

How Well Do You Know Your Drink?

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK CONVERSATION STARTER

Drinks poured by college students are typically stronger than standard drinks, meaning you may be consuming more alcohol than you think. This year's National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week (NCAAW) educational poster focuses on the importance of knowing their drink based on alcohol serving sizes and drink containers. This conversation starter provides discussion questions to better educate members on standard drink amounts for different types of alcohol and healthy ways to moderate drinking behavior.

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

CHAPTER DISCUSSION

Let's start by defining what a standard drink is as a group.

What is a standard drink?

Allow participants time to respond.





A standard drink is any beverage that contains ½ ounce of ethyl alcohol.

- 12 ounces of beer or hard seltzer
- 4 ounces of wine
- 1.5 ounces of 80 proof hard alcohol (40% alcohol by volume)

Do you often drink alcoholic beverages that are larger than a standard drink?

Allow participants time to respond.

You can consume a dangerous amount of alcohol in a short period of time while thinking it was only “one or two drinks.” In fact, a national study* that looked at how inaccurately college students defined standard drink volumes found the following:

AMOUNT YOU TYPICALLY POUR OVER THE STANDARD AMOUNT	IF YOU SAY YOU HAD X DRINKS ...	YOU PROBABLY HAD X DRINKS ...
 <p>12%</p>	4-5	4.5-5.5
 <p>33%</p>	4-5	5.5-6.5
 <p>53%</p>	4-5	6-7.5
 <p>92%</p>	4-5	7.5-9.5

What is surprising about the information in this study? Which statistic is most relatable to you personally and why?

Allow participants time to respond.

What are examples of when underestimating could be an issue?

- When someone else makes a drink for you
- When you have a mixed drink that contains multiple liquors. (Long Island iced tea, hurricane, martini, specialty drinks, etc.)
- Drinking out of large cups or water bottles
- Doing shots and chasing with another alcoholic drink

What can you do to make drinking a fun, yet safe, experience?

- Set your drinking limit before a social drinking occasion
- Keep track of how much you drink
- Space your drinks
- Only drink mixed drinks made by a bartender
- Do not do shots
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic beverages

- Drink for quality, not quantity
- Avoid drinking games
- Learn drink-refusal skills
- Find other things to do
- Don't accept a drink if you don't know what is in it

CONCLUSION

Any steps toward reduced risk are steps in the right direction.

As a final reminder: if you are under 21, it is illegal to drink. If anyone does make the choice to drink, please develop a personal plan to do so in a less risky way. Remember this: take care of yourself and take care of each other.

REFERENCES:

- White, A. M., Kraus, C. L., Flom, J. D., Kestenbaum, L. A., Mitchell, J. R., Shah, K., & Swartzwelder, H. S. (2005). [College students lack knowledge of standard drink volumes: implications for definitions of risky drinking based on survey data](https://doi.org/10.1097/01.alc.0000158836.77407.e6). *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*, 29(4), 631–638.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.alc.0000158836.77407.e6>