

Recommended Reading



Document for student affairs and prevention professionals that could help identify some learning outcomes for programming for first year students.

Predictors of Alcohol Use during the First Year of College: Implications for Prevention

Missouri Partners in Prevention is proud to be Missouri's higher education substance abuse prevention and mental health consortium. In order to see measurable change in the health, safety, and well-being on campus, campus prevention practitioners must employ evidence-based strategies and models. This series provides a brief synopsis of the publications, articles, and resource documents available to campuses to assist in their substance abuse prevention and mental health intervention efforts. These documents provide a great deal of technical assistance and support. Browse our recommended reading synopsis to learn more about these publications.

“Predictors of Alcohol Use during the First Year of College: Implications for Prevention” is a 2007 journal article published in *Addictive Behaviors* by Borsari et al. that seeks to determine moderators and mediators of first year alcohol use. The article defines both terms; “moderators precede attending college and identify which students are at risk for increasing their alcohol use in college”, while “mediators explain how or why entering college affects first year alcohol use”.¹ Background on first year alcohol use is discussed on page 2, highlighting rates of first year use, increases in alcohol use from high school, and alcohol-related problems students experience.

The following moderators were identified as increasing risk for alcohol use during the first year of college:

- Sensation seeking (high sensation seeking)
- Race (Anglo-American/Caucasian)

- Gender (male)
- Religiosity (low religious involvement)
- Pre-college alcohol use (high-level of drinking pre-matriculation)
- Parental influences (low parental monitoring/influence)

Mediators help explain how or why entering college affects first year alcohol use, and occur after college entrance but before alcohol use increases during the first year. The following mediators were identified as factors that increase alcohol use during the first year of college:

- Coping (e.g. lack of coping skills or using alcohol to cope)
- Alcohol expectancies (positive beliefs about cognitive, affective, or behavioral effects of alcohol)
- Drinking motives (social facilitation, sense of belonging, “fitting in”)

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- Perceived norms (perception of high frequency and quantity of drinks, perceived peer approval of drinking)
- Greek membership (involvement is associated with heavy alcohol use)
- Drinking game participation (participation predicts greater frequency and quantity of drinking)

The article then goes on to discuss prevention implications based on these moderators and mediators and recommends the following, which can be found in greater detail on pages 8-11. These include screening, internet screening and intervention, parental interventions, brief motivational interventions (e.g. BASICS), and social norms campaigns. Additionally, on the

final pages (11-15), larger scale interventions are listed to encourage changing the overall culture of college drinking, such as decreasing the availability and increasing the price of alcohol, enforcement of campus alcohol policies and minimal drinking age law, increasing academic demands and volunteer work, increased adult presence in living environments, and increasing alternatives to alcohol use.

Read 'Predictors of Alcohol Use During the First Year of College: Implications for Prevention' [here!](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0306460307000329?via%3Dihub)

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Citations

1. Borsari et al., 2007. Predictors of alcohol use during the first year of college: implications for prevention. *Addict. Behav.*, 32 (2007), pp. 2062-2086

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