Risk Factors for Alcohol-Related Problems Among College Students
Understanding Risk Factors from a Social Ecological Standpoint (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)
Alcohol-Related Outcomes

• Alcohol Consumption
  Quantity per drinking occasion
  Frequency
  Binge drinking (males 5+ drinks, females: 4+ drinks)

• Alcohol-Related Problems (Consequences)

• Alcohol Dependence
  Diagnosed using DSM-IV criteria.

Key Point: Different outcomes have different risk-factors & show distinct patterns over time.
Alcohol Consumption

White et al. (2005)

Alcohol-Related Problems
More Than One Pathway to Problem Drinking

At Least Two Groups (King et al., 2005):

- Adolescent Onset (Before College)
  More genetically influenced
  More related to externalizing and delinquency

- College Onset
  Developmentally limited
  More role transition \ enviro. influenced

Key Point: There’s more than one type of problem drinker – each type may have distinct risk factors.
Intercampus Factors

Risk Factors

• Region: Northeast > North Central > West > South
• Four-year > Two-year
• Non-commuter > Commuter
• Small town/rural > City
**Intercampus Factors (Continued)**

**Protective Factors**

Historically black and women’s colleges – lower risk

**Little Evidence of Importance**

Private vs. Public

Alcohol Free Campus Policy
Living Environment Risk Factors

**Neighborhood**
- Alcohol Pricing
- Outlet Density

**Residence**
- Greek System
- Residence Hall > Off Campus (except drinking and driving)
- Substance-Free Residence Hall – lowers risk
Interpersonal Risk Factors

**Parents**

Family history of alcohol dependence

Perceived attitudes toward drinking

Monitoring – may lower risk

**Peers** *(strongest predictor of alcohol consumption)*

Active social network

Peer drinking behavior

Perceived norms regarding drinking
Demographic Risk Factors

Gender: Males > Females

Race: Caucasian & Native American > Hispanic > Black & Asian
Personality Risk Factors

- Impulsivity (Disinhibition)
- Sensation Seeking
- Deviance-Proneness
- Neuroticism/Negative Emotionality
- Extraversion

Protective Factors: Religiosity & Academic Self-Efficacy
Drinking-Related Behaviors

- Drinking History Prior to College
- Drinking Alone
- Playing Drinking Games
- Pre-Gaming
- Attending High-Risk Events (e.g., 21st Birthdays, Spring Break, Sporting Events)
- Positive Consequences
Drinking Motives – The Final Common Pathway

- Social Motives
- Enhancement Motives
- Coping Motives
- Conformity Motives

Other possible motives:

Defiance, Demonstrating Autonomy, Self-Handicapping
Focus on Adolescents

Goals | Components/Curriculum | Contact | Referral form |

Programs are available for adolescents ages 14-21 years old who:

- show high-risk behaviors linked to substance abuse
- need education about alcohol and other drugs
- need a better sense of personal risks and responsibilities
- qualify for an alternative to detention, suspension or expulsion

Our adolescent interventions are solution-oriented, fitting the needs and situations of each individual, and utilize a one-on-one format that includes two brief sessions. Three-month follow-ups allow for continued client support as well as six-month and annual contacts.

Referrals to the Focus on Consequences Program come from attorneys and judges; coaches; counselors/social workers; EAPs; health professionals/physicians; parents/guardians and school administration.

This research-based program is confidential and provides recommendations for further assessment when necessary.

www.eccpasa.org
Summary

• Be specific regarding which drinking-related outcomes you are targeting (e.g. alcohol consumption, alcohol-related problems).

• Know the risk and protective factors especially relevant for your setting and population.

• Interventions may need to be tailored to address the various pathways (e.g., drinking motives) to alcohol problems.