Hidden Dangers: Substance Abuse Among College Students

by Louisville Addiction Treatment Center | Oct 31, 2023

Addiction can be a challenging and isolating struggle, but it is important to remember that you are not alone. If you are seeking addiction treatment in Louisville, Kentucky, there is hope.

College life is a time of self-discovery, newfound freedom and the pursuit of knowledge. Unfortunately, it can also be a time when young adults are exposed to substance abuse. Many young people living on their own for the first time in college may be exposed to drugs and alcohol, indulging more than they should. As a result, substance abuse among college students in the country is a growing concern.

Most Commonly Abused Substances Among College Students

College students are at risk of substance abuse for several reasons. This includes peer and social pressure, fraternity and sorority life and party culture. Alcohol and drugs are easily accessible during social functions and students may feel taking them is a part of college life. Additionally, college students are under high academic pressure, especially during tests and exams. This may drive them to seek out "study drugs" to help them stay focused when studying.

The most commonly abused substances among college students include:

Alcohol

Drinking among college students is almost a cliché. According to the 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), almost 50% of full-time college students aged 18-22 drank alcohol in the month before the survey with 27.4% engaging in binge drinking.

Marijuana

Marijuana use has continued to increase among college students for the past 5 years. The rates of use reached a historic high in 2020 with 44% of college students admitting to using the drug in 2020 compared to 38% in 2015.

Prescription pills or stimulants

According to data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), about 12% of young adults aged 18-25 reported the use of prescription stimulants in the past year with young adults attending college being more likely to misuse prescription stimulants than their non-college attending peers. Opioids, stimulants like Adderall and sedatives are the most commonly used prescription drugs among this population.

The Consequences of Substance Abuse

Poor academic performance

Substance abuse can lead to a decline in academic performance due to hangovers, missing classes, impaired cognitive functions, memory loss or poor concentration caused by taking drugs or alcohol.

Health risks

Health risks associated with substance abuse include alcohol poisoning, accidents, injuries, assault and unsafe sexual behavior. Abusing opioids may result in addiction, overdose and other long-term physical and mental health issues.

Social and legal consequences

Substance abuse may lead to the loss of friendships and the breakdown of relationships while legal consequences may include charges for underage drinking, drug possession, assault and driving under the influence.

Help is Available

College is meant to be an exciting time in a person's life. However, substance abuse can complicate things and have far-reaching consequences.

At Impact Outpatient Program, we understand how difficult it can be to address addiction and substance abuse, especially in college students. That's why we offer intensive outpatient and traditional outpatient treatment programs that allow individuals to easily keep up with their school schedules while undergoing treatment. We also offer telemedicine sessions that allow clients to attend treatment virtually.

Don't hesitate to contact us for more information about our addiction treatment programs.

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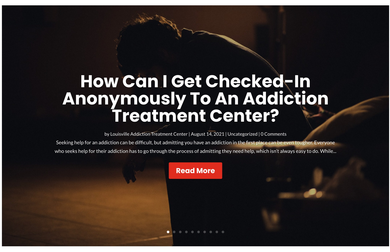

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