

## Alcohol: When is it a problem? <sup>[1]</sup>

Patterns of alcohol use can change over the course of a lifetime or even over a semester. Deciding if your patterns of alcohol use are problematic can sometimes feel difficult. One way to conceptualize alcohol use is to think of it as behavior falling on a continuum. Where would you place yourself on the continuum below? If you have trouble placing yourself, consider asking a trusted friend to locate where they feel your use lies.

### Continuum of Use:

- *Abstinence*: Complete non-use of a substance.
- *Non-problem use*: Using in moderation; appropriate behavior when drinking.
- *Critical incident*: An isolated event; a single episode of a problem or harm.
- *Substance abuse*: Pattern of negative consequences (3+ in 6 months); using despite knowledge that use causes or contributes to problems; moderation is still possible.
- *Dependency*: Tolerance; periodic loss of control of quantity and/or behavior; important activities reduced or given up because of use; use criticized by family members/friends; moderation difficult or impossible.

### Reflecting on Your Drinking:

Another way to help determine whether your use is problematic is to consider what consequences you have experienced due to alcohol use. Have you experienced any of the following in the past six months?

- Felt guilty about how often or how much you drink
- Did or said something you later regretted or that caused you to feel shame or embarrassment
- Missed a class, got behind in school work, or otherwise felt unable to do your schoolwork
- Spent more money on alcohol than you wanted to
- Noticed your relationships have been negatively affected for alcohol-related reasons
- Had difficulty fulfilling school, work, or social responsibilities
- Felt nauseous, got sick/vomited, had a headache or hangover the next day
- Had difficulty remembering all or part of the time in which you were intoxicated
- Needed medical attention/treatment

If you're concerned about consequences of your use, there are many resources available to you both on and off-campus. A good place to start exploring on your own is the Online Anonymous Alcohol Self-Assessment.

Last reviewed/updated: April 27, 2015

## **Columbia Health BASICS program (Morningside)** <sup>[2]</sup>

BASICS is designed to assist students in examining their drinking and other drug-use behavior in a judgment-free environment. Services provided through the BASICS program are non-judgmental, non-labeling, and private.

This service is available to all all registered undergraduate, graduate, and professional students on the Morningside campus, including Affiliated Schools: Teachers College, Union Theological Seminary and Jewish Theological Seminary.

### **Website**

Columbia Health BASICS program (Morningside) <sup>[3]</sup>

Read more <sup>[2]</sup>

## **Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside)**

<sup>[4]</sup>

CPS supports the psychological and emotional well-being of the Morningside campus community by providing counseling, consultations, and crisis interventions — all of which adhere to strict standards of confidentiality. Drop-In Counseling Offices offer the opportunity for students to meet with CPS counselors, without an appointment, when immediate support, resources or referrals are needed.

### **Phone**

(212) 854-2878

### **Website**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) <sup>[5]</sup>

Read more <sup>[4]</sup>

## Mental Health Services (CUIMC) <sup>[6]</sup>

The Mental Health Services offers services from social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists to provide confidential services including short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, pharmacotherapy, and couples counseling.

### Phone

(212) 305-3400

### Website

Mental Health Services (CUIMC) <sup>[7]</sup>

Read more <sup>[6]</sup>

---

## Footer menu

- ▼ Contact Alice!
  - Content Use
  - Media Inquiries
  - Comments & Corrections
- ▼ Syndication & Licensing
  - Licensing Q&As
  - Get Alice! on Your Website
  - Full Site Syndication
  - Link to Go Ask Alice!

**Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.**

If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

---

**Source URL:** <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/fact-sheet/alcohol-when-it-problem>

### Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/fact-sheet/alcohol-when-it-problem>

[2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/columbia-health-basics-program-morningside>

[3] <https://health.columbia.edu/content/basics>

[4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/counseling-and-psychological-services-cps-morningside>

[5] <http://health.columbia.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>

[6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/mental-health-services-cuimc>

[7] <http://cumc.columbia.edu/student-health/mental-health-services>