

Columbus State University

Alternative Justice for Alcohol and Marijuana (AJAM)

The purpose of AJAM is to offer educational and personal growth opportunities to students found in violation of the University's alcohol and drug policy. The objective of the program is to reduce alcohol and marijuana usage, and promote healthy choices. Instructors will provide information for making healthy choices and developing coping skills for risk reductions.

Alternative educational and Restorative justice programs in higher education are based on a research and practice derived from a juvenile justice approach that began to get traction in the 1970's. Research indicates that the *get tough* rhetoric when dealing with individuals that have not fully developed emotionally or mentally does not necessarily reduce unwanted behavior. Restorative justice seeks to empower individuals and "should be to repair the injury to all parties through active participation, dialogue, and negotiation".¹ Restorative justice at its core seeks to bring *rule breakers* into an awareness and appreciation of self regulations so they can become a better member of society².

Information about alcohol and drugs, and related risks will be embedded within a broader frame of lifestyle behaviors in this cognitive behavioral approach for students at Columbus State. Elements of the program are listed below:

MyStudentBody: MyStudentBody is an online course that is a comprehensive approach to reducing the risk of drug and alcohol abuse and sexual violence among college students. This program consists of two different assessments. The *Student Conduct* assessment will be utilized with the AJAM Program as educational tool for, not only learning important information about alcohol and drugs, but it is also teaches students skills in taking responsibility for their actions and utilizing a decision making process to help make smarter decision. The preventative assessment part of *MyStudentBody* called *Essentials* will be a mandatory online test required of all incoming students before they complete 30 hours of course work at Columbus State University. Both assessments can also be used as a clinical tool used by mental health

¹ Paye, A. (1999). Communities Take Control of Crime: Incorporating the Conferencing Model into the United States Juvenile Justice System, *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Association*, p.163.

² Tyler, T. (2006). Restorative Justice and Procedural Justice: Dealing with Rule Breaking. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 2006, pp. 307-326.

professionals to encourage personal growth. MyStudentBody engages students and parents in effective, evidence-based prevention and gives administrators the data to target, evaluate, and strengthen prevention initiatives.

Personal Counseling Session: Each student who is assigned to the Alternative Justice Program will also be assigned one counseling session with a professional counselor at the University's Counseling Center. This will give the student an opportunity to individually discuss their decision making process for using alcohol or marijuana and if there are any other underlying issues or addictions.

Course Offerings: Four class courses will be coordinated through the Office of the Dean of Students and held on the last Friday of every month consisting of:

1. Risky Behaviors and Decision Making Course

Instructor: Dr. Moore, Alcohol and Drug Coordinator, University Counseling Center.

Description: The course will process ultimate life goals for students, discuss processes of decision-making within normal limits and under the influence of substance. It will explore various reasons of why people engage in substance abusive behaviors while providing several vignettes identifying possible consequences and lessons learned by actions.

2. Alcohol & Marijuana and Your Health

Instructor: Amy Shirey, Physician's Assistant, University Health Center

Description: The objective of this course is to educate students on many of the health related factors involved with alcohol and marijuana usage and abuse.

3. The Law and Legal Consequences

Instructor: Sgt. Tessie Taylor, University Police Department

Description: The objectives of this course are to educate students on understanding the University's policies and the state of Georgia's laws regarding alcohol and marijuana. Consequences involving: 1) Minor in possession of alcohol, 2) Contributing to the delinquency of a minor, 3) Possession of marijuana, and 4) Driving under the influence. The course will also discuss statistics involving college alcohol and marijuana usage

4. Peer Interaction Class

Instructor: BACCHUS Peer Education Group

Description: The objective of this course is for students to discuss peer pressures and tools for making better decisions with their peers who are trained on alcohol and drug prevention methods. It involves interactive activities and follow-up discussions.

NOTE:

1. The Office of the Dean of Students will coordinate proof of attendance in all required courses and online tests, logging these into the Maxient³ database.
2. Students who fail to attend or fail to complete any course will be given one opportunity to reschedule for a \$50 fee.

³ Maxient: Web-based software package for receiving incident reports via the web, tracking and managing behavioral issues, and providing timely analytics.