

the RED CUP Q&A

separating alcohol fact from fiction

wildfact

86% of UA students indicated that they party one night or less per week.

(2016 Health & Wellness Survey, n=3,113)

Does alcohol make depression worse?

Yes, it can. Research informs us there is a link between depression and alcohol but there's often the question of which came first. Do you drink to feel better or do you become depressed with excessive drinking? A number of studies have shown that alcohol abuse increases the risk for depression. This connection may be because of the effects of heavy alcohol exposure to the brain. We've all had friends who tried to drink away the hurt of a breakup only to have alcohol make it worse. While it's tempting to self-medicate with alcohol, the data suggests it's not a useful strategy or long-term solution. Using alcohol regularly to deal with your problems can have the opposite effect and lead to feeling worse.

So, what's one to do? When you're feeling depressed it's hard to want to do anything at all. If you're finding you have little interest or pleasure in doing things you used to enjoy or feeling hopeless more often

than not, then it's time to get that check-up you've been putting off (start with a self-assessment at mentalhealthscreening.org). You'll also have to ask yourself a tough question; is it worth it to cut back on drinking in order to feel better?

If that doesn't work, stop by Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS) on the 3rd floor of the Campus Health Services to get a confidential consult with a counselor to help you sort things out. In the meantime, here are some helpful hints to feel better:

- Exercise at Campus Rec – physical activity can lift your mood
- Socialize, don't isolate yourself
- Have a heart-to-heart with a parent or good friend
- Find ways to have fun without alcohol or other drugs

You don't have to do it alone. CAPS is just a phone call away.

Got a question about alcohol? Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu



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