Detecting a drinking problem

The ability to detect if someone has a drinking problem beforehand may ultimately enable you to avoid alcohol related emergency situations. Some basic warning signals that indicate a person may have a drinking problem include someone who:

1. Frequently drinks to the point of intoxication.
2. Relies on a drink to start the day.
3. Consistently misses appointments, classes, etc. due to hangovers.
4. Has blackouts and loss of memory from drinking.
5. Frequently drinks alone to escape from reality, boredom and loneliness.
6. Often gets injured after drinking.
7. Excessively denies he/she has an alcohol problem when approached about his/her behavior concerning alcohol.
8. Suffers from chronic hangovers and wants a drink to relieve the hangover.
9. Under the influence of alcohol, does something he/she would not do otherwise.

If you have a drinking problem or if you think someone else may have a problem, encourage him/her to seek help.

For more information:

Student Health & Wellness Center……....707-654-1170

Visit Our Website at http://www.csum.edu/web/campus-life/student-center/student-health-center

CMA Public Safety……..……...911 or 707-654-1111

For counseling and treatment of alcohol abuse contact the following agencies:

Counseling and Psychological Services…....707-654-1170

Alcoholics Anonymous (24 hrs)…….707-643-8217

24-hr Nurse Advice Line (Med Call)……..800-877-0027

Special Thanks to San Diego State University

California Maritime Academy
Student Health & Wellness Center
200 Maritime Academy Drive
Vallejo, Ca 94590

Phone: 707-654-1170
Fax: 707-654-1171
E-mail: healthcenter@csum.edu

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Alcohol Related Emergencies

California Maritime Academy

A campus of the California State University

Health Watch Education Brochure

Alcohol Related Emergencies

When alcohol is consumed in excess, it can be poisonous to human systems. Nearly 10,000 Americans die each year as a result of alcohol abuse. Alcohol is also a major factor in more than half of the country's homicides, suicides and traffic accidents. Many 18-24 year olds admitted to emergency rooms for serious injuries are intoxicated at the time of admission.

Given these disturbing facts, there may be times when a person's alcohol use causes you to become concerned for their personal safety as well as the safety of others. The following are some tips on how to interpret what you observe and what to do in case emergencies arise as a result of alcohol use.

Signs and Symptoms

Dangerous signs of alcohol poisoning/ overdose include:

- Glazed eyes with pupils that react slowly to light
- Difficulty in focusing eyes
- Inability or difficulty awakening after "passing out"
- Progressive slowness and or irregularity of breathing
- No response to a pain stimulus such as a pinch
- Skin is clammy or pale
- Blood in vomit (may look like coffee grounds)

If someone has these DANGER signs, call 911 immediately. A person in this condition may be unconscious and will need medical attention.

What should you do?

Here are some basic, but essential, procedures you can follow in a situation when someone is drunk:

- Don't communicate any feelings of anxiety to the person and don't ridicule or threaten him/her.
- Before approaching or touching the person, explain what you intend to do in a direct and reassuring manner.

For example: "I'm going to help you get home now."

- Keep the person still and comfortable. Don't let him/her walk unattended.
- Do not administer any food, drink or medications, including aspirin or vitamins, because these may cause stomach distress.
- Do not let the person sleep on his/her back. If vomit is inhaled into the lungs, it may result in choking and possibly death. To avoid this, place the person on his/her side, with one arm extended above the head.
- Keep a sober person nearby to watch for signs of trouble and observe the intoxicated person for at least an hour.

If the person can talk to you ask:

- How much has he or she had to drink and how long ago?
- What has he or she had to eat (because of the possibility of vomiting)?
- Whether he or she is injured?
- Whether any other drugs have been taken?

Important Facts to Know

An equivalent percentage of pure alcohol is contained in the following:

Beer	12 ounces
Table Wine	5 ounces
Distilled Liquor (one shot)	1.5 ounces

- The peak effect from drinking occurs about thirty minutes after consumption if the stomach is empty.
- Each person's capacity to tolerate alcohol is different. Therefore, it is important to be aware of your own limitations to alcohol in order to avoid dangerous intoxication.
- Walking, black coffee, or a cold shower will not help. Only time and bed rest will help to sober a person who is intoxicated.
- Adding drugs to alcohol can heighten the effects of both substances and create a dangerous combination. **If someone is experiencing the symptoms of alcohol poisoning and you suspect that they have mixed alcohol with other drugs call 911 immediately.**

Estimated Blood Alcohol Percentage* by weight

No of Drinks	Body weight in pounds							
	100	**120**	**140**	**160**	**180**	**200**	**220**	**240**
1	.04	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
2	**.08**	.03	.05	.05	.04	.04	.03	.03
3	**.11**	**.06**	**.08**	.07	.06	.06	.05	.05
4	.15	**.12**	**.11**	**.09**	**.08**	**.08**	.07	.06
5	.19	.16	.13	**.12**	**.11**	**.09**	**.09**	**.08**
6	.23	.19.	16	.14	.13	**.11**	**.10**	**.09**
7	.26	.22	.19	.16	.15	.13	**.12**	**.11**
8	.30	.25	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14	.13
9	.34	.28	.24	.21	.19	.17	.15	.14
10	.38	.31	.27	.23	.21	.19	.17	.16

** Approximate Blood Alcohol Percentage. Percentages will vary different individuals.*

1. The area **above** the bolded numbers represents people who **may** be under the influence of alcohol.
2. The **bolded** numbers represents people who are under the influence of alcohol.
3. The area below the bolded numbers represents people who are intoxicated.

It is important to remember that if you are uncertain whether a medical emergency exists, call 911. It is better to be safe than sorry.

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