

Be the Vibe, Not the Risk

ALCOHOL EDUCATION CONVERSATION STARTER

When the vibe is fun, safety is key! In honor of National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, this poster reminds members to look out for one another and make smart decisions when it comes to alcohol. By encouraging responsibility, members can stay in control of their drinking and own their choices in social settings. Tips like pacing yourself, staying hydrated and setting limits are simple but impactful ways to stay safe and enjoy the moment. This conversation starter helps chapters reflect on how they can support sisters and promote a culture of care and accountability.

In this document, questions to ask and points to make verbatim are in **bold**. Notes and instructions for facilitators are in *italics*.

CHAPTER DISCUSSION

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Like many other substances, alcohol can inhibit a person's physical and mental abilities, which means negative consequences can result from choices you make.

Why is it important to understand the risks and have a plan when drinking?

Allow responses from participants.

- You are taking steps to increase your safety in situations involving alcohol.
- Planning reduces the risk of experiencing the negative effects of high-risk drinking.
- Having a plan may reduce the amount of alcohol you consume.

KNOW THE STRENGTH, AMOUNT AND TIME

Studies have shown drinks college students pour are typically stronger than standard drinks. When you drink these beverages, you consume more alcohol than you think, and your BAC rises quickly.

Can you name factors that affect how quickly your body absorbs alcohol?

Allow responses from participants.

The higher the concentration of alcohol in the beverage (ABV=Alcohol By Volume), the faster it is absorbed into your bloodstream.

- Shots (40% ABV) are absorbed quicker than hard seltzer (5% ABV).
- Wine (12% ABV) is absorbed quicker than beer (5% ABV).

How you drink matters. The faster you consume alcohol, the quicker your body absorbs it – especially if the drink is carbonated, which speeds up absorption even more. On the flip side, having food in your stomach can slow down how quickly alcohol enters your bloodstream. Understanding these factors can help you make smarter choices and stay in control during social situations.

When drinking, how does length of time factor into intoxication level?

Allow responses from participants.

- Blood alcohol content (BAC) is the legal measurement of the amount of alcohol in a person's bloodstream.
- Your BAC drops at a steady rate of 0.016% per hour*.
- Generally, the human body fully processes the alcohol in one standard drink in one hour*. When you drink quickly, the effect of each drink accumulates, causing your BAC to rise exponentially.
- Depending on various intoxication rate factors, your BAC level can be different each time you drink.

**These rates apply if you are drinking measured, standard drinks. The above figures will not be accurate if you are drinking unmeasured drinks.*

TIPS FOR CREATING A PLAN

If you choose to drink, what can you do to make drinking a fun and safe experience?

Allow responses from participants.

- Set your drinking limit before you start drinking.
- Keep track of how much you drink.
- Pace yourself.
- Don't mix drugs and alcohol.
- Skip hard alcohol and shots.
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic beverages.
- Drink for quality, not quantity.

- Avoid drinking games.
- Learn drink refusal skills.
- Charge your phone before going out.
- Don't accept a drink if you don't know what is in it.

CONCLUSION

Any step you take toward reducing risk is a step in the right direction.

Remember: If you are under 21 years old, it is illegal to drink. If those of legal age do make the choice to drink, developing a personal plan to do so in a less risky way is important. Help each other create these plans to keep everyone safe.

