



PREVENTION WITH PURPOSE:

A Resource for Campus Police and Public Safety Personnel

As members of campus law enforcement and public safety, you understand the impacts of student alcohol and other drug misuse on the campus community better than most. It is also important to understand that not only is it possible to prevent student drug misuse, but also that you can play a critical role in these efforts! You don't need to be a prevention expert to bring an important perspective to the table. Your active involvement leads to better planning, implementation, and evaluation of prevention strategies and a greater likelihood these strategies will succeed.

Drug Misuse on Campus

Alcohol and other drug misuse among students affects every person on campus and in the surrounding community: students, faculty, staff, leadership, and residents nearby. It leads to increased crime—both on campus and in the surrounding community. It also contributes to increased rates of injury, violence, unsafe sexual behavior, and impaired driving, as well as vandalism and damage to personal and school property.¹

Shaping the Campus Environment

Environment plays an indisputable role in promoting health behaviors. All students arrive at school with a range of experiences that both increase their risk of misusing drugs and protect them from doing so. You can't change these experiences. But you **can** help to create an environment that makes it easier for students to make healthy and safe choices.

The most important way you can do this is by supporting collaborative campus- and community-based prevention efforts. In your role, you engage directly with students and other campus community members. You are on the frontlines, enforcing campus policies and community laws related to drug misuse, preventing crime, and participating in community policing efforts. You are in a unique position to influence attitudes related to alcohol and other drug use, to provide education and support at “teachable moments”—that is, when students may be most likely to listen—and to intervene in potentially dangerous situations.

There are many well-researched prevention strategies we know can work to prevent drug misuse among college students. Many of these are driven by campus police and public safety officers. Their success depends on your leadership and close involvement.



Students who binge drink are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than students who do not. Almost 20% of students have felt unsafe due to another student's drinking.²

Prevention with Purpose: How Effective Prevention Happens

Not all strategies are right for all campuses. To ensure that prevention strategies are the best fit, prevention professionals should engage in a data-driven, step-by-step strategic planning process that includes stakeholders from across the campus and members of the surrounding community. One such planning process is the Strategic Prevention Framework. Research tells us that implementing the SPF contributes to better student outcomes and safer campus environments.

What You Can Do

Your involvement is critical to prevention success! Here are some specific ways you can support prevention efforts:

- » **Connect with others doing this work.** Alcohol and other drug misuse is a campus-wide problem. Therefore, effective prevention depends on the involvement of key stakeholders from across the college and surrounding community. As members of campus police and public safety, your voice must be part of the prevention conversation. If a prevention team already exists on your campus, join it. If not, connect with members of the Student Affairs Department to discuss starting one.

- » **Collect and share drug misuse data.** Effective prevention begins with data. Information routinely collected by your department, including numbers of citations and arrests for drug-related issues and the methods and types of drugs being used, can help prevention planners better understand how drugs are being misused on campus, by whom, and in what situations. From this data, planners can select prevention strategies most likely to make a difference.
- » **Align your prevention and enforcement efforts with existing efforts.** Work with campus prevention professionals to ensure that the actions, programs, and messaging delivered by members of your department are consistent with best practices in prevention and reinforce other campus prevention efforts.
- » **Learn about best practices.** Participate in professional development opportunities about what constitutes effective prevention and the role your department can play in these efforts. Cross-train with other departments, such as student affairs, student conduct, and housing, to develop a shared understanding of each group's role in your campus's prevention plan.
- » **Take time to build relationships.** Now more than ever, it is crucial for campus police and public safety personnel to develop trusting relationships with members of the college community. This takes time. Engagement in campus prevention work offers regular opportunities to connect positively with students and colleagues around shared priorities.



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By completing the SPF steps outlined in this publication, you can create a data-driven, comprehensive strategic plan to prevent drug misuse among your students and help your students thrive. For additional guidance on the SPF, we encourage you to review [*Prevention with Purpose: A Strategic Planning Guide for Preventing Drug Misuse Among College Students*](#).

Acknowledgements

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Division of Public Safety

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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International Association of Campus Law Enforcement

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Endnotes

- 1 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2021). *College drinking* (Fact sheet). Retrieved from <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/media/collegedrinkingFactSheet2021.pdf>
- 2 Presley, C. A., Meilman, P. W., Cashin, J. R., & Leichter, J. S. (1997). Alcohol and drugs on American college campuses: Issues of violence and harassment. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Core Institute.

Copies of this Publication Are Available Online

Copies of this publication are available online at www.campusdrugprevention.gov, DEA's website for professionals working to prevent drug misuse among college students.

Notes

**Drug Enforcement Administration
Office of Congressional and Public Affairs
Community Outreach and Prevention Support Section**

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