new findings suggest a reason for the prevalence of alcoholism in those who drink AmEDs. As we begin to better understand the relationship between AmEDs and elevated risk, we must be sure to share these findings with students so that they can make more informed choices if they choose to drink alcohol.

**Arria, A. M., Caldeira, K. M., Kasperski, S. J., Vincent, K. B., Griffiths, R. R., & O'Grady, K. E. (2011). Energy drink consumption and increased risk for alcohol dependence. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 35(2), 365-375. doi:10.1111/j.1530-0277.2010.01352.x**

**Marczinski, C. A., Fillmore, M. T., Henges, A. L., Ramsey, M. A., & Young, C. R. (2013). Mixing an energy drink with an alcoholic beverage increases motivation for more alcohol in college students. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 37(2), 276-283. doi:10.1111/j.1530-0277.2012.01868.x**

## What's Happening at Your School?

### Mississippi Valley State University: Impaired Driving Prevention

The Student Counseling Center, in collaboration with the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition's *Delta Region Alcohol Countermeasures Impaired Driving Prevention Initiative*, sponsored an impaired driving prevention outreach on Tuesday, November 5 from 11 a.m. to Noon in the Charles R. Lackey Recreation Center.

The Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition (MJCPC) is an entity of Jackson State University. The goal of their initiative is to reduce the number of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities involving motor vehicles in the Mississippi Delta Region. This program has a powerful impact on students and is also designed to heighten awareness to the dangers and consequences of drunk and distracted driving.

According to the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, in 2011 there were a total of 807 drivers involved in fatal crashes; 62 were between 17-20 years of age; and 5 of these teens had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .10 or greater. As impaired driving is 100% preventable, this number is far too many.

All MVSU faculty, staff and students were invited to come out and participate in this very informative outreach. For more information on this successful event, please contact Yolanda Jones at 662-254-3830 or e-mail us at [counsel@mvsu.edu](mailto:counsel@mvsu.edu).



### Mississippi State University: OkSOBERfest!

On Oct. 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the staff at MSU Health Education and Wellness hosted "OkSOBERfest Carnival" in conjunction with National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week (NCAAW). "OkSOBERfest" was set-up as a fall carnival-style event with games, food, prizes, and a "jail bail." For the event, MSU Health Education and Wellness partnered with Kappa Alpha Fraternity and Order of Omega.

While at the carnival, students were given an alcohol fact at each game they played, which had a responsible drinking theme. The games included hand/eye coordination-based tasks while wearing drunk goggles, estimating a standard drink by pouring different types of alcohol, three little ducks draw, and others. At the prize table, students were offered the opportunity to win more tickets with the knowledge they gained from the alcohol facts by taking a quiz which covered all the information presented in the carnival games.

"OkSOBERfest" had 375 student participants, as well as 50 student volunteers! Students said they enjoyed that the event was fun and interactive, and they liked winning tickets and prizes. Overall, "OkSOBERfest" raised students' awareness of the negative effects alcohol can have in their lives when abused.



## Conference Call Recap!

**What did you think about using the NCHA survey at your school? Is this a possibility?**

**Like the newsletter? Would you be interested in contributing articles by working on the Communication Committee?**

**Know administrators at another institution that is not yet a member of MCPP? Contact them! Or, email Michelle, and she can contact them for you! We want to include every community college and four-year institution in Mississippi!**