

# SUBSTANCE USE

## Tips for Parents & Supporters

### EXPECTATIONS

With the fall semester quickly approaching, you and your student can anticipate a time full of exciting experiences, growth and discovery. It may also be the first time your student is away from rules and influence, living on their own, and feeling pressure to "fit in." Combined with the widespread belief that alcohol and drug use is a "rite of passage" and something everyone does in college, students may be confronted with making decisions about substance use.

An often overlooked protective factor in preventing substance misuse, involves parent and supporter involvement before and during a student's college experience. Research shows that students who abstain from drinking often do so because their parents or supporters discussed alcohol use and its adverse consequences with them. As a family member, you play a critical role in influencing your students choices when it comes to substance use. We hope this quick guide provides parents and supporters with a variety of strategies for speaking with your student about substance misuse, as well as additional resources for you and your student to utilize throughout their college experience.

[collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

**Not everyone uses substances** - 25% of US college students last year reported never using alcohol and 58% never used marijuana.

*National College Health Assessment Data, Spring 2019*

“Over half of incoming West Chester students last year reported not using alcohol or marijuana in the past two weeks.”

*Think About It, 2019*

**Alcohol is a reality, but in no way is it a necessity.** The legal drinking age in PA is 21 and WCU is a dry campus.





Share your views on illegal and/or risky drinking, as well as other drug misuse. Talk with your student about their use and how it might be affecting their **health, safety, and academics.**

“Frequent marijuana use is associated with more discontinuous enrollment, skipping more classes, and lower GPAs.”

*Arria, et al., 2013, 2015*

**Avoid trying to solve the problem.** It is important for students to advocate for their own needs and learn how to problem solve. If your student shares an issue, try to listen, encourage problem solving, and support their decision (even if you don't agree).

## COMMUNITY

In addition to WCU being a dry campus, under federal law, any use or possession of non-medical or medical marijuana on campus is illegal and a violation of WCU Student Conduct. When a student participates in behaviors that may violate the Student Code of Conduct and/or local, state, or federal law, there may be consequences through both the University and local law enforcement. As you provide support to your student through these processes, review the Student Conduct website, at [www.wcupa.edu/conduct](http://www.wcupa.edu/conduct).

Remind your student, that there are other things to do at WCU besides drink or use drugs. Find out how your student can get involved - visit the student leadership and involvement website, at [www.wcupa.edu/\\_services/stu/studentLeadershipInvolvement/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_services/stu/studentLeadershipInvolvement/).



WCU has over **280 campus student organizations**, as well as various community events happening throughout the year. Encourage your student to seek out opportunities to get involved.



## BASICS & CASICS

### Brief Alcohol and Cannabis Screening and Intervention for College Student programs are:

- 1-1 conversations with a trained, professional staff member of the Office of Wellness Promotion
- aimed at helping students explore their use and the impact it may have on their health, safety, and academics
- opportunities to equip students with the necessary tools and strategies to make positive changes when it comes alcohol or marijuana use

## CHOICES

### The Choices alcohol education program is a:

- 90-minute group workshop that engages students in the discussion around alcohol
- educational opportunity for students to learn about the risks associated with underage or high consumption
- safe space to practice skills and information learned, in a peer-to-peer environment



## WELLNESS PROMOTION

The Office of Wellness Promotion provides a series of educational opportunities for students to explore and define what well-being means to them. Education provided focuses on a variety of interconnected themes to help students not only figure out what wellness means to them, but also find community with other Golden Rams.

You can find additional resources and information for parents and supporters, including the **Ram Fam Wellness guide**, on the Office of Wellness Promotion's website, at [www.wcupa.edu/wellness](http://www.wcupa.edu/wellness).



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