

# Creating a Responsible Community: Resources for Event Hosting

## Overview/Table of Contents

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### Overview

As you know, there is a tremendous amount of information available about alcohol and drinking, particularly when it comes to drinking safely. The keys to drinking safely include understanding how alcohol affects you and being aware of your limits. These ideas may prove particularly helpful when hosting an event for others. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some basic information on alcohol, tips for responsible drinking, strategies for helping someone who has been drinking, and useful resources for event hosting.

### Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Alcohol Basics</b>	<b>3</b>
	a. Determining Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	3
	b. Gender differences	3
	c. Possible BAC effects	3
	d. Driving	3
	e. Alcohol and other drugs	4
	f. BAC tables	4
	g. Point of diminishing returns	5
	h. Lower-risk drinking	5
<b>II.</b>	<b>Helping Someone Who Has Been Drinking</b>	<b>6</b>
	a. How to approach an intoxicated person	6
	b. Symptoms of alcohol poisoning	7
<b>III.</b>	<b>Creating a Responsible Environment</b>	<b>7</b>
	a. Hosting an event	7
	b. Checking IDs	7
	c. Underage warning signs	7
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Intervening at an Event</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Campus and Community Resources</b>	<b>9</b>

## I. Alcohol Basics

One of the best ways to gauge how different amounts of alcohol impact us is by determining Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). BAC is calculated by using a person's body weight, the number of drinks s/he consumed in one sitting, and the number of hours s/he has been drinking. When put into a formula to calculate BAC, these factors provide a reliable estimate of the individual impact of alcohol. Keep in mind, however, that a person might feel the effects of alcohol more or less intensely than the BAC might suggest. For example, some people could feel relaxed at a particular BAC, while others become noticeably tired at the same BAC. BAC is influenced by several factors, including body weight, type of alcohol, amount of food eaten before/during drinking, rate at which alcohol is consumed, and use of medication or other drugs. Mood is another factor that can influence the way individuals react to alcohol, although it does not affect BAC directly.

Gender also plays an important role in the individual impact of alcohol consumption. Men and women's bodies process alcohol different rates. Here are a few reasons why:

- The enzyme that processes alcohol in the body (*gastric alcohol dehydrogenase*) is found in higher amounts in men than in women;
- Alcohol is absorbed by muscle more quickly than fat - men typically have more muscle than women; and
- The impact of alcohol increases with lower total body water volume, and men typically have a greater total body water volume than women.

Although alcohol affects people differently based on factors such as gender and body composition, a person who has been drinking is likely to feel the following effects of alcohol at the corresponding levels of BAC. *See next page for tables to assist you in calculating BAC.*

BAC	Possible Effects
.02	Mild relaxation, loss of shyness, slight euphoria, exaggerated mood.
.05	Feelings of warmth and relaxation, intensified emotions, lowered caution and inhibitions. Coordination, judgment, and reaction time can also be affected.
.08	Impairment of speech, balance, vision, hearing, reaction time. Perception of ability is often higher than actual ability. It is illegal to drive at this level.
.10	Markedly impaired motor skills, highly exaggerated emotions, increased aggression, and diminished erection in men.
.20	Feelings of confusion and disorientation, difficulty standing or walking, serious health concerns possible.
.30	Stupor, disorientation, little comprehension of surroundings, serious & life threatening health concerns at and above this level.

### **Driving**

While New York City has an amazing infrastructure for public transportation, it's important to remember that other parts of the country and world are not as fortunate. Whether driving back home on break or here in the city, combining any substance with driving causes significant risk. Visit the [New York State Department of Motor Vehicles \(http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/dmvfaq.htm#dwi\)](http://www.nydmv.state.ny.us/dmvfaq.htm#dwi) for more information. Outside of New York, check with the DMV in your state, province, or country.

### Alcohol and Other Drugs

Mixing alcohol and other drugs, including marijuana and prescription medications, can affect your BAC levels and/or how you feel while drinking. There is no way to know exactly how drinking alcohol while using another substance will affect each person; however, some common effects can include extreme dizziness or fainting, impaired coordination, dangerous rise in blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, convulsions, and increased risk for severe alcohol poisoning. For more on combining alcohol with certain drugs, visit [Go Ask Alice!](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu) ([www.goaskalice.columbia.edu](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu))

### Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Tables

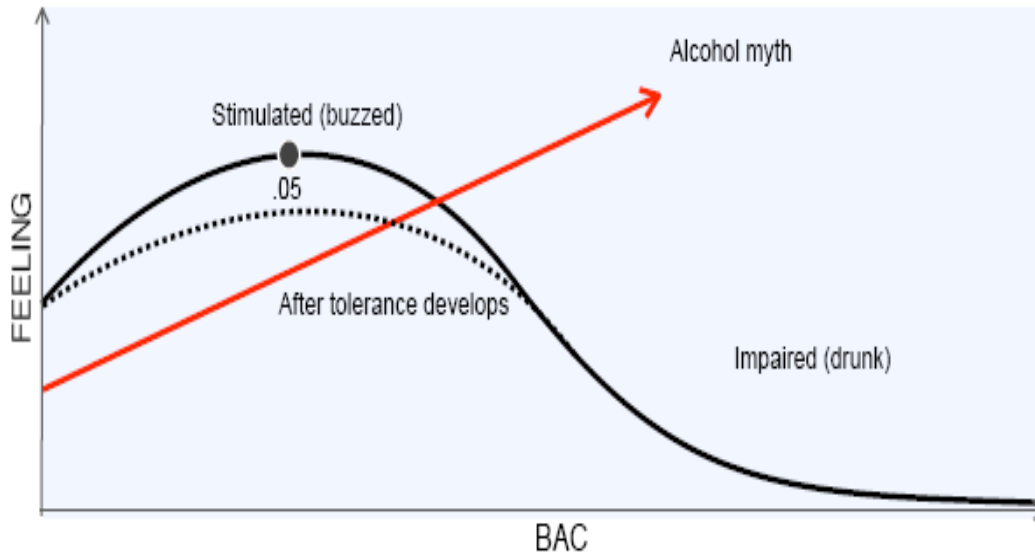
DRINKS	BODY WEIGHT IN POUNDS (MEN)											1 DRINK = 12 OZ. Beer 5 OZ. Wine 1.5 OZ. Liquor	
	80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	260	280		300
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Completely sober;
1	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0	0	0	only safe driving limit
2	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	Relaxed sensation;
3	0.13	0.1	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	impairment begins
4	0.18	0.14	0.11	0.1	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	Coordination, judgment,
5	0.23	0.18	0.15	0.12	0.11	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.05	reaction time affected
6	0.27	0.22	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.11	0.1	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06	Vomiting may occur;
7	0.32	0.25	0.21	0.18	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.11	0.1	0.09	0.08	0.08	
10	0.46	0.37	0.3	0.26	0.23	0.2	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.12	0.11	are impaired; risk of
12	0.56	0.44	0.37	0.31	0.27	0.24	0.22	0.2	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.14	injury
15	0.7	0.56	0.46	0.4	0.34	0.3	0.27	0.25	0.23	0.21	0.19	0.18	"Blackouts" may occur;
17	0.8	0.64	0.52	0.44	0.38	0.33	0.29	0.26	0.25	0.23	0.21	0.2	loss of consciousness;
19	0.88	0.71	0.6	0.52	0.46	0.41	0.36	0.34	0.31	0.28	0.25	0.23	memory loss may occur
21	0.99	0.79	0.65	0.56	0.49	0.43	0.39	0.35	0.32	0.29	0.27	0.25	Risk of harm; death possible

Subtract 0.015 for every hour of drinking [www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol](http://www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol)

DRINKS	BODY WEIGHT IN POUNDS (WOMEN)											1 DRINK = 12 OZ. Beer 5 OZ. Wine 1.5 OZ. Liquor	
	80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	260	280		300
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Completely sober;
1	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0	only safe driving limit
2	0.1	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	Relaxed sensation;
3	0.16	0.13	0.1	0.09	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03	impairment begins
4	0.22	0.17	0.14	0.12	0.1	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	Coordination, judgment,
5	0.27	0.22	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.12	0.1	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06	reaction time affected
6	0.33	0.26	0.22	0.18	0.16	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.1	0.09	0.09	0.08	Vomiting may occur;
7	0.39	0.31	0.25	0.22	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.1	0.09	balance and movement
10	0.56	0.45	0.37	0.31	0.27	0.24	0.22	0.2	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.14	are impaired; risk of
12	0.67	0.54	0.45	0.38	0.33	0.29	0.26	0.24	0.22	0.2	0.18	0.17	injury
15	0.85	0.67	0.56	0.48	0.42	0.37	0.33	0.3	0.27	0.25	0.23	0.22	"Blackouts" may occur;
17	0.95	0.77	0.63	0.54	0.46	0.41	0.38	0.34	0.31	0.27	0.26	0.24	loss of consciousness;
19		0.86	0.72	0.62	0.54	0.48	0.44	0.39	0.36	0.32	0.3	0.28	memory loss may occur
21		0.95	0.79	0.67	0.59	0.52	0.47	0.42	0.39	0.36	0.33	0.31	Risk of harm; death possible

Subtract 0.015 for every hour of drinking [www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol](http://www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol)

Some people believe that the more they drink, the better they will feel. However, in reality, there is a point at which we stop feeling the positive and euphoric effects of alcohol called the point of diminishing returns. Most people reach the point of diminishing returns at a BAC of 0.05, so it's recommended that people who choose to drink aim to stay at a BAC between 0.04 and 0.06. The graph below compares the myth of alcohol's effect (straight red line) to the reality of alcohol's effect (the curved black line).



**Lower-Risk vs. Higher-Risk Drinking**

<b>Lower-Risk Drinking is:</b>	<b>Higher-Risk Drinking is:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining the number of drinks you plan to consume before initiating drinking</li> <li>• Pacing your drinking to no more than one drink per hour</li> <li>• Consuming less than 4 drinks for women, 5 for men in one sitting</li> <li>• Alternating alcohol-free drinks and alcoholic drinks</li> <li>• Avoiding drinking games</li> <li>• Planning how to get home before going out</li> <li>• Asking friends for help sticking to your drinking “rules”</li> <li>• Eating before and while you are drinking</li> <li>• Knowing what is in your drink</li> <li>• Never leaving a drink unattended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking only to get drunk</li> <li>• Chugging, drinking games &amp; contests, shots (drinking anything out of a bowl, hose, or funnel)</li> <li>• Drinking more than 1 drink per hour</li> <li>• Drinking more than 4 drinks for women, 5 drinks for men in one sitting</li> <li>• Drinking on an empty stomach</li> <li>• Leaving your drink unattended</li> <li>• Drinking “mystery drinks” of which the contents are unknown</li> <li>• Mixing alcohol with medications or drugs</li> <li>• Driving after drinking or riding in a car with someone who has been drinking</li> </ul>

## II. Helping Someone Who Has Been Drinking

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The changes in behavior that occur while drinking are called cues. Usually, the higher the BAC, the more obvious the cues. It might be helpful to watch for cues in four primary areas:

- **Inhibitions:** People with lowered inhibitions become more talkative, relaxed, over-friendly, less inhibited, and moody.
- **Judgment:** May be noticeably impaired when individuals begin behaving inappropriately. Examples include: drinking competitively, using foul language, telling out of character jokes, annoying others, and generally exhibiting poor judgment.
- **Reactions:** Glassy unfocused eyes, slurred speech, slower speech and movement, slower reaction times. You may also notice people forgetting things, lighting more than one cigarette at a time, or frequently losing their train of thought.
- **Coordination:** Loss of coordination may be exhibited by stumbling or swaying, dropping belongings, having trouble holding a drink, or passing out.

Another effect of drinking to keep in mind is blacking out, or, experiencing periods of memory loss. Blackouts vary in severity and are often unmarked by visible altered states of consciousness. Blacking out is not to be confused with passing out, which does constitute a change in consciousness. In other words, a person can still be talking, walking, and functioning while blacked out. For more on the science behind alcohol and memory, visit the [National Institutes of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov). ([www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov))

### Approaching an Intoxicated Person

- **When should you approach an intoxicated person?**
  - When someone has had too much to drink.
  - If someone is behaving inappropriately.
  - If you must ask someone to leave.
  - If violence erupts or appears imminent.
- **How should you approach an intoxicated person?**
  - Find a friend. Ask someone who is sober to help you.
  - Approach the person without being threatening.
  - Encourage the person to move away from the main party area.
  - Address the person's behavior rather than her/his character.
  - Stay calm and be respectful.
  - Be assertive, not threatening.
  - Follow up with the person or a friend of the person the next day when sober.

## Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

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- If you see someone experiencing the following symptoms, call for help *immediately*.
- **DIAL 212 854 5555 or x99 on campus; or 911 off campus**
  - Mental confusion.
  - Semi-consciousness or unconscious and cannot be awakened.
  - Cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin.
  - Slowed breathing (fewer than 8 breaths per minute).
  - Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths).
  - Vomiting while “sleeping” or passed out, and not waking up after vomiting.

## III. Creating a Responsible Environment

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### Hosting a Responsible Event

- **Tips for creating a responsible environment:**
  - Make sure everyone consuming alcohol is at least 21 years of age by checking IDs.
  - Intervene early to help people stop or slow down and to avoid problems later.
  - Discourage the overconsumption of alcohol, including minimizing or avoiding drinking games.
  - Keep an eye out for behavioral cues that suggest someone may be drinking too much.
  - Offer choices in addition to alcohol, such as food, non-alcohol beverages or games and activities that don't involve drinking.
  - Set an example for others by consuming alcoholic beverages in a responsible manner.
  - Recognize absorption rate factors that will impact alcohol absorption for different people.
  - Pay attention to how much alcohol the people around you drink.
  - When a situation is beyond your ability to comfortably handle it or when someone needs medical attention, seek help immediately.

### Checking IDs

- **Look for:**
  - ID's expiration date.
  - Glue lines or bumpy surfaces (typically indicate tampering).
  - State logo.
  - Pin holes on the surface (typically due to bleach).
  - Size, color, lettering, thickness, and corners (compare against a known valid ID).
  - An out-of-state license (check against an *ID checking guide*).
  - Reject what appears to be a valid license if you know for certain the individual is underage.
- **If you spot any one of these problems...**
  - Ask for a second piece of ID.
  - Quiz the cardholder (birth date, zodiac sign, middle initial, zip code, etc.).
- **Underage Warning Signs**
  - Seems nervous and moves around a lot.
  - States that s/he is a friend of the host and doesn't need to show ID.
  - Never gets any of her/his own drinks, people bring them to her/him
  - Is too eager to show identification.
  - Avoids all conversations that would indicate what year s/he is.

#### IV. Intervening at an Event (*Adapted from the “Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS)”*)

- **Guideline 1: Do not be confrontational.**
  - Reason: Using non-confrontational strategies help keep the mood pleasant and enjoyable, while also ensuring that people are drinking in a safer manner.
  - Example: Note the following strategies for buying time:
    - Have a quick conversation with the person to determine if s/he is already approaching and exhibiting signs of intoxication.
    - Tell the person you must cross check an ID with the guest list.
    - Suggest to the person that they try a non-alcoholic beverage or engage in a different activity (e.g. dancing).
  - The following strategies can also prove helpful:
    - Know the University’s [alcohol policies](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/housing/docs/guide-to-living/policies/alcohol.html) (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/housing/docs/guide-to-living/policies/alcohol.html>).
    - Ask other members of your organization to help prevent others from drinking too much.
    - Remove the drink, if possible, when someone is intoxicated.
    - Keep track of how many drinks a person has consumed.
    - Be wary of a person who is requesting multiple drinks at once.
    - Avoid serving alcohol from common sources (i.e. kegs).
    - Collect all empty glasses throughout the function.
    - If in doubt, don’t serve the person alcohol.
- **Guideline 2: Use “I” instead of “You”.**
  - Reason: Take responsibility for the statements you are making.
  - Example: “I’m sorry, I can’t serve you another drink.” (“You” statements put others on the defensive.)
- **Guideline 3: Provide a reason for why you are taking action.**
  - Reason: This will help ensure that the person does not feel that they are being treated arbitrarily or in a condescending way.
  - Example: “I’m sorry, it’s the law, and I could get into trouble if I give you another drink.” or “I’m sorry, but it’s campus policy.”
- **Guideline 4: When you are speaking, make nonjudgmental statements.**
  - Reason: Judgmental statements are often perceived as “put downs” or insults and can lead the individual to feel defensive or angry.
  - Example: “How about making the next one a soda?”
- **Guideline 5: Speak clearly and to the point.**
  - Reason: In order to address the problem, the individual needs to understand what you are saying.
  - Example: “I can’t let you in unless I check your name on the guest list.”

- **Guideline 6: Take note of the person’s body language and behavior. Use this information to gauge the level of your response.**
  - Reason: Certain individuals might require more firmness and a stronger tone of voice than others. Watch for cues as the person responds.
  - Example: “I notice that other people are having a hard time hearing each other, please try to keep the music down. Thanks.” or “You may not realize it, but other people are becoming annoyed.”

## V. Resources

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- **On Campus**
  - **Alice! Columbia University's Health Promotion Program**  
<http://www.alice.columbia.edu>  
 Wien Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
 411 W. 116<sup>th</sup> Street  
 212 854 5453  
 Workshops & Training | Educational programs | Healthy drinking guidelines | Web and written materials | Referrals | Individual consultations with students concerned about self, family member, friend, or roommate
  - **Go Ask Alice! - CU's Health Q&A Internet Resource**  
[www.goaskalice.columbia.edu](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu)
  - **Alcohol Self-Assessment**  
[www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol](http://www.health.columbia.edu/alcohol)
  - **Counseling and Psychological Services**  
[http://www.health.columbia.edu/docs/about\\_us/cps.html](http://www.health.columbia.edu/docs/about_us/cps.html)  
 Alfred Lerner Hall 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 212 854 2878  
 Evaluation | Individual counseling | Support group for students in recovery | Referrals for in-/out-patient treatment | Counseling for students concerned about family member, friend, or roommate
  - **Columbia University EMS**  
 212 854 5555 or x99 from an on-campus phone
- **Off Campus**
  - **Prevlite**  
 800 729 6686  
[www.health.org](http://www.health.org)
  - **College Drinking: Changing the Culture**  
[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/CollegeStudents/](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/CollegeStudents/)