

A Guide for Helping Students Succeed

How to Refer for Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse Issues

Creating a safe environment for students to discuss their substance use problems is an important first step. Conveying empathy and expressing a caring attitude can lead to students being open and honest and reduce their fears that others may judge or reject them.

Red flags for students that may warrant a conversation

- **Student misses class** or regularly arrives late to class
- **Grades decline**
- Recent **academic probation**
- **Frequent illness**
- **Smells of alcohol** (and also has slurred speech, bloodshot eyes, etc.)
- **Brags about high-risk behavior** (passed out, hung-over, threw up, arrested, drunk or injured)

Here's how to start the conversation

"I've noticed some things are going on and wanted to check in with you. How is it going?"

If the student discloses something which may warrant seeing a counselor, say the following:

- "I can help refer you to CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services). They offer **confidential** individual counseling sessions, it's **free**, and this does not become part of your academic record or any disciplinary proceedings."
- Provide referral information.

If the student does not disclose that there's anything going on, offer specific examples, such as:

"I'm concerned about you and want to be helpful."

And then cite specifics, such as:

- "I noticed you failed the exam last week."
- "You have recently been placed on academic probation."
- "Your semester index fell below a 2.0."
- "You have missed four out of the last six classes."
- "I have smelled alcohol on your breath."
- "I saw your name in the arrest records, or heard you talk about getting arrested, etc."

After expressing concern, suggest that the student talks with CAPS and provide referral.

How to make a referral

Suggest the student call (765) 494-6995 to set up an initial 15-minute triage appointment. After triage, the student will be matched with a therapist specializing in alcohol and other drug concerns.

CAPS has two locations: PYSC Room 1120; PUSH Room 246.

*On-call therapists are also available at the same number if the student is in immediate crisis.

Consulting about referrals: Faculty or staff can consult with CAPS about referring a student, by calling (765) 494-6995. Ask to speak with the therapist on-call. The therapist can also offer guidance if immediate assistance is warranted.

Information about CAPS Alcohol and Other Drug Services

At CAPS, substance abuse issues are evaluated by specially trained substance abuse therapists. CAPS services involve individual, group, and psychoeducational treatment for substance abuse, and outside referrals are made in the cases of active addiction.

For more information, visit the CAPS website: <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/>



Dale Whittaker
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs

“We are deeply committed to ensuring that our students have a solid foundation for success. Data from the 2012 Purdue Wellness Survey show that close to 12% of undergraduate students said they missed a class due to alcohol use. Missing class impacts academic success. Connecting students to needed support services can improve their college experience and ensure that our retention rates continue to increase.”

Sandy Monroe

Director of University Undergraduate Academic Advising

“Academic advisors provide individualized attention to our students. We can see firsthand if something is preventing them from growing intellectually and personally. This document will help us identify whether substance abuse might be hurting a student’s progress. Then, we can connect the student to the best support services on campus to promote academic success.”



This document is a project of the Campus Improvement Team.

Content provided by Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Purdue Academic Advising Association (PACADA), Student Wellness Office (SWO), and University Undergraduate Academic Advisors.

For more information, contact the Student Wellness Office at (765) 494-9355 or swo@purdue.edu.