



transforming

C O L L E G E D R I N K I N G

a solutions
guide

 3rd Millennium
CLASSROOMS

What's happening with college drinking?

College drinking is one of the most intractable public health problems today. In 2005, 600,000 full-time college students were injured because of drinking, nearly 700,000 were hit or assaulted by another drinking student, and nearly 100,000 were victims of alcohol related sexual assault.¹ One study placed the annual societal cost of underage drinking at \$61.9 billion—approximately \$1 for every drink consumed by an underage drinker.²

Individual colleges are often concerned about the effect of alcohol on student success and retention. Heavy drinkers are much more likely than non-heavy drinkers to miss class and perform poorly on tests, and less likely to graduate.^{3,4} This creates an enormous financial cost to colleges in terms of lost revenues from tuition, fees, and housing, and the loss of contributions from would-be alumnus.

College drinking can also affect the reputation of a college. Academic reputation is second only to cost when potential applicants are selecting a college.⁵ An institution's reputation as a "party school" can dissuade quality applicants (as well as faculty and staff) from considering that school.

To address drinking on their campus, colleges have begun to target incoming students with alcohol prevention programs that address these negative effects. Page xx of this guide talks about some of the ways that colleges are responding.

The good news is that college drinking rates have decreased slightly over the last decade. This suggests that prevention efforts are having an impact. According to the Monitoring the Future Survey, from 1991 to 2009, **monthly alcohol consumption declined about 12% and binge drinking declined about 14%**. In 2009, about 37% of students reported having consumed five or more drinks at least once in the past two weeks—the **lowest rates in 20 years**.

For a more complete story, see our research page, "**A Case for Prevention.**"

3rdmilclassrooms.com/website/research.aspx

Evidence for Individual Treatment Approaches⁷

- Educational Programs +
- Expectancy Challenge ++
- Alcohol Skills Training +++
- Motivational Interventions +++
- Mailed/Web Feedback ++++



- + Less than one quarter of studies showed significant changes over control.
- ++ One quarter to one half of studies showed significant changes over control.
- +++ One half to three quarters of studies showed significant changes over control.
- ++++ More than three quarters of studies showed significant changes over control.

Intervention Planning Assessment

- Where and when is drinking more likely to occur on campus?
- How does the campus screen for at-risk drinking?
- How are at-risk drinkers referred for more intensive services?
- What specific programs are currently in place to address risky drinking?
- What percent of services currently offered would be considered “evidence-based”?
- What specific content areas need to be developed?
- What specific target areas need to be developed?
- Who would participate in the planning and implementation of new programs?
- What resources will be needed to implement these new programs?

Communicating a Vision to Campus Administration

Staff who work directly with students sometimes struggle with how to best communicate the needs of their campus to senior administration. 3rd Millennium Classrooms has compiled a set of steps and accompanying resources to help prevention workers make the case to university leadership for funding specific prevention programs.

For a more complete story, see our research page, “Resources.” 3rdmilclassrooms.com/website/resources

1. Present a Clear Case

Gather specific information to demonstrate to university leadership that there is a need for evidence-based prevention approaches. Senior administrators may be well aware of the problems associated with heavy drinking, but may be less familiar with evidence-based strategies and may be unwilling to commit funds until they can be assured of a return on their investment.



Quote about experience goes here. It should be pretty short, but not too short--wanna get some good stuff in there. Quote about experience goes here. It should be pretty short, but not too short--wanna get some good stuff in there.

-This person,
This college

2. Use real examples from your campus

The need for prevention programs becomes more “real” when it is **based on local data**. Begin by gathering data on the alcohol and drug use of students on your campus, either using national surveys such as the Core or NCHA surveys or by conducting your own local surveys. This allows a campus to identify specific areas of need, track changes over time, and compare their own rates to national survey results. This information will be helpful in making a case to senior leadership for investing in specific kinds of prevention programs.

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3. Involve others in the effort

An important strategy in “getting the ear” of senior administrators is to **enlist the help of other campus members**, such as faculty, judicial staff, media relations or legal affairs officials. This demonstrates to senior leadership that the need for alcohol prevention results from an institutional priority, rather than a departmental “wish-list.”

4. Present a clear, realistic solution

Some kinds of programs are more likely to be effective. In particular, motivational interviewing and web-based feedback have been very effective with individual at-risk students. At the institutional and community level, effective strategies include increased enforcement of drinking laws, restrictions on alcohol outlet density, increased alcohol taxation, and campus-community coalitions.



For a more complete story, see our research page, “Resources.”
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transforming
COLLEGE DRINKING



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