The U.S. Department of Education's

HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER | for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Violence Prevention

COLLEGE PARTY INTERVENTION CHECKLIST[1]

Problem Statement

Off-campus parties are a major source of underage and excessive drinking among college students and cause alcohol-related problems for students and residents.

WHY should campuses implement an off-campus party intervention?

College students tend to drink in two settings—bars and parties. Parties tend to be less regulated than bars and have multiple risk factors, including:

- High blood alcohol concentrations;
- Drinking games;
- High risk for females;
- Illicit drugs used and available;
- Underage drinking;
- Hazing.

In addition to risks for students directly attending parties, campuses, students, and residents often experience secondary effects including:

- Fights;
- Noise complaints;
- Enforcement costs;
- Vandalism;
- Loss of sleep or study disruption;
- Poor town-gown relations, including decreased property values.

Implementing effective intervention strategies around off-campus parties will:

- Reduce the overall number of student parties;
- Reduce underage and excessive drinking;
- Limit the availability of alcohol to minors;
- Decrease alcohol-related problems for students and residents;
- Improve town-gown relations.

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[1] This checklist is a brief, evidence-based guide for campus-based prevention professionals. It is designed to give you the basic information needed to develop, implement, and evaluate an intervention for addressing the problems related to off-campus parties. For more information, contact the Higher Education Center at HigherEdCtr@edc.org or (800) 676-1730.

WHAT can campuses do about parties?

Policies[2]
Ensuring that the right policies (community and institutional) are in place (and enforceable) will help to support party interventions. Some of the key policies include:
1. Social host liability;
2. Noise ordinances;
3. DUI;
4. Providing alcohol to a minor;
5. Open container;
6. Minor in possession;
7. Landlord lease agreements;
8. A campus code of conduct policy holding students accountable for off-campus behavior.

Enforcement
Enforcement approaches vary but can include:
1. Formal police patrols;
2. Student campus official party patrols working with police;
3. Community policing;
4. DUI checkpoints.

Other key components of effective enforcement:
1. Multiple and coordinated enforcement activities;
2. Consistency in enforcing policies;
3. Make sure enforcement is high profile (use flashing lights, party patrols should be easily identifiable);
4. Avoid arresting or citing a lot of party hosts or partygoers as the goal—use enforcement to raise the *perception* of the risk of being cited;
5. Stay clear of being too aggressive—student backlashes or too many arrests are counterproductive.

Media and Communications
A media and communications campaign will inform others of your efforts and help to raise the perception of risk of "getting into trouble" associated with hosting or going to parties. Important points to remember in utilizing media strategically:
1. Party interventions should be supported by effective communication before, during, and after they are implemented;
2. Educate students about policies and enforcement efforts;
3. Carefully designed and well-publicized enforcement of policies serves to increase the perception of risk associated with underage and heavy drinking;
4. Can help to define a social norm that promotes health and safety;
5. Demonstrate that your university takes this issue seriously and is acting in a positive way to address it;
6. Identify a spokesperson who can clearly articulate your efforts and understands the goals of a media campaign.

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[2] For detailed information on a variety of these and other alcohol policies at both the state and federal levels, refer to the Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS) Web site at http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/Home.html.

PARTY INTERVENTION CHECKLIST

Conduct a Needs Assessment	Identify Key Stakeholders	Convene Meeting	Select Interventions	Monitor and Evaluate
❑ Interview data with anecdotal evidence ❑ Calls for service from campus or local police ❑ Noise complaints made to campus or local police ❑ Incident reports to campus judicial office related to parties ❑ Incidents report to Greek/Panhellenic office ❑ Injury reports to campus health center ❑ Transports to the hospital for alcohol poisoning	❑ Campus administrators ❑ AOD prevention professional ❑ Campus police ❑ Judicial office ❑ Students ❑ Community police ❑ Landlords ❑ Residents ❑ Others?	❑ Briefly review data and data needs ❑ Review policies and activities currently in place ❑ Agree on desired outcome(s) (fewer big parties, less noise, etc.) ❑ Agree on specific activities ❑ Agree on timeline of milestones ❑ Discuss how milestones will be achieved ❑ Assign tasks related to activities	**Policies*** ❑ Social host liability ❑ Noise ordinances ❑ DUI ❑ Providing alcohol to a minor ❑ Open container ❑ Minor in possession ❑ Landlord lease agreements ❑ A campus code of conduct policy holding students accountable for off-campus behavior **Enforcement*** ❑ Formal police patrols ❑ Student campus official party patrols working with police ❑ Community policing ❑ DUI checkpoints *Use media and communication strategically to support enforcement and educate about policies*	❑ Examine pre- and post-indicator data ❑ Were interventions implemented? If not, why not? ❑ Was there a change? ❑ What went well? ❑ What can be sustained? ❑ What needs to be changed?

Supporting Information, Resources, and References
Off-Campus Party Interventions

College Drinking and Related Problems

Heavy drinking and its related problems remain the most serious public health concern on U.S. college campuses. Heavy drinking is related to risk for numerous problems, including:

- **Alcohol abuse and dependence:** Research shows that 31 percent of college students met DSM-IV criteria for alcohol abuse and 6 percent for dependence (Knight et al., 2002).
- **Academic problems:** About one-quarter of students report academic problems (e.g., missing class or getting behind in school work) due to alcohol consumption (Wechsler et al., 2002).
- **Drunk driving:** A recent study found that more than 3,360,000 college-age students drove under the influence of alcohol (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009).
- **Sexual violence:** Research consistently finds that at least half of all sexual assaults involving college students are associated with alcohol consumption (Abbey, 2002; Banyard et al., 2005). It's estimated that 97,000 students annually are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009).
- **Legal troubles:** Research estimates are that about 5 percent of college students are involved with police or security due to their drinking (Wechsler et al., 2002). And 110,000 students are arrested each year for alcohol-related incidents, such as driving under the influence or public intoxication (Hingson, Heeren, Zakocs, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2002).
- **Health-related problems:** Approximately 600,000 students are injured each year because of their drinking (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009).
- **Blackouts and emergency room (ER) visits:** It is estimated that alcohol-induced blackouts cost an emergency room at a large campus with 40,000 students between $469,000 and $546,000 per year (Mundt & Zakletskaia, 2012).
- **Injuries and death:** Annually, there are approximately 599,000 student injuries and 1,825 deaths (Hingson, Zha, & Weitzman, 2009).

For campuses, there are both regulatory and risk management issues related to how alcohol-related problems are prevented and responded to, including:

- *Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA)* and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Regulations (http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/mandates/dfsca).
- *The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act)* (http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/mandates/clery-act)

One high-profile alcohol-related death, serious injury, or rape could potentially cost a campus a lot of money and resources to defend and settle. An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure.

Conduct a Needs Assessment of Parties and Related Problems

If you have decided to address drinking at student parties on or near your campus, you may have collected data that illustrate the types of problems experienced by students, neighbors, and campus officials related to such parties. Having such data serves two purposes: (1) It allows you to talk with administrators about the seriousness of the problems and gain their support to address these issues; and (2) Collecting data will allow you to monitor your progress and evaluate your efforts. Please refer to the following tools and guidelines on conducting a needs assessment and collecting data:

- *College Alcohol Risk Assessment Guide: Environmental Approaches to Prevention* (*CARA;* Ryan, Colthurst, & Segars, updated 2009) http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/services/publications/college-alcohol-risk-assessment-guide-environmental-approaches-prevention
- *Conducting a Campus-Based Needs Assessment for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Preventions*, (Online Training) http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/services/training/online-training/conducting-campus-based-needs-assessment-alcohol-and-other-drug-ab
- *Problem Analysis: The First Step in Prevention Planning* (DeJong, 2009) http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/services/publications/problem-analysis-first-step-prevention-planning
- *Strategic Planning for Prevention Professionals on Campus* (Langford & DeJong, 2008) http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/services/publications/strategic-planning-prevention-professionals-campus

If at all possible, link student alcohol use data to the fiscal costs to your campus and student academic retention and success. Doing so can be a very powerful tool to convince campus administrators that addressing such problems is a worthwhile investment.

Political Support and Critical Stakeholders

Party interventions typically require some political support from campus administrators and community leaders. Minimally, some senior administrators should approve or be supportive of policy implementation and enforcement. Further, having law enforcement support is typically required to implement party interventions. The support of judicial affairs is needed if a code of conduct intervention is to be implemented. The person leading the effort to implement a party intervention (alcohol and other drug coordinator, a health professional or counselor, a campus official or administrator, or a campus police officer) has the time and energy to conduct the work and has access to the key stakeholders needed to implement such an intervention. The time and resources needed to implement party interventions are not as great as one might think. Several campuses have been able to implement such activities with very few resources. Strategically using the resources you **do** have is the key.

At the community level, local police, city officials, landlords, local residents, neighborhood associations, and local health departments or prevention agencies are potential stakeholders and supporters of such interventions. The key is strategically assessing the following:

1. Who can help you implement the policy?
2. Who can help you enforce the policy?
3. Who might be a barrier to implementing and enforcing the policy?

Small task-oriented groups composed of individuals with the power and interest in "getting the job done" are often better than broad-based coalitions in quickly implementing party interventions. In some campus communities, a larger coalition might be beneficial or necessary, but that is not always the case.

Setting Your Goals

It is important to consider what goal or goals you hope to reach with your "party prevention" efforts. Common goals for such efforts include reducing:

- The overall number of student parties
- The availability of alcohol to minors
- Noise complaints and trash associated with parties
- High-risk activities at parties (e.g., drinking games and drug use)
- Intoxication at parties
- Large "out of control" parties

Every party intervention should address at least one of these goals, and it is common to have multiple goals for an intervention. There is, however, no one intervention to address all these goals. Data you have collected concerning alcohol problems related to parties should help you set your goal(s) and identify which policy or party intervention best suits your campus and community. At a minimum, you should have some evidence that the goal(s) you selected matches a campus need, and some way to monitor the problem(s) you hope to change.

Current Research

The current scientific research supporting party interventions is encouraging. A study conducted by Wagoner et al. (in press) evaluated the effect of social host ordinances (laws aimed at holding party hosts responsible for serving minors alcohol, noise, costs associated with police calls for service, etc.). Results: Youth living in communities with social host policies were less likely to have attended large parties than youth in communities without such policies.

Similarly, a study by Saltz et al. (2011) examined party interventions in a randomized trial of 14 public universities in California. The study used a combination of compliance checks, DUI checkpoints, party patrols, social host "response cost" ordinance, and a social host safe party campaign. Results: The above interventions protected against getting drunk at off-campus parties, getting drunk in general, and DUI. At each intervention campus, the intervention resulted in 900 fewer students drinking to intoxication at off-campus parties.

Several campuses have also implemented successful interventions to reduce high-risk drinking and related problems at off-campus parties. The strategies included a comprehensive approach that involved critical stakeholders (landlords, students, neighborhood residents, law enforcement, and the university). For successful case studies regarding party intervention efforts, see the following:

- "Resident Roundtables Address Neighborhood Issues" (in NU Directions Campus Community Coalition newsletter), http://www.nudirections.org/pdfs/residentRoundTableReport.pdf
- *e-Fact Sheet: Controlling Rowdy House Parties Through Enforcement,* http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/files/factsheets/december2009.pdf
- *A Matter of Degree Advocacy Initiative: A Project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,* http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/111703amod.initiative.pdf

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