

# BLAZERWELL

A BLAZER FAMILY GUIDE TO SUPPORT STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING



STUDENT AFFAIRS

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

## *Dear Blazer Families,*

Welcome to our UAB family! As a Health Promoting University, UAB is dedicated to partnering with families to help our students integrate into our campus community, achieve academic success and develop into professionals who are ready to face the world. We recognize that you play an integral role in helping your student make healthier choices and achieve their goals. For that reason, we want to empower you with tools so you can have important conversations with them about sensitive topics like alcohol and other drug use and interpersonal violence.

Negative experiences with substance use and interpersonal violence can unfavorably impact both the individual student and the campus community. Wellness Services, the Collegiate Recovery Community, and the Title IX Office have an intentional and comprehensive plan for educating students about alcohol and drug safety and interpersonal violence prevention.

Research suggests that families have a great impact on influencing their student's health behaviors, and we encourage you to join us in our current initiative to fully educate them on substance use and interpersonal violence. We hope you will use this booklet as a guide to starting those tough conversations and understanding all of the great resources we have for your student's wellbeing.

If you have questions about the material in this booklet or regarding the many resources we share, we invite you to reach out to UAB Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement at [families@uab.edu](mailto:families@uab.edu) or 205-975-0684.

Sincerely,



*Ray L. Watts*

Ray Watts, M.D.  
President  
UAB



*John R. Jones III*

John R. Jones, Ph.D.  
Vice President  
UAB Division of Student Affairs

## Why is this important?

There are many exciting opportunities awaiting your student as they transition to the University of Alabama at Birmingham: from creating new relationships, participating in university events and programs, to engaging with their academic areas of study. However, there are also challenges ahead during their transition to adulthood and college life. One of the biggest all college students face is deciding whether or not to participate in potentially high-risk behavior or what to do if they find themselves in a high-risk situation. Parents and family members want their student to be knowledgeable and comfortable to make healthy choices, and so do we. Together, we can all work to ensure that our Blazers are making safer and healthier decisions during their time at UAB.

We recognize that holding conversations with students regarding alcohol, drugs, and interpersonal violence and other high-risk issues can be very challenging or awkward for both the student and their family members. In an attempt to help you navigate these crucial conversations, the offices of Off-Campus Student & Family Engagement, Wellness Promotion, Community Standards & Student Accountability, Collegiate Recovery Community, and Title IX have partnered to put this information together.

*We hope you will find this booklet to be a useful guide for you and your student as you all begin the transition to the University of Alabama at Birmingham!*

### *Substance Use in College*

National research has shown that family members positively impact their student's alcohol or drug use, especially if families engage in conversations with their students prior to their enrollment in the university. In a recent study of family members of incoming UAB students, almost 97% of

respondents indicated that they held a conversation with their student about alcohol, and 94% said that they talked to their student about drug use. However, approximately 42% of incoming students indicated they received ZERO hours of alcohol education prior to arriving at UAB.

*“Sending your children to college without coaching them about how to deal with drugs and alcohol would be like giving them the keys to the car without teaching them how to drive.”*

– Joseph A. Califano,  
*How to Raise a Drug Free Kid*

## The College Effect

*“The idea that once students are on campus, they’re exposed to higher-risk behaviors and are then more likely to participate in them.”*

- The U.S. Dept. of Education

*Research shows that family education and intervention before a student enters college reduces the college effect.*

## Not My Student!

No parent or family member wants to believe that their student would engage in high-risk behaviors. While we know that UAB students engage in alcohol and drug use less frequently than the national average, we want to continue to help our Blazers make healthier and safer choices about alcohol and drug use. It is imperative that we all work together to ensure their safety.

The following are common myths that our staff have heard from family members:

*“These things don’t apply to my child. They don’t smoke, drink, do drugs, or engage in sex.”*

Didn’t think these were necessary topics? **The first six weeks of college are a critical time for every college student and can set the tone for a student’s academic and social success.** While many students enter college with some healthy behaviors, they are still prone to the college effect. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the college effect is “the idea that once students are on campus, they’re exposed to higher-risk behaviors and are then more likely to participate in them.”

*“My student is an athlete that has never shown signs of being interested in partying.”*

While binge-drinking behaviors among student athletes is decreasing, according to the NCAA, about 80% of them still reported alcohol use within the past year. More concerning is that the same study showed that misuse of prescription drugs among those same student athletes is on the rise. The NCAA study revealed that almost 25% of student athletes reported using prescription pain medication in the past year and revealed that 6% of them did so without a legal prescription. Additionally, 16% reported using ADHD medication (such as Adderall or Ritalin) and over half of those students used these drugs without a prescription.

*“Our student is very mature for their age, and we don’t have to discuss things that don’t apply to their goals.”*

While it is true that 1 out of every 3 UAB students reports not using alcohol, it is still important to connect with them and have these vital conversations so that they have as much information as possible when faced with certain situations.

Even if your student never engages in high-risk behaviors, they will likely interact with peers who are engaging in those behaviors. We encourage all of our Blazers to be active bystanders and the more information they have, the more likely they are to intervene in a positive way.

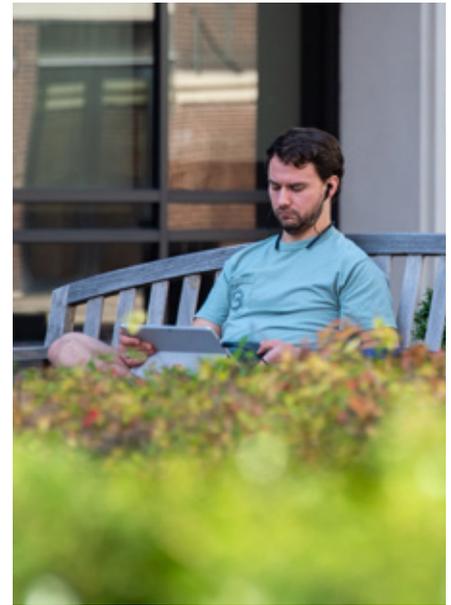


AVAILABILITY OF ALCOHOL +  
ABSENCE OF PARENTS +  
DESIRE TO FIT IN =  
**POTENTIALLY RISKY DRINKING DECISIONS.**

*Did you know?* ✕

At UAB, almost 1 out of every 3 students chooses not to drink alcohol.

Source: NCHA Fall 2022



## National Stats & Facts

### *Since Spring 2014,*

UAB has participated in the American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment in order to understand students behaviors.

This survey data provides us more information and understanding about college student perceptions and usage of alcohol and other drugs. Empowering families with these facts can better help you educate your student on how to make healthier choices when it comes to alcohol and drug use during their time at UAB.

*On average UAB students drink less than their peers nationally, but UAB continues to work to ensure all of our Blazers are making healthier decisions in regards to drinking behaviors.*

# 30.8%

*Drove within six hours of using cannabis*



# 13.5%

*Drove after drinking any amount within the last 30 days*

# 23.5%

*Recently consumed 5+ drinks in one sitting*



\*All statistics are national averages.

**3.5%**

*Used Rx drugs not prescribed to them in the last 3 months*

**4.9%**

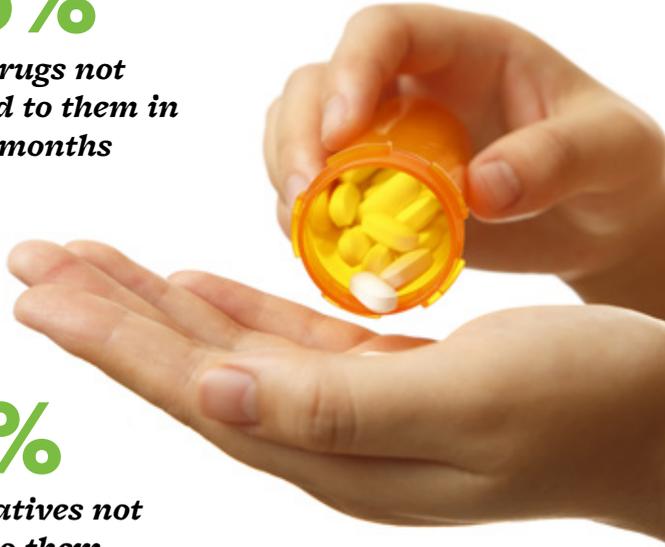
*Used Rx sedatives not prescribed to them*

**42%**

*Used cannabis*

**16.5%**

*Used e-cigarettes or vape in the last 3 months*



*“Empowering families can better prepare your student.”*

*- Kenya Harris, MSW  
Substance Misuse Prevention  
Assistant Director*

**Did you know?**



Vaping has increased among college students over the last several years. There is a misperception that vaping is “safer” than cigarette use, but vape juice contains a variety of chemicals that are associated with lung damage. Levels of nicotine are also higher than cigarettes and could lead to nicotine overdose or health problems associated with nicotine use.

*Source: Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, Stanford Medicine*

# Talking Tips

It is vital to discuss family history regarding substance use disorders (SUDs) in an open and compassionate way, so your student better understands their personal risk.

People with a family history of SUDs are 60% more likely to develop one themselves. Ensure your student knows where and how to seek help for themselves or a friend.

*The first six weeks of college are crucial due to the social and academic pressures of their new environment.*

Though you may not always think they are listening to you, 70% of students report that the expectations of their parents influence their alcohol and drug use during college.

- » **Bring up the topic conversationally** and at a time when you can have a relaxed back-and-forth conversation. Revisit this topic often and throughout their time at college.
- » **Discuss your expectations around substance use** along with facts about substance use. Ask them what their expectations will be about their or others' substance use.
- » **“Don’t do it because I said so”** is not a sufficient conversation.
- » **Discuss assertiveness skills** in setting limits with others and practice ways they can refuse offers to use substances. Remind them that not all college students drink and that most students do not drink in high-risk ways that are often glamorized in the media.
- » **Avoid communication stoppers** that tend to shut down the conversation like exaggerated statements, judgmental statements, and transitioning into an argument.
- » **Understand and talk about the high risks** associated with drinking games, drinking large quantities of alcohol, and the importance of planning ahead when they will be in situations where substances will be present.
- » **Ask what concerns or questions they have** about substance use on college campuses.
- » **Convey confidence** in their ability to make healthy choices and know when to come to you to talk about this or anything else if they aren't sure what to do.
- » **Ensure they know where and how to seek help** for themselves or a friend.

It does not need to be a formal or intimidating event when having these conversations. It is important to come from a place of love and understanding. You know your student. Find the way that feels the most natural for your family. ***Whatever you do, just talk about it!***

***Be calm, open, and prepare to listen to your student. This is not time for a lecture or to be judgmental. Now is the time to establish an open and loving conversation with your student.***

Discuss the consequences of high-risk behaviors such as binge drinking, drinking and driving, or mixing substances.

### ***Help them have a plan!***

- » How will they handle a roommate that is using substances?
- » What will they do in a situation where they find themselves around drugs?
- » What is their plan if their designated driver decides to use substances?
- » What will they do if someone is showing signs of alcohol poisoning or overdose?
- » Encourage them to get involved on campus.
- » Take a look at the Engage website or BlazerPulse together.
- » Talk about the importance of self-care in regards to sleep, nutrition, and physical activity.

## **START THE CONVERSATION**

*“I know this may be uncomfortable for us to talk about, but with you going to UAB soon, I think it’s important for us to talk about alcohol and drugs. I love you and want to make sure you and your friends are safe and know that we can talk about these things anytime.”*

### ***Did you know?***



30% of those who use cannabis may have some degree of cannabis use disorder. Individuals who begin using marijuana before age 18 are 4 – 7 times more likely to develop a cannabis use disorder than adults.

Source: NIDA. 2021, April 13. *Is marijuana addictive?* Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/marijuana-addictive-on-2023>, March 6



## Drinking & Driving

According to the National College Health Assessment Survey and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, drinking and driving among college students has drastically dropped since the 1980s, however it continues to be an important conversation to have with all students.

Though nearly 90% of students reported nationally to not drinking and driving after consuming alcohol, UAB's goal is to have all Blazers demonstrate safer behaviors if they choose to drink.

*Here are responses students have given to why they may have chosen to drink and drive:*

*I didn't think it was a problem.*

*It wasn't that far. (No other options.)*

*I was the least drunk in my group.*

*Uber/Lyft was too expensive.*

# Talking Tips

Surprised by any of these responses? Here are some suggested tips from other UAB families to use when talking to your student about drinking and driving:

*It is helpful to explain consequences in years and dollars:*

***A DUI conviction remains on record for at least five (5) years and the average cost is around \$10,000 in Alabama. An Uber ride home from a party or bar is way more cost-effective!***

***Explain other consequences such as losing their license. Other possible consequences include removing your student from the family car insurance policy or having them pay their own insurance (which will increase after a DUI), taking their car away, or having them pay for their own car.***

***A preventive practice could be allowing your student to access your Uber or Lyft app. It is important to reinforce healthy decision making and not be harsh with your student when they utilize your rideshare account! If your student feels judged for choosing a safe ride after drinking, they may not make that same choice in the future.***

# Misuse of ADHD Medication:

**“Study Drugs” or a Red Flag?** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects approximately 8% of college students in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The most effective medication for ADHD is a class of medicine called “stimulants” including: Ritalin, Adderall, Vyvanse, and Focalin. These types of medicines work well for students with ADHD, but misuse has become a health and safety concern among college students.

***Studies have shown up to 1 in 4 college students have misused stimulants during college.***<sup>2</sup>

Students who misuse stimulants do so to help them study, to stay awake, or for recreational purposes: “getting high.” Most students get these medications from a friend who has a prescription.<sup>4</sup> Many students without diagnosed ADHD use prescription stimulants as “study drugs” in attempt to improve academic performance.

However, it has been shown that students who do not have ADHD and misuse these medications experience worsened mental performance.<sup>5</sup> Another researcher found that stimulant misuse was associated with lower grade point averages.<sup>6</sup>

***Those misusing stimulants were 2.9 times more likely to have a substance use disorder in one study.***<sup>7</sup>

Instead of treating stimulant misuse as a “normal behavior,” we should view it as a red flag for other drug or alcohol use problems, academic difficulties, or need for evaluation for psychiatric conditions (including ADHD).

***Your student’s most important influence is you! Families have a responsibility to know the facts about stimulant misuse, its negative health effects, and its legal ramifications.***

<sup>1</sup> Weyandt and DuPaul, J Atten Disord 2006 • <sup>2</sup> McCabe 2005; Garnier 2010 • <sup>3</sup> DuPont 2008; Carroll 2006 • <sup>4</sup> Garnier 2010  
<sup>5</sup> Volkow, et al, 2008 • <sup>6</sup> McCabe 2005 • <sup>7</sup> Wilens 2016

You have an opportunity to encourage healthy study habits and discourage risky practices with your student. It is important to remember that most students at UAB do not misuse prescription stimulant medication. This can be a powerful reminder for your student as they begin their university experience. UAB is here to help.

***UAB's Student Health Services can assist students who have psychiatric concerns (including ADHD), in addition to many other primary care and specialty care services such as drug and alcohol evaluations.***

Our initial assessment includes a psychiatric and substance use history. All students receiving stimulant medication for ADHD must sign a contract of agreement that they are expected to take the medicine as prescribed and not sell or give the medication to another person. They are not to use any other illegal substances while taking the medication and must return for scheduled follow-up visits.

### *Did you know?*



Being in possession of a stimulant medication that is not prescribed to the user is a Class C felony which can carry consequences including 1-10 years of incarceration and fines of up to \$10,000.



## *Signs Your Student is Struggling with Substance Use Disorder*

American culture is embedded with images that glorify college as a time and place to experiment. The truly dangerous part about this message is that an individual's brain is not fully developed until around age 25, leaving them at a greater risk for developing a substance use disorder during those crucial years. Early intervention is vital and increases the chance of behavior changes and success.

### ***The “Big Five” as outlined in Recovery Ally Training\*:***

#### ***Withdrawal Symptoms***

When someone becomes dependent on a substance, a variety of symptoms may present when they suddenly stop using it (voluntarily or otherwise). Physical symptoms may include sweating, shaking or trembling, itching, abdominal cramps, headache, or vomiting. In extreme cases, alcohol withdrawal may cause seizures and even become life-threatening. Other signs, including irritability, significant changes in mood or disposition, or cognitive impairment can also occur.

#### ***“Rule-setting” to Limit Use***

Negative consequences of substance use can lead an individual to give themselves arbitrary “rules” as a means to reduce or stop their use. Examples might include only drinking or using on weekends, switching from hard liquor to beer or wine, or only using substances when they have completed all of their class assignments, etc. If the individual regularly breaks or changes their own “rules”, it may indicate that their substance use is getting out of their control.

#### ***Sacrificing Activities***

When an individual gives up pursuits they previously enjoyed in order to obtain, use, or recover from the effects of a substance, it could be a sign that their use has become unmanageable and needs to be addressed.

#### ***Role Fulfillment Failure***

This means that an individual's substance use is interfering with their ability to meet major responsibilities at school, work, or home. Missing classes or assignments, neglecting extracurricular commitments, or repeatedly missing work may be signs that a student is in need of additional support.

#### ***Craving or Compulsion to Use Substances***

When a person finds that they cannot change their patterns of substance use—even when they want to—it is likely that their use has become unmanageable. Someone experiencing serious cravings may not understand why they can't “just stop” despite the negative effects of continued use. It is important to know that these compulsions are powerful, and that individuals in this situation are not actively choosing to keep using substances.

*\*Recovery Ally Training is a one-hour educational presentation offered by the UAB Collegiate Recovery Community to provide faculty, staff, and students with the tools to understand substance use disorders, connect to campus resources, and engage in compassionate and helpful dialogues with peers about substance use and recovery. For more information, email [kpemslic@uab.edu](mailto:kpemslic@uab.edu).*

## *I am worried about my student's substance use. What do I do?*

1. As calmly and kindly as possible, express to your student what you have seen, heard, and experienced in their behavior that causes you to be concerned. Use “I statements” and avoid judgmental/subjective language (e.g. good vs. bad, “a lot” vs. “a little”) as much as possible. For example:

*“The last two times you came home from seeing your friends, I noticed you were stumbling and slurring your words. I care about you and your health and safety. I am concerned and I'd like to talk about your drinking.”*

2. Offer to help them get professional help. The first step in helping someone in a situation of possible substance misuse (Alcohol is a ‘substance’ too!) is to get a professional assessment of the situation.
3. Any UAB student may set up an appointment to assess their substance use with *Student Counseling Services in their patient portal or during regular walk-in hours*. Students may also contact the *Recovery Resource Center at (205) 458-3377* to make an appointment for a substance use screening and assessment Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Recovery Resource Center is located in Cooper Green Hospital at 1515 6th Ave. South, just across the street from Hill Student Center. The Recovery Resource Center also offers support for families of those affected by substance use.
4. Students also have access to the *Collegiate Recovery Center* - a safe, confidential, and judgment-free outlet to discuss concerns around substance use. The CRC is located at 1102 12th Street South and holds weekly All-Recovery Meetings, every Wednesday from 4:00-5:00 p.m.
5. Have your student complete a free, confidential, anonymous online self-assessment (see links below), print it and bring it with them to the appointment at Counseling Services. Taking this assessment may also help them to see for themselves how risky their behavior has become.

*Alcohol: <http://bit.ly/alcohol-checkup>*

*Cannabis: <http://bit.ly/marijuana-checkup>*

# The UAB Continuum of Care for Substance Use Disorders

UAB is proud to offer a full continuum of care for people struggling with substance use disorder. Anyone in or seeking recovery or assistance can find the appropriate level of care at one of our many on-campus resources:

Utilize this info to determine what resource may be best for you or your student. When in doubt, please reach out to the staff of the Collegiate Recovery Community and they will assist you with connecting to the appropriate resource!

## *Remember!*

Always remind your student that you care about them and will not judge them.

*Be sure to take care of yourself too!*

For more information about resources, refer to page 21.

## PRIMARY PREVENTION

### UAB Wellness Promotion

- Alcohol & Other Drug Education and Prevention
- Interpersonal Violence Education & Prevention
- Peer Education

SHWC/LRC 390  
wellnesspro@uab.edu  
uab.edu/students/wellness

## EARLY INTERVENTION

### UAB Student Counseling Services

SHWC/LRC 3rd Floor  
205-934-5816  
uab.edu/students/counseling

### UAB Student Outreach

uab.edu/students/outreach

## TREATMENT

### UAB Addiction Recovery Program

- Short-term Detox Services
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Support Groups

uabmedicine.org/addiction  
205-975-7350

## RECOVERY SUPPORT

### UAB Collegiate Recovery Community

1102 12th St. South  
205-996-1612  
uab.edu/recovery



# Blazing a Path to Recovery

## UAB's Collegiate Recovery Community



The *Collegiate Recovery Community* is a peer-driven resource for students seeking to improve their relationship to substance use. The CRC is open to all interested students, including those in recovery, working towards it, or simply thinking about making some changes. The CRC provides a community of like-minded individuals and a substance-free environment to study, socialize, or learn more about recovery.

### *We offer:*

- Social support from peers
- Weekly, non-denominational recovery meetings
- Service opportunities
- A confidential, judgment-free setting to discuss substance use concerns
- A safe and secure space on campus (with 24/7 access for members)
- Substance-free social events
- Individualized support for students in ALL pathways of recovery
- Recovery Ally Training for students, faculty, and staff

*For more information, visit our website at [uab.edu/recovery](http://uab.edu/recovery), call (205) 996-1612, or find us on Instagram at @UABCRC.*

*“The Promoters of Wellness peer education program trains student leaders to empower, educate, and support their peers to make healthy choices as they navigate life outside the classroom.”*

Promoters of Wellness  
Mission Statement

## Wellness Promotion

Wellness Promotion is located within the UAB Student Health & Wellness Center. Wellness Promotion provides students with fun and educational programs and resources to promote personal wellness in the areas of interpersonal violence prevention; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug misuse prevention; sexual health, and the promotion of sleep, stress, and self-care. Wellness Promotion offers honest conversations, provides accurate information, and develops skill-building activities to help students navigate decisions outside the classroom that can impact their personal and academic success.

### Become A Peer Educator

Students interested in becoming a member of the Promoters of Wellness team must complete one semester of training. This training is provided through an academic course for credit (CHHS 426/526). The course is listed as an elective and is open to students of any major. At the end of the course, students are eligible to become a nationally Certified Peer Educator through the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Initiatives of NASPA. To learn more about the course, please contact [wellnesspro@uab.edu](mailto:wellnesspro@uab.edu).

*Keep updated with our health promotion and prevention events and initiatives. Follow us on Instagram at @WellnessUAB*

## Substance-Free Activities

UAB offers a variety of programming on campus that encourages healthy connection that does not revolve around substance use. We encourage you and your student to check out the many opportunities' students have to engage in healthy and fun activities throughout the year. Engage is a great starting point for them to get connected to our community.

**Some examples of events to get excited about include:**

- > **Blazer Welcome**
- > **Taste of UABham**
- > **National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week**
- > **Homecoming**
- > **Into the Streets**
- > **Take Back the Night**
- > **Stress Less Week**
- > **Blazer Way Creed Week**
- > **National Recovery Month**
- > **MLK Beloved Community**





## Other Important Issues to Discuss

### *Stress, Anxiety, & Depression*

As students adjust to college, they experience some change in mood, academic performance, and behavior. Entering college is associated with excitement, anticipation, and some nervousness. Different situations can be stressful for different students, depending on their history and experience with coping skills. It is important to remember that whatever your student says is stressful about their life in college **IS** stressful to them. Validating or affirming their perspective helps them feel more supported and will have a positive effect on their ability to cope with stress in their life.

*When we see someone we love dealing with issues like stress, anxiety or depression, our tendency is to act to remove the distressing circumstance or to lessen the impact of stress in someone's life. The most helpful stance a family member can take is that of a 'consultant' in their student's life. Students are more likely to pull family into a conversation when they know there will be support and not lectures or judgement.*

## *Suicide Prevention*

It is important to understand common warning signs of **increased suicide risk**. A suicide threat is defined as spoken, written or behavioral indication of self-destructive tendencies with the intent of taking one's own life. Listen intently and let the person express their feelings and emotions. Practice reflective listening in a non-judgmental manner. Validate their feelings. Help them gain understanding of the situation and regain a sense of control.

*Directly ask them if they have considered suicide (do not just wonder; ask). Be willing to go with them to get help.*

Contact Student Counseling Services in the **Student Health and Wellness Center** at 205-934-5816. If a student is in immediate danger or has attempted suicide, please contact 911, the **UAB Police Department** at 934-3535, or have the student go to the nearest Emergency Department.



## Resources

**Off-Campus Student & Family Services**  
families@uab.edu  
(205) 975-0684

**Student Counseling Services**  
counseling@uab.edu  
(205) 934-5816

**Collegiate Recovery Community**  
kpemslie@uab.edu  
(205) 996-1612

**Community Standards & Student Accountability**  
accountability@uab.edu  
(205) 996-1512

**University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Police Department Emergency**  
UABPD-PoliceDept@mail.ad.uab.edu  
(205) 934-3535 or 911  
Non-Emergency: (205) 934-4434

**Title IX Office**  
titleixoffice@uab.edu  
(205) 996-1340

**Wellness Promotion**  
wellnesspro@uab.edu  
(205) 996-0834

<http://www.uab.edu/uabcares>



## Student Conduct Process

The Student Conduct Process, coordinated by the Office of Community Standards & Student Accountability, supports the vision, mission, and shared values of the University and the tenets of the University's creed, The Blazer Way. Through a student-focused and learning-centered lens, the process strives to uphold individual and community standards; foster an environment of personal accountability for decisions; promote personal growth and development of life skills; and care for the well-being, health, safety, and property of all members of the University.

The Student Conduct Code, available at [uab.edu/studentconductcode](https://uab.edu/studentconductcode), describes the standards of behavior for all students and student organizations and outlines their rights and the process for adjudicating alleged violations.

*For additional information, contact Community Standards & Student Accountability at 205-975-9509 or visit their website at [uab.edu/accountability](https://uab.edu/accountability).*

# FIVE THINGS

*you should know  
and discuss about the*

# STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS

1. The jurisdiction of the Code extends to all students regardless of whether the conduct occurs on University premises, at University sponsored activities, or off-campus.
2. To foster an environment that positively impacts the safety, well-being, and educational opportunities of members in the University community, the illegal or improper use, possession, or distribution of alcohol or other drugs is prohibited.
3. If a student is found responsible for a violation of the Code, a sanction(s) will be determined.
4. If a student is found responsible for having violated the Code, the case file will be retained in the Office of Community Standards & Student Accountability as part of the student's conduct record for a minimum of seven years from the date of resolution. This may impact future job opportunities, graduate school, studying abroad, transferring, and more.
5. No earlier than two calendar years after completion of all sanctions associated with a case, an individual may request in writing via an online form available from Community Standards & Student Accountability that their conduct record related to a minor violation of the code be expunged early.



## Things You Should Know about Alcohol and Other Drugs in the Residence Halls

1. Complementary to the Student Conduct Code, Student Housing & Residence Life has established additional policies to promote a safe and comfortable living-learning environment that is student-centered, inclusive, and focused on the holistic development of the student. These include, but are not limited to the following: (a) residents 21 and over are not permitted to consume or have open containers of alcohol in a common area; (b) decorative container collections (e.g. bottles, cans, bottle caps, etc.) are not permitted; (c) kegs, beer balls, funnels, bongos, and other devices that promote irresponsible drinking are not permitted in the residence halls; and (d) in addition to these restrictions, alcohol and illegal drugs are prohibited in Blazer Hall, Gold Hall, McMahon Hall and other designated areas by residents or their guest(s).
2. Residence Life staff members have authority to conduct a “plain view” search of suite(s), apartment(s) or area(s) (including a hall or building) as necessary when reasonable suspicion (smell, towels underneath the doors, etc.) is present. A search may be conducted with or without the resident present. All residents are responsible for reporting violations. All involved individuals will be held responsible for any illegal substances found in the suite/apartment or area. UAB Police will determine if further criminal action is necessary.



# STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES

*preparing for your  
student's transition  
to college*

- 1. Recognize college as a time of exploration.*
- 2. Talk about expectations NOW.*
- 3. Consider a relationship with Community Standards & Student Accountability as a collaborative partnership.*
- 4. Empower your student in their decision making and in managing those decisions.*
- 5. Be willing to learn with your student.*



## Medical Amnesty

UAB encourages a living and learning environment that promotes the health and safety of all members of the UAB community. The University is committed to ensuring that students obtain timely medical assistance for themselves and for their peers. As such, students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to seek medical attention in serious or life-threatening situations that result from alcohol consumption.

Students may be hesitant to seek assistance in such circumstances, because of fear of potential conduct consequences for themselves or for the person in need of medical attention.

*A student who seeks emergency assistance on behalf of themselves, another student, or someone else who appears to be experiencing an alcohol-related emergency will not be subject to conduct action under the Student Conduct Code, except when it has been determined that another violation of University policy has occurred.*

While no conduct action will be pursued, the student must agree to complete recommendations made by Community Standards & Student Accountability, including, but not limited to, alcohol education and/or an alcohol assessment. Failure to complete recommendations may result in conduct action.

**For additional information, including the Medical Amnesty Policy, visit [uab.edu/medicalamnesty](http://uab.edu/medicalamnesty).**



## *Interpersonal Violence*

It is not enough to talk with your student just about their substance use. Young adults are also making decisions about romantic relationships and sexual behaviors. Society provides many competing messages about consent, what is or is not healthy in a relationship, and what their role in a sexual or romantic relationship “should” be. As a trusted adult in their life, you can help your student prepare for healthy romantic and sexual relationships and help them identify behaviors of concern and how to address them.

Research suggests that most sexual assaults occur prior to the age of 30 with a large percentage occurring between the ages of 18-24. For college students, more

than half of sexual assaults occur between August and November, and students are at the highest risk of experiencing sexual assault during the first few months of their first and second semesters in college.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, relationship violence affects young adults at an alarming rate with women aged 18-24 being one of the age groups that experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.<sup>2</sup> While there is not as much research, we know men experience both sexual violence and dating violence as well.

For these reasons, even if it is uncomfortable, it is important to talk about issues like boundaries, consent, and traits of both healthy and unhealthy relationships early and often.

<sup>1</sup> RAINN.org • <sup>2</sup> Black, M.C., Basile, K.C., Breiding, M.J., Smith, S.G., Walters, M.L., Merrick, M.T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M.R. (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# Boundaries

Boundaries help people define what they are comfortable with and how they want to be treated by others. Everyone has different boundaries, so it is important for individuals to think about what their boundaries are and how to communicate them to others. This is important for all relationships, not just romantic or sexual ones.

People set personal boundaries all the time and boundaries also shift over time. You can encourage your student to feel

confident communicating their boundaries in small things so that they are also confident communicating them during more serious situations, like substance use, romantic relationships, and sexual situations.

Talk with your student about the types of boundaries they can think about as it relates to friendships, roommates, dating partners, substance use, and romantic or sexual behaviors.

*Prompt them to think about boundaries in the following domains:*

## *Social*

What kinds of friends they have, how they will set limits if friends pressure them, what types of activities their social life revolves around.

## *Physical* ✕

What they will or won't do with their bodies

## *Digital* ✕

What they will or won't share electronically, how often they are comfortable texting with their partner, social media boundaries, etc.

## *Other* ✕

Let them identify areas they want to discuss as it relates to boundaries.



# Consent

Consent has been a hot topic for quite a while now, and it is good that people are talking about it! Consent is the difference between sex and rape. It is the bare minimum required for having sexual contact with someone. Thinking about consent only in terms of sexual behaviors can make it feel awkward to talk about.

When talking about consent, it helps to normalize that people ask for consent all the time on a daily basis. For example - Can I use your charger? Do you want me to hold the door open for you? Can I give you a hug? Can I have a tater tot?

When talking about consent, it's important to understand what it is, how to ask for and give consent, and when a person may not be able to give consent.

Consent is an active and ongoing mutual agreement to participate in romantic or sexual act(s). It can include verbal and non-verbal communication, and it should be clear if a person is consenting.

*If it's not clear, then there may not be consent.*

An easy way to remember the specifics of consent is through the use of the acronym FRIES

***FRIES: Freely given, Reversible,  
Informed, Enthusiastic, Specific***

Asking for consent does not need to be awkward. It is just checking in with one's partner throughout intimacy to ensure you are both on the same page.

## *How to ask:*

*Do you want  
to \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

*Can I \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

*How does  
that feel?*

*Is it ok if  
I \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

## *Avoid:*

**Pressuring or coercing  
someone - for example:**

*If you care  
about me...*

*I thought you  
wanted to by  
the way you  
were acting.*

*Asking again after a person has said no,  
asks to delay, or has avoided answering.*

## *Signs consent has been given*

THEY  
SAY YES

THEY ARE  
EXPRESSING  
ENJOYMENT

THEY ARE  
ENTHUSIASTICALLY  
PARTICIPATING

## *Signs consent has NOT been given*

HESITANCY

SAYING  
“I’M NOT  
SURE.”

SILENCE

SAYING  
YES AFTER  
BEING  
PRESSURED

BEING TOO  
INCAPACITATED  
TO MAKE  
DECISIONS

Waiting for a “no” from a sexual partner and not hearing it does not mean that person has consented. It’s more about ensuring your partner has said “yes” either verbally or non-verbally and that it is a clear and freely given “yes”!

Sexual activity when combined with alcohol can blur understanding of consent. 90% of campus sexual assaults involve use of alcohol by the perpetrator, victim, or both. Caution your student about engaging in any sexual activity when they or their potential partner are under the influence of alcohol, especially if it is a new relationship or partner. Encourage them to safely intervene in situations where there may be risk of alcohol facilitated sexual assault as a way to combat a misguided cultural norm that drunk sex is a part of the college experience.

Normalizing sexual communication and encouraging your student to be assertive in their communication as a sexual being is important for safety and pleasure. Helping them feel confident and comfortable expressing sexual communication is a conversation that can’t be started too early. If your student is not sexually active, talking about this will not push them to become sexually active but it will help prepare them for when they decide it is the right time to become sexually active.

# Healthy & Unhealthy Relationship Signs

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive, with unhealthy somewhere in the middle. Being able to recognize the signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship and feeling comfortable talking to your students about those signs can help them navigate relationships if they turn unhealthy. Even if you haven't had

the best relationships yourself, you can still be open and honest about the experiences you've had, share lessons learned, and identify things you wish you would have done differently. This can open dialogue and help your student feel more comfortable sharing the things they are experiencing.

Healthy	Unhealthy	Abusive
Mutual respect	Manipulation	Extreme manipulation
Good communication	Breaks in communication	Controlling or isolating
Trust	Dishonesty	Criticizing
Honesty	Struggle for control	Intimidation
Supportive	Inconsiderate behavior	Threatening or mistreating
Fairness & equality	Love bombing	Harm

## *What is Love Bombing?*



Love bombing is a manipulation tactic used to overwhelm a new partner with romantic gestures designed to make you feel more than simply flattered. This most commonly happens at the beginning of a relationship, but it can also happen with couples after they have a big fight or break up. Someone who uses this tactic usually does so to hurriedly gain the favor of a potential partner so they can control them more quickly and easily.

# Talking

Be open and honest. It's ok for you or them to acknowledge that this conversation might be uncomfortable but that you want to talk about it regardless because their happiness and safety are important.

Remember, you do not have to be an expert on these topics. As long as you are encouraging conversation and know where to get more information if needed, you can have a productive discussion that helps your student think about these issues. Plus, it opens the door for them to come back and share concerns with you if they arise later.

# Tips

Ask open-ended questions and be supportive of their answers.  
For example:

- » What are some of your boundaries?
- » What do you do if someone crosses your boundary?
- » What are your relationship expectations once you get to college?
- » What are some ways you want your partner to treat you?
- » What are some behaviors you would not accept in a partner?
- » What does consent mean to you?
- » What do you think about how alcohol can impact consent?

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Some useful resources that you and your student can look at as independently or together are:

- » **Love Is Respect** | A national resource that provides education, signs of healthy/unhealthy relationships, relationship quizzes, and a 24/7 confidential hotline, text, and chat line.  
*loveisrespect.org*
- » **RAINN** | A national resource that provides education, safety and prevention tips, survivor support and lots more information.  
*rainn.org*
- » **CDC** | has information about both sexual violence and intimate partner violence with facts, information about prevention, and more. *cdc.gov/violenceprevention*

## **Title IX** | *Resource & Response Guide*

**Title IX** is a federal civil rights law that was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in educational programs and activities which receive federal financial assistance. Consistent with Title IX, UAB is committed to maintaining a positive climate for study and work and

an atmosphere free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. As such, the Title IX Office is also committed to responding promptly and effectively in response to reports of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking.

***Who Does Title IX Protect?*** Title IX protects students, faculty, staff, and others affiliated with the university.

***What are some of UAB's responsibilities under Title IX?*** Title IX requires that UAB have a policy prohibiting sex discrimination containing clear grievance procedures. The UAB Title IX Policy can be found online at [uab.edu/titleix/](http://uab.edu/titleix/).

### ***How to support your student if they experience a form of sex-based discrimination:***

1. Offer them support, listen, and encourage them to seek help and counseling as soon as possible.
2. If your student's safety is an immediate concern, call 911 or contact UAB Police & Public Safety Department at (205) 975-4434.
3. Share reporting options. Inform your student that they have options. The options can include filing a formal complaint with the Title IX Coordinator in accordance with the Title IX Policy. The Title IX Office can be contacted to assist you and your student at (205) 996-1340 or [titleixoffice@uab.edu](mailto:titleixoffice@uab.edu).
4. Complete the online reporting form. The Title IX Office has an online form that will allow you to report on behalf of your student. After the report is submitted, the Title IX Office will contact your student and provide them with resources and options.
5. Offer to join them at meetings or appointments. When going to seek support, medical attention, or file a report with the Title IX Office or police your student might not want to be alone. If they do want to go alone, let them!

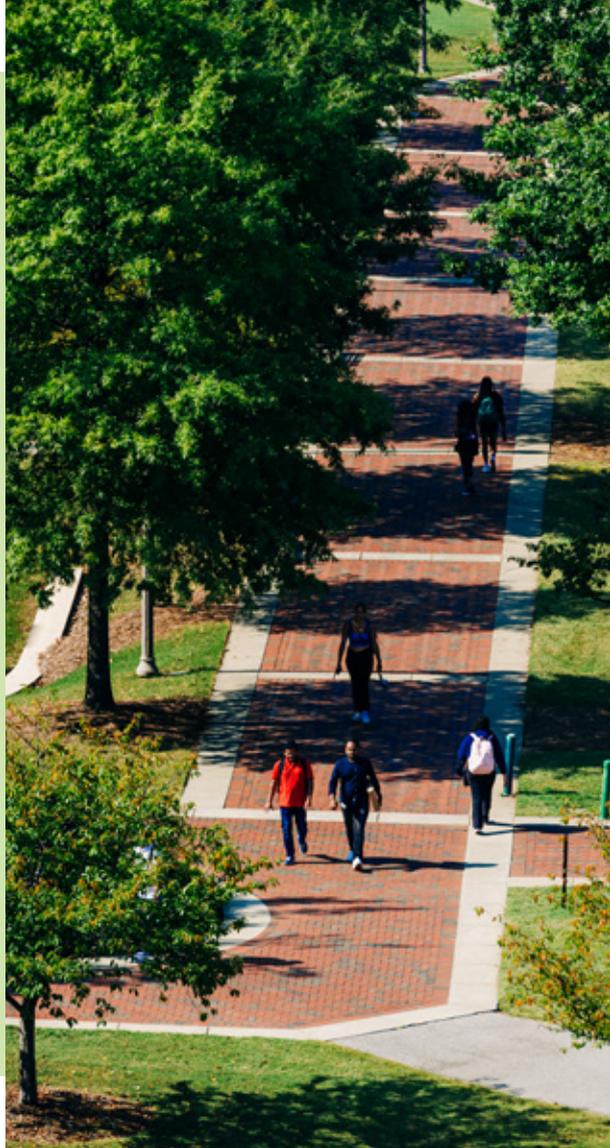
***UAB has a strong prohibition against retaliation. The University does not tolerate acts of retaliation against anyone for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy.***

***Thank you*** for taking the time to read through this guide. We hope you have found useful tips and information to help you have these important conversations with your student. As a caregiver of an emerging adult, it can be tricky to balance the role of coach and consultant. As your student gets older, being seen as a trustworthy consultant is an excellent way to keep communication strong.

For these topics, what matters most is that you provide a nonjudgmental environment and encourage a back-and-forth dialogue with your student. You want them to know they can talk with you not only about their successes but also when they are feeling pressured, after they've made a mistake, or if they are struggling. Listen to them and show them that, if it's important to them, then it's important to you. Express to them that you believe in them and their ability to make healthy choices while still having fun and enjoying this amazing time of being a college student.

Thank you again for choosing UAB as the place your student will grow into adulthood as they work toward their future goals. We are so excited to have them as part of the Blazer family, and along with you, we will do everything in our power to ensure their college years are memorable in the best of ways!

**We remain ever faithful, ever loyal. Go Blazers!**



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