

Do you skip classes because of a hangover? Are you frequently moody and depressed? Do you feel guilty about going out all the time? Are you spending all your money on alcohol? Do you drink to escape from your problems?

If you can answer yes to these questions, then you may have a problem with alcohol abuse, and you may need to seek professional help. Texas A&M students can get this help from either a campus center or a local hospital.

Dennis Reardon, coordinator of the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at Texas A&M, says of about 40,000 students here, about five to 10 percent have alcohol related problems.

Although not all these students are actually alcoholics, alcohol negatively

affects their lives in some way, including consistently missing or being late for classes, being unable to prepare for classes properly, having mood alterations and depression and feeling guilty about drinking, he says.

The center serves as a preventive agency whose aim is to "get out and educate the students about what they can do to avoid serious problems," Reardon says.

They present programs to various student groups with hopes of educating them about the negative effects of alcohol. When students suffer from alcohol problems, the center refers them to a judicial affairs officer and they are required to attend an alcohol and drug workshop.

They attend group sessions to discuss the problems they have had and what got them into trouble, Reardon says. In addition, all student abusers must also attend individual sessions with a counselor to prevent overlooking someone with a serious problem, he says.

"We talk about issues concerning the offense and steps to avoid problems in the future," Reardon says. "We try to make sure they have a responsible understanding of alcohol use and are aware of the University's policy."

If students have serious alcohol abuse problems and need hospital care, they are often referred to HCA Greenleaf Hospital in College Station.

Gloria Noah, program director of the alcohol and drug recovery unit at Greenleaf, says many people are affected by alcohol dependency. Someone is addicted to alcohol when they can't control the use of the drug, and when the drug is taken away the person exhibits physical withdrawal symptoms, Noah says.

Delerium tremors, when a heavy drinker experiences the shakes within

one to three days after abstaining from the substance, is a good indicator that the person is addicted to the drug, Noah says.

Other symptoms include no control over drinking, the inability to take one drink and stop, personality changes after drinking to excess, depression and refusing to admit having a drinking problem.

"Someone suffering from alcoholism may not attribute their problems to drinking for a long time," Noah says.

"This happens because of the social myth that you need to hold a drink," she says.

Scoholism and alcohol related problems affect families and friends of the problem drinker, and statistics show that one out of 10 people will either become addicted to alcohol or experience major physical problems or complications, Noah says.

A significant problem exists in this area with both alcohol and drugs, she says.

"For a while people thought there was little abuse in this area," she says. "Surveys have been done and now there is a center on campus to help deal with the problem. Someone has

uncovered data to the contrary."

To help people overcome alcohol and drug addiction, Greenleaf has a 28 day inpatient chemical dependency program designed to completely detoxify the patient. The hospital seeks to restructure their lives and teach alcoholics and drug addicts to live without drinking.

This is an intensive structured treatment which includes group therapy, alcohol education and exercise. Greenleaf provides a Sunday educational program for the families of alcoholics.

"It's not just a problem of the person drinking," she says. "It's a family concern. If we ignore the people they associate with, then when the patient gets out, he'll have a hard time adjusting."

Rusty, a recovering alcoholic, says he had been drinking and taking drugs every day since 1973 until he went to Greenleaf in March, 1987 for treatment.

"I was lost in the ozone," Rusty says. "I'd had enough and didn't know what to do. I went to their alcohol and drug floor, and they packed me up and said I was going to a meeting."

This meeting was Alcoholics Anonymous, and he has been attending meetings every day since his release from the 28 day inpatient program, which he extended to 35 days.

"When I left, they said I'd never make it," Rusty says. "I didn't do it — the power of fellowship, the program (AA) and God helped me survive. When I did dope, it was the only way I knew how to live."

Rusty says AA has helped him live life sober, and he says he is grateful for the program and the people who attend. The fellowship of men and women with a common problem helps other people recover, he says.

"When you take away the alcohol, you still must deal with the bills and everyday events," he says. "I've gone to meetings every day for the past year and I'm going to stick with a winner."

The preamble of AA read at the beginning of almost every meeting says, "AA is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other



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