

APPENDIX A

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE POLICY

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL RISKS

The negative physical and mental effects of the use of alcohol and other drugs are well documented. Use of these drugs may cause: blackouts, poisoning, and overdose; physical and psychological dependence; damage to vital organs such as the brain, heart, and liver; inability to learn and remember information; and psychological problems including depression, psychosis, and severe anxiety. Risks associated with specific drugs are described later in this section.

Impaired judgment and coordination resulting from the use of alcohol and other drugs are associated with acquaintance assault and rape; DUI/DWI arrests; hazing; falls, drownings and other injuries; contracting sexually-transmitted infections including AIDS; and unwanted or unplanned sexual experiences and pregnancy.

The substance abuse of family members and friends may also be of concern to individuals. Patterns of risk-taking behavior and dependency not only interfere in the lives of the abusers, but can also have a negative impact on the affected employees' job performance or students' academic work, emotional well-being, and adjustment to college life.

Individuals concerned about their own health or that of a friend should consult a physician or mental health professional. More information and assistance can be obtained by contacting one of the college's substance abuse resources listed in this policy or a community resource listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory.

Alcohol: Alcohol abuse is a progressive disorder in which physical dependency can develop. Even low doses of alcohol impair brain function, judgment, alertness, coordination and reflexes. Very high doses cause suppression of respiration and death. Chronic alcohol abuse can produce dementia, sexual impotence, cirrhosis of the liver, and heart disease; and sudden withdrawal can produce severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and life-threatening convulsions.

Marijuana (Cannabis): Marijuana has negative physical and mental effects. Physical effects include elevated blood pressure, a dry mouth and throat, bloodshot and swollen eyes, decrease in body temperature, and increased appetite. Frequent and/or long-time users may develop chronic lung disease and damage to the pulmonary system.

Use of marijuana is also associated with impairment of short-term memory and comprehension, an altered sense of time, and a reduction in the ability to perform motor skills such as driving a car. Marijuana use also produces listlessness, inattention, withdrawal and apathy. It also can intensify underlying emotional problems and is associated with chronic anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

Hallucinogens: This category includes phencyclidine (PCP or “angel dust”), and amphetamine variants which have mind-altering effects. Perception and cognition are impaired, and muscular coordination decreases. Speech is blocked and incoherent. Chronic users of PCP may have memory problems and speech difficulties lasting 6 months to a year after prolonged daily use. Depression, anxiety, and violent behavior also occur. High psychological dependence on the drug may result in taking large doses of PCP. Large doses produce convulsions, comas, and heart and lung failure.

Lysergic acid diethylamine (L.S.D. or “acid”), mescaline and psilocybin (mushrooms) cause illusions, hallucinations and altered perception of time and space. Physical effects include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, decreased appetite, insomnia and tremors. Psychological reactions include panic, confusion, paranoia, anxiety and loss of control. Flashbacks, or delayed effects, can occur even after use has ceased.

Cocaine: Cocaine stimulates the central nervous system. Immediate physical effects include dilated pupils and increased blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate and body temperature. Occasional use can cause a stuffy or runny nose, while chronic use may destroy nasal tissues. Following the “high” of extreme happiness and a sense of unending energy is a cocaine “crash” including depression, dullness, intense anger, and paranoia. Injecting cocaine with contaminated equipment can cause AIDS, hepatitis and other diseases. Tolerance develops rapidly and psychological and physical dependency can occur.

Crack or “rock” is extremely addictive and produces the most intense cocaine high. The use of cocaine can cause kidney damage, heart attacks, seizures, and strokes due to high blood pressure. Death can occur by cardiac arrest or respiratory failure.

Stimulants: Amphetamines and other stimulants include “ecstasy” and “ice” as well as prescription drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin. The physical effects produced are elevated heart and respiratory rates, increased blood pressure, insomnia, and loss of appetite. Sweating, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, and anxiety may also result from use. High dosage can cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremors, loss of motor skills and even physical collapse. Long-term use of higher doses can produce amphetamine psychosis which includes hallucinations, delusions and paranoia.

Depressants: Barbiturates and benzodiazepines are two of the most commonly used groups of these drugs. Barbiturates include Phenobarbital, Seconal and Amytal; benzodiazepines include Ativan, Dalmane, Librium, Xanax, Valium, Halcion and Restoril. These drugs are frequently used for medical purposes to relieve anxiety and to induce sleep. Physical and psychological dependence can occur if the drugs are used for longer periods of time at higher doses. Benzodiazepine use can cause slurred speech, disorientation, and lack of coordination. If taken with alcohol, abuse can lead to coma and possible death.

Narcotics: Narcotics include heroin, methadone, morphine, codeine, OxyContin, Vicodin, and opium. After an initial feeling of euphoria, usage causes drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting. Effects of overdose include slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma and possible death. Physical and psychological dependence is high, and severe withdrawal symptoms include watery eyes, runny nose, loss of appetite, irritability, tremors, panic, cramps, nausea, chills, and sweating. Use of contaminated syringes may cause AIDS and hepatitis.

