

In this chapter, you will learn about alcohol, depression, and sexual assault. You will also learn about sleep, smoking, stress management, and sexual health. Learning about these topics will help you successfully navigate potential problems many college students face.

All of these reflect potential class topics in your 101 seminar. Please read this chapter before your Prevention and Outreach lesson to supplement your awareness on each topic.

When you are done with this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize common issues facing college students
- Issues that have the potential to impact safety, emotional or psychological wellness, personal satisfaction, or academic success at risk
- Engage in behaviors that promote wellness and prevent risk
- Identify campus resources for support with these issues

What is Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)?

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential services available to currently enrolled students taking at least six credit hours. Included services are crisis intervention, brief counseling for individuals, couples, and groups; consultation to students, faculty, staff, friends, and parents; assistance with referrals to community resources.



What is the Center for Prevention and Outreach (CPO)?

The Center for Prevention and Outreach (CPO) serves the campus community by educating students, faculty, and staff on factors that place college students at risk and impact their safety. We explore the connections between emotional and psychological wellness and academic success, educate the campus community about campus resources, foster safety through the prevention of violence and the promotion of healthy relationships, and support the psycho-educational development of all students.

Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)

Stony Brook University has a strong commitment to maintain a community of wellness and create a safe environment for learning. The Center for Prevention and Outreach at Stony Brook University recognizes the importance of educating our students on AOD-related issues in order for them to make informed and healthy decisions.

Did you know?

- When students binge drink they increase their risk of physical injury, fighting, unwanted sexual contact, sexually transmitted infections, blackouts, alcohol overdose, and even death
- Drinking too much alcohol in one sitting can cause depression of the central nervous system resulting in a shutdown of vital organs and possible brain damage or death
- 1825 college students die from alcohol overdose and related injuries every year (NIAAA, 2009)
- Alcohol interferes with your ability to achieve REM sleep and loss of adequate sleep can have a negative impact on your academic performance

Marijuana

Did you know?

- Science has shown that marijuana can produce adverse physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral changes
- Marijuana can be both psychologically and physically addictive
- Nearly one in ten first-year students have a cannabis use disorder (CASA Report, 2007)
- Students who had used cannabis reported problems such as concentration difficulties, regularly putting themselves in danger, and driving after using marijuana (DEA, 2008)
- Marijuana use can worsen depression and lead to other mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, anxiety, and even suicide

Nationally, 22.9% of college students meet the criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence (CASA Report, 2007), more than double the proportion found in the general population. Stony Brook is serious about its commitment to help students who may be struggling with these issues.

Education

- [e-CHUG](#) and [e-TOKE](#) are free and anonymous online personal feedback tools to help students assess their alcohol and marijuana use
- Ongoing educational workshops and informational programs
- [Peer Education programs](#) such as “[Swallow This!](#)” an education through the performing arts program and “[CHOICE](#)”, a peer program designed to help students make healthy choices in their environments
- The [Red Watch Band](#) program is a nationally recognized program developed through Stony Brook University that educates student on how to identify alcohol poisoning in peers and learn how and when to call for emergency help.



Understanding Alcohol and Binge Drinking

Excessive drinking or binge drinking has long been recognized as a major problem on college campuses. Consequences of binge drinking include lower grades, property damage, relationship difficulties, legal trouble, and even death, just to name a few.

Drinking alcohol impairs judgment. Binge drinking is defined as a large consumption of alcohol per sitting that leads to physical and cognitive impairment. Currently binge drinking is having more than 5 drinks in one sitting for males and 4 or more drinks in one sitting for females. When students binge drink they increase their risk of physical injury, fighting, unwanted sexual contact, blackouts, and fatal alcohol overdose.

Alcohol Overdose

Drinking too much alcohol in one sitting can cause depression of the central nervous system resulting in a shutdown of vital organs and possible brain damage or death.

Blackouts

Blackouts are when we are unable to remember events that have taken place while remaining conscious during that time. Blackouts occur when students consume enough alcohol to interfere with brain functioning. The brain can no longer form memories.

Tolerance

Tolerance is the degree to which your body has adapted to a given blood alcohol level. Each time you drink your tolerance will increase. The higher your tolerance the more alcohol you will need to drink to feel the same effects. High alcohol or other drug tolerance puts you at risk for increased health problems related to your use and at risk for developing an addiction.

Understanding Your Personal Relationship with Alcohol

We all have our own personal experience with alcohol. Whether we use alcohol ourselves or not, alcohol is a prevalent fixture in our society. Understanding our own personal feelings, beliefs, and experiences with alcohol give us a better understanding of the choices we make.

Resources Available at SBU

- Substance abuse counselors can provide confidential individual and group counseling, assessment, and referrals
- On campus, student-run Alcoholics Anonymous meetings; as well as local and easily accessible off campus self-help meetings
- Student Recovery Group is composed of students helping students stay alcohol-free and drug-free

For more information about services and educational programs please contact Lara Hunter LCSW—CPO/Counseling and Psychological Services (631) 632-6720

Depression

"What is stress anyway? I used to think, it is feeling like you are going to explode from all the pressure and trying to take things one at a time and trying to remember to talk to others."

— **ALEXANDER**, STONY BROOK SOPHOMORE

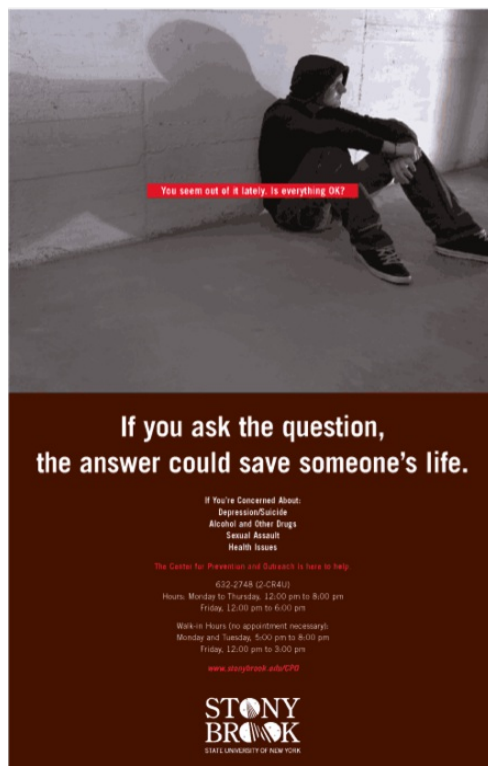
Stress and depression are common to the college experience. Long term stresses can contribute to depression. Some of the situations or feelings that might cause depressive symptoms can include:

- A relationship ending
- Death of a loved one
- Divorce or separation
- Academic difficulty

While it is difficult to determine a single cause for depression, it is often better to be aware of the signs, some of them may include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood (try one of our online apps)
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activity, ranging from schoolwork to sex
- Sleep and eating disturbances
- Decreased energy, difficulty concentrating, remembering, and making decisions

Depression is not a character flaw or weakness; it is a medical condition that can affect your mood, body, and thoughts. It is important to know it is okay to seek help. Everyone is different and can experience many levels of feeling sad to depressed. When you are unsure whether you or someone else needs help for depression, act on the side of caution, and reach out for help.



How Do You Know if a Friend Is At Risk for Suicide?

There is no foolproof checklist for identifying a suicidal person. Suicide, like many other human behaviors is difficult to predict. Take any talk of suicide or attempt seriously. Professional help is needed, even if you are unsure about your friend's intentions. All suicidal behavior should be considered serious and dangerous, as it may result in permanent injury or death.

How Do You Reach Out to Someone Who May Be Suicidal?

Remember that you are not responsible for your friend's depression. Reach out to them, suggest help, be supportive, and be honest. Trying to help someone who is suicidal can be scary and make sure you get support for yourself as well. Your friend may be initially angry with you, but your actions could save a life.

QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Gatekeeper Training


This program shows members of the community likely to come in contact with those at risk of suicide how to recognize such people and refer them to the appropriate resources (for more information, [click here](#) .)

Resources

If you feel overwhelmed and don't want to live anymore, help is available. Suicidal feelings are intense, but the impulse will pass, especially if you talk to a close friend, a relative, or a counselor to get relief from the pain. A person who considers suicide wants the pain to end.

If you think you, or someone you know, may be depressed or suicidal contact the Counseling and Psychological Services (631) 632-6720.

In an emergency contact University Police at (631) 632-3333 from a cell phone or 911 from any on-campus phone.

[RESPONSE](#)  also has a 24-hour hotline—(631) 751-7500.

You can also call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)  at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a term that addresses a whole spectrum of unwanted behaviors, from verbal harassment to sexual assault and rape. What all these actions have in common is that they are unwanted – that is, the victim has not consented to them. Men and women both experience sexual violence, although women are victimized at significantly higher rates.

Rape and Sexual Assault

According to the Department of Justice, 20 – 25% of women and 15% of men experience forced sex during their time in college. A common rape myth is that the majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by strangers. A 2005 National Institute of Justice study shows that 80% of the victims know the rapist. Alcohol or other drugs are involved in approximately 60% of all sexual assault situations. The most commonly used date rape drug is alcohol, but other drugs (such as Rohypnol (Roofies), GHB, or even over the counter medications like Benedryl) are sometimes combined with alcohol to render the victim helpless.

Sex without Consent Is a Crime

Consent is defined by Stony Brook University as the agreement to engage in specific sexual contact; this may be given by verbal agreement or active and willing participation in the sexual activity. Silence, previous sexual relationships, current relationships, or the use of alcohol and/or drugs cannot be taken as an indication of consent. The use of force, threat of force, threat of immediate or future harm, or use of physical intimidation to secure compliance with sexual activity implies lack of consent. Although consent may be initially given, it may be revoked at any point, either verbally, through physical resistance, or by losing consciousness. Failure to respond promptly to a withdrawal of consent constitutes sexual assault. Consent cannot be given if an individual is under the age of 17, physically helpless, mentally incapacitated, and impaired and/or incapacitated because of drug or alcohol intoxication. If a person is unconscious or their judgment is impaired by alcohol or drugs, they cannot give consent. The offender is responsible for their actions no matter how intoxicated they, themselves, may be.

It is really important to understand that no one deserves to get sexually assaulted or “asks” for it. It is not the survivor’s fault. If you or someone you care about experiences any form of violence, Stony Brook is here... If someone tells you about their experience, be supportive and refer them to available help on campus.

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted within the last 96 hours you are entitled to receive FREE comprehensive medical treatment and forensic evaluation at the Stony Brook University Medical Center SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) Center. You do not need parental consent, health insurance, or police involvement to receive this service.

Also, you can reach out for confidential support and counseling services at the Center for Prevention and Outreach / Counseling and Psychological Services at 631-632-9666 or 631-632-6720 any time after the assault. For more information, go to www.stonybrook.edu/besafe .



Sleep

"It took me until my senior year to realize I kept getting wicked sick around midterm time. I finally added some sleep and vitamins to my overwhelming schedule. I don't think I got that horrible cold my last year."

— **KAITLYN**, STONY BROOK SENIOR

According to the 2009 Health Assessment Survey, 23.2% of Stony Brook students reported that sleep difficulties impacted their academic performance. Insomnia is defined as difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or poor quality of sleep. As a college student sleep is the first thing to go when the pressure is on. Sleep is a very important self-management tool to succeed as a student.

The National Sleep Foundation identifies a few dangers associated with SLEEPLESSNESS:

- More than 10% of drivers admit to having dozed off at the wheel. 30% of road accidents—including many deaths—are caused by sleeplessness.
- College-age students (and everyone else) need at least eight hours of sleep to maintain optimum health and learning capabilities.
- Due to pressures of school, family, and a social life, few students are sleeping nearly enough.
- Some students also hold jobs to help defray college expenses which will affect sleep.

All these pressures increase stress and stress can lead to insomnia and even more sleep loss. NSF also states there are medical conditions related to sleep deprivation, depression, obesity, and accelerated aging process. Sleep is the only way to beat fatigue. It is important to recognize the signs (irritability, memory loss, illness, etc.) of being sleep-deprived and increase your sleep to diminish them. A regular bed and wake time within a sleep-conducive environment will support a good night's sleep. Also, it is important to avoid caffeine, nicotine, and/or alcohol close to bed time.

TOP TEN TIPS TO HELP YOU GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

1. Establish a regular bed and wake time schedule, even on weekends.
2. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as taking a hot bath and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.
3. Create a sleep-conducive environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool.
4. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillow.
5. Finish eating 2–3 hours before your regular bedtime.
6. Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout a few hours before bedtime.
7. Avoid caffeine (e.g., coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.
8. Avoid nicotine (e.g., cigarettes, tobacco products) close to bedtime. It can lead to poor sleep.
9. Avoid alcohol close to bedtime. It can lead to disrupted sleep later in the night.
10. Keep a journal next to your bed to write down any thoughts to clear your mind for sleep.

"I definitely missed out on a lot of sleep my freshman year. Sleep is so amazingly important. When I get my 8 hours of sleep I feel energized. I can get to class, focus and get my work done. So, I figured out what my important priorities were and sleep is up there on the top of my list."

—**CRYSTAL**, STONY BROOK SOPHOMORE

"I always enjoyed sleep and I didn't realize how important it was until I came to college. Countless nights I spent on the phone, hanging out and watching TV. This led to missing classes. Now I make it my priority to get enough sleep and it has improved my attendance and class participation."

—PASCALE, STONY BROOK SOPHOMORE

Smoking/Nicotine

You May Already Know Smoking Cigarettes:

- Is addictive
- Causes impotence
- Causes cancer, high blood pressure, heart attacks
- Reduces your physical performance and endurance
- Causes shortness of breath
- Gives you bad breath
- Leads to more colds, bronchitis, and chronic coughs
- Kills 400,000 Americans each year

You May Know that Cigarette Smoke Contains:


Insect poison, refrigerant, toilet disinfectant and chemicals found in exhaust fumes, embalming fluid, metal cleaners and explosives.

You May Know that if You Stop Smoking You Will:

- Have better breath
- Have clearer skin
- Have whiter teeth
- Increase your energy and stamina
- Breathe easier

In 2009, only 13.1% of Stony Brook students reported any tobacco use in the previous 30 days. 73.6% reported that they have never used tobacco.

Resources

To get help to stop smoking, there are confidential resources available on campus. Contact the Health Education Office at (631) 632-6689 to speak with a health educator. Free nicotine patches are available through New York State's Smokers' Quitline. Visit www.nysmokefree.com  for more information.

Stress Management

Any change in your life can be stressful and starting college is no exception. Students report that stress is the biggest obstacle to academic success, so learning to manage it is important.

- Exercise is a great way to burn off the chemicals that cause the stress response.
- Getting enough sleep and eating well help your body handle it as well.
- Talking to roommates, friends, RAs, or counselors can help you find solutions to common problems.
- Your attitude plays a major role in how stressful college life will be for you.

Those who believe they must perform perfectly in all situations, experience a great deal of stress. If you are taking courses you truly enjoy, there will be less stress involved. Be sure that your academic and career decisions are based on your needs and desires and not the expectations of others.

Resources

- Center for Prevention and Outreach Health Education Office: (631) 632-6689
- Counseling and Psychological Services Meditation Groups: (631) 632-6720
- Campus Recreation: (631) 632-7168

Sexual Health/Safer Sex

It is not who you are—it is what you do—that makes you vulnerable to acquiring a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) (also known as Sexually Transmitted Diseases—STDs). STIs—including Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis, Herpes, HIV, Molluscum Contagiosum, Crabs, Scabies, Syphilis, and Genital Warts (HPV)—are spread by contact with infectious microorganisms (ex: bacteria, viruses, and parasites) that are spread by person-to-person contact.

Know the Facts about STIs:

- Each year 3,000 adolescents contract sexually transmitted infections, which is about one in four sexually experienced teens.
- STIs can be caused by viruses or bacteria. STIs caused by viruses include hepatitis B, herpes, HIV, and the human papilloma virus (HPV). STIs caused by bacteria include Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.
- More than half of sexually active adults will get an STI at some point in their lives. Your chance of acquiring an STI increases when you have unprotected sex. Your risk is higher if you have had many sex partners, or if you have had sex with someone who has had many partners.
- Know that most people infected with an STI don't know they are infected—they may pass it on without knowing it.
- Know that one-in-three people who know they are infected with an STI admit they have lied about their infection just to have sex.
- Know that the use of alcohol and/or other drugs will decrease your ability to make informed decisions—mixing sexual activity with consumption of alcohol and/or other drug will impair your judgment. Know that some STIs, like herpes, can pass from one person to another by skin-to-skin contact between the penis and/or vagina, anus, and mouth. Another way to practice safer sex is to only have sex play that has no risk—or a lower risk—of passing STDs. This means no vaginal or anal intercourse.
- Know that the only 100% effective preventative measure is abstinence.
- Know that you can take action to prevent the spread of STIs by practicing “safer sex.”

HIV—an STI/STD that Can Lead to AIDS

HIV—Human Immunodeficiency Virus—is also an STI—an STI infection that can lead to AIDS—Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome. Most people infected with HIV appear to be healthy. Many do not realize they have been infected. According to the CDC, more than 20% of people with HIV don't know they have it. About 40,000 men and women in the United States get HIV each year. HIV has few, or no, symptoms for up to 10 years or more before developing into AIDS. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV—there is no cure for HIV/AIDS.

HIV Transmission

Americans between the ages of 13–24 contract HIV at the rate of 2 per hour—however—no one “catches” HIV infection the same way one “catches” a cold. The most common way HIV is spread is by having vaginal or anal intercourse without a condom with someone who has HIV/AIDS. HIV is also spread by sharing needles or syringes with someone who has HIV/AIDS; being deeply punctured with a needle or surgical instrument contaminated with HIV; getting HIV-infected blood, semen, or vaginal secretions into open wounds or sores. Babies born to women with HIV/AIDS can get HIV from their mothers during birth or from breastfeeding.

You cannot get HIV from hugging, from someone's sweat, or insect bites. It is found in other fluids, saliva, sweat, tears, or urine, but not a high enough quantity to transmit HIV. There are many ways you can protect yourself from HIV. The surest way is to abstain from sexual intercourse and from sharing needles and “works” if you use steroids, hormones, or other injected drugs.

“Correct and consistent condom use,” says the CDC, “could break the back of the AIDS epidemic.”

STI & HIV Testing

Early identification of HIV or of another STI infection enables people to start treatment sooner leading to better health

outcomes. If you have participated in sexual health-risk behaviors—had unprotected sexual contact, had unprotected vaginal, anal, oral sex with men who have sex with men; injected drugs or shared needles; unprotected sex—or if you have been diagnosed with tuberculosis, hepatitis, or another STD—speak with a health profession about testing for an STI and/or for HIV.

Safer Sex & STI Prevention

Some kinds of sex play are “safer” because they have lower risk of infection than others. “Safer-sex” activities are those we choose to lower our risk of exchanging blood, semen, or vaginal fluids—the body fluids most likely to spread HIV. Each of us must decide what risks we will take for sexual pleasure.

Always take precautions—always choose “safer sex”—when choosing to engage in sexual activity. Safer sex is all about caring for your partner and for yourself. Be informed, be aware, know that there is no kind of skin-to-skin sexual activity (with a partner) that is totally risk-free.

Practicing “safer sex” is something all sexually active people can do—use of a latex condom or a female condom to keep blood, pre-cum, semen, or vaginal fluids out of each other’s bodies, don’t have sex play when you have a sore caused by a sexually transmitted infection. If you are sexually active protect yourself and your partner by practicing “safer sex.”

Remember to:

- Communicate with your partner—“safer sex” takes two;
- Use a latex condom—or a female condom—correctly and consistently 100% of the time. Condoms work by reducing skin-to-skin contact by forming a barrier, the barrier that also keeps one partners fluids from getting into or on the other (ensure your condoms are stored correctly and use only water-based lubricants).
- Do not use baby oil, mineral oil, cold cream, lotion, or Vaseline as a lubricant when using a condom. Doing so may be harmful to the latex and thus may increase the risk of breakage.
- NEVER—EVER—reuse a condom.
- Make informed, safer sex choices about sexual activity.
- If you are sexually active, get regular STI (including HIV) tests.

Health Information and Campus Resources

There are many ways you can protect yourself from acquiring STIs, including HIV. The surest way is to abstain from sexual intercourse and from sharing needles and “works” if you use steroids, hormones, or other injected drugs. Safe sex practices will also limit your risk for STIs. Remember the risk affiliated with use/abuse of alcohol and other drugs that decrease judgment. Be aware – be prepared – protect yourself and others.

If you have concerns, if you have questions, visit the Student Health Service—1 Stadium Road—and speak with one of SBU’s health care professionals. Call 631-632-6740 to schedule an appointment.

You may also visit the Center for Prevention and Outreach Health Education office (located in the Student Health Center—2nd floor—room 213). Call 631-632-9338 to schedule an appointment with a Health Educator. The CPO offers health information and a list of resources for free confidential HIV Testing. CPO also hosts HIV Testing Days on campus. Check the CPO website for upcoming HIV testing dates and event information

<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/cpo/> 