

## Alcohol & Mental Health

While the effects of alcohol can sometimes have a short-term positive impact on our mood, in the long term it can cause problems. People who are experiencing a mental health difficulty may use alcohol to try and manage their stress or anxiety. This might seem to be helpful in the short term but may make things much harder to handle in the long run. Drinking alcohol impairs both physical and mental abilities, decreases inhibitions, and impacts decision making. This can lead to us making decisions while drinking that we would not normally make sober.

*Educating yourself on the potential effects of drugs and alcohol can help keep you—and your friends—safe.*

## Healthier Alternatives to Alcohol for Stress Management

Alcohol is not a healthy way of dealing with stress. It is important to have coping strategies that do not involve drinking. Try the following strategies:

### Schedule Quiet Time:

Take 10-20 minutes each day to quietly reflect. Listen to music, relax, and clear your mind of stress.

### Share Your Feelings:

Talk with your friends and family, OSU staff and mental health professionals about what is causing you stress. If you need to, make an appointment with OSU Counseling.

### Go Outside:

There are hiking and mountain biking trails, kayak rentals, and beautiful views at Lake McMurtry, Boomer Lake, or Lake Carl Blackwell. Or, take a walk around the OSU Botanic Garden!

### Do Something Creative:

Try a class at the OSU Prairie Arts Center, have a painting night with friends, or just get out a coloring book and markers.

### Learn To Say No:

If you are overwhelmed with responsibilities, make a point not to take on more than you can handle.

### Exercise Regularly And Eat Healthfully

Get 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week and focus on eating a healthy diet. Try the Colvin Recreation Center or the Seretean Wellness Center or check out the Colvin Group Fitness Schedule.

### Learn Relaxation Methods:

Relaxation methods, such as meditation or yoga, breathing techniques or a warm bath can all be helpful when you feel worried or anxious. Try TAO Online Therapy, a free resource for OSU students.

## If You *Do* Choose To Drink, Be *S.M.A.R.T.*

### Set and know your limits.

Pace your drinks: one per hour  
Alternate drinks with water  
Avoid drinking games  
Never drive after drinking.  
Refuse drunk rides home.

### Make a plan

Go and stay with friends you know.  
Always eat a full meal before you drink.  
Always have a sober buddy in your group.

### Appoint a sober driver

If you have been drinking, DO NOT drive.  
A sober driver is not the least drunk person; a sober driver is the person who has not drank at all!  
There is no way to sober up quickly. Time is the only thing that will sober an individual.

### Responsible Means Over 21

There is nothing responsible about breaking the law. If you are under 21 you should not be drinking.

There are things you can do for fun that do not include drinking.

People have different reasons for not drinking, respect other's decisions to not drink.

### Think Before You Drink

Always make your own drinks.  
Don't drink from a common container  
Keep your body hydrated.

If anyone has signs of alcohol poisoning, **CALL 911 FOR HELP!**

Alcohol lowers your inhibitions. If someone has been consuming alcohol know that they CANNOT give effective consent to any sexual contact.

Alcohol affects your emotions. Don't drink if you are hungry, angry, lonely, or tired.

Oklahoma State University is a community that cares, and there are resources and programs to help you.

If you or someone you know is looking for free help with substance abuse, the OSU Alcohol & Substance Abuse Center (405-744-5458) is available.

Concerned about a peer? Fill out at a Care Report at <https://ssc.okstate.edu/report.html>



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AND CONDUCT