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## Articles:

Academic Stress:  
Coping Strategies



College Stressors and  
Substance Misuse



# Substance Misuse Prevention: A Collection of Readings

## Substance Use and Mental Health among Young Adults



[https://oasas.ny.gov/sites/g/files/oe1061/files/styles/mobile\\_lead/public/media/2024/04/hs\\_students.jpeg?h=4e0a7ff1&itok=4nkpfbce](https://oasas.ny.gov/sites/g/files/oe1061/files/styles/mobile_lead/public/media/2024/04/hs_students.jpeg?h=4e0a7ff1&itok=4nkpfbce)

### Anxiety, Depression, Coping, Alcohol Use, and Consequences in Young Adult College Students (McConaha et al., 2023)

Risk of substance use often rises in adolescence and peaks in young adulthood. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2020 nearly 72% of young adults (18-25) reported past-year alcohol use, 45% reported heavy episodic drinking, and 19% met criteria for alcohol use disorder. Taking this into consideration, anxiety and depression are commonly comorbid with alcohol use. Some theories suggest that high comorbidity is a result of drinking to cope with emotional distress. Using alcohol to cope can provide short-term relief while simultaneously contributing to longer-term problems. This study examined how approach and avoidance coping strategies affect the relationship of emotional distress and hazardous alcohol use among young adult college students.

### 3 Mental Health Coping Mechanisms for Students (Best Colleges, 2022)

Regularly check in with yourself:

How am I really doing, emotionally and socially?

Do I feel known and valued by the important people in my life, including myself?

Am I experiencing anxiety, depression, and/or stress?

Use the three A's:

Awareness- am I aware of my feelings, thoughts, actions, and relationships?

Acceptance- am I able to sit with the negative feelings and stress that I am experiencing?

Active Change- am I trying new things or reaching out for support if needed?

Practice mindfulness with an attitude of CALM MO (curiosity, acceptance, loving, motivation, meta-cognitive, observer)- the ability to shift the focus of our attention to how we are thinking and feeling.

Approach Coping	Avoidance Coping
Addressing a stressor and related emotions	Escaping a stressor and related emotions
Examples: planning, reframing the situation, using social support	Examples: denial, blaming, venting
Buffer against negative effects of stress	Amplify negative effects of stress

Preliminary results of this study (McConaha et al., 2023) show that avoidance coping was positively related to hazardous alcohol use and consequences while approach coping was inversely related. These initial findings indicate that working to reduce avoidance coping strategies and weakening ties from depression to avoidance coping in students may be beneficial for reducing likelihood of hazardous alcohol use and negative consequences.

**Participate in ScreenU: Take any of the ScreenU Assessments now to find out your anonymous results**



ScreenU Alcohol is a free, confidential, alcohol risk assessment based on evidence-based strategies called SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment). ScreenU Alcohol is very brief (three to five minutes to complete on a computer, laptop or mobile device) and offers immediate, personalized feedback.

ScreenU Alcohol can help you quickly identify if you are experiencing negative consequences because of your alcohol use. Based on your responses, you will receive non-judgmental feedback encouraging you to think about your choices that may be putting you at risk for harmful consequences.

For comments on this newsletter or suggestions for future articles please contact: Diane Geyer LCPC, LADC, CCS, NCC- Director of Training or Mary Furlong, Graduate Assistant- Email: [diane.geyer@maine.edu](mailto:diane.geyer@maine.edu) or [mary.furlong@maine.edu](mailto:mary.furlong@maine.edu)