

# Alcohol-free Programming

A USC Well-being Collective Toolkit



January 2021

## USC Well-being Collective

The USC Well-being Collective harnesses the power of Collective Impact for a variety of distinct and often siloed academic departments, administrative units, recognized student organizations and local non-profits to come together and work with the whole student community towards our common agenda: **strengthening a campus culture driven by student wellbeing.**

This goal is supported by four interrelated strategic goals:

**Equity and Inclusion** – enhancing the culture of equity and inclusion

**Resilience and Thriving** – creating a culture where individuals and communities thrive

**Alcohol and Other Substance Use** – disrupting the culture of at-risk substance use

**Consent and Healthy Relationships** — fostering a culture of consent and healthy relationships

# Introduction

At-risk and binge drinking have become national issues at universities. This is not only because of the consequences experienced by students who drink to excess, but also because of the impact these behaviors have on the majority of students who choose not to drink or to drink moderately. A 2015 survey by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that almost 55 percent of college students, 18-22 years old, drank alcohol in the past month and almost 37 percent of students reported engaging in binge drinking during the same period of time. The phenomenon known as the “college effect” refers to the increase in at-risk drinking that occurs when entering students arrive on campus. The first six weeks of fall semester have been identified as an especially vulnerable period for incoming first year students.

In order to combat the high prevalence of student drinking, many campuses are making strong efforts to provide alcohol-free social programs. Traditionally, alcohol-free programs are hosted during times when students commonly drink in excess. These include Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights between 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m., and during traditional events that increase risk for alcohol use, such as Homecoming, a big football game, or Spring Break. Alcohol-free social, recreational, and other extracurricular options for students can help deter students from high-risk alcohol use and detract from the culture of alcohol use. Overall, alcohol-free social programming can be an effective strategy for decreasing alcohol use at times when students might otherwise attend gatherings and events where alcohol is served.

# Alcohol-free Programming

## Toolkit Description:

Campus activity units host alcohol-free programming.

## Strategic Goals:

Equity + Inclusion

Thrive + Mental Health

**At-Risk Substance Abuse**

Consent + Healthy Relationships

## Action Areas:

Building healthy public policy

**Creating supportive environments**

Strengthening community action

Developing personal skills

Re-orienting all sectors towards prevention

## A Toolkit For:

Faculty

**Staff**

**Student**

Parent/Guardian

**Administrator**

# Goal

This strategy aims to provide alternative alcohol-free programming during prime social settings.

## Intended Outcomes

### Key Performance Indicators:

- Reduce percent of students who engage in at-risk drinking in the past 2 weeks
- Reduce percent of incoming undergraduate students who are at-risk drinkers after first 6 weeks on campus

## Evidence of Effectiveness

Promising practice- Current available research does not directly link alcohol-free programming to reduced alcohol consumption among student populations. However, offering alcohol-free programming is an important step in reinforcing healthy behaviors and providing communal activities for non-drinkers.

## Implementation Ideas

### Staff

Staff may organize community service outings or arrange night time activities, including athletic games. Examples of alternative and alcohol-free activities include:

- Hosted board game nights
- Organized hikes
- Volleyball tournament
- Dodgeball tournament
- Rent-a-theater
- Bowling nights out
- Ballroom dance class
- Networking mixers
- Hosted dinners
- Carnival nights
- Murder Mystery Party
- Community service
- Hosted bonfire nights outdoors

### Student

Student leaders and Registered Student Organizations can host alcohol-free programming efforts and communicate out these offerings regularly. Examples of alternative and alcohol-free activities include:

- Paint days
- Bingo nights
- Group exercise classes
- Coffee and Conversations
- Trivia nights
- Online game nights
- Book Club
- Virtual online group gaming
- Sponsored food trucks
- Study sessions
- T-shirt making
- Dog/animal therapy
- Escape rooms
- Pizza nights
- Group Meditations
- Casino fundraisers
- Late-night breakfast

RSOs can host late-night social events such as dances, live music showcases, seasonal festivals, study sessions and off-campus trips to provide alternatives for social gathering during the times students commonly drink in excess.

Student leaders can organize and host student-centered activities, ranging from arts and crafts, exercise classes, mindfulness group sessions, and magic shows within common student spaces.

RSOs and student leaders can coordinate recurring late-night events such as movie nights, hosted midnight breakfasts, gaming competitions, volunteer opportunities and other participatory events providing late-night free food and/or entertainment.

## **Administrators**

Administrators may extend library hours on the weekends and during late nights to offer student access to safe study spaces.

Administrators may organize community service outings or arrange evening activities, including athletic games. Examples of alternative and alcohol-free activities include:

- Campus sponsored music showcases
- Volunteer days/nights
- Museum trips
- Art gallery visits
- Bowling nights
- Campus sponsored giveaways

- Campus competitions
- Late night themed dining halls, lower cost or free
- Community gardening spaces

## Implementation Resources

College AIM: [Require alcohol-free programming](#)

Everfi Prevention Compass: [Alcohol-free options](#)

### Student Guide for Planning an Event/Activity

#### **Choosing a theme:**

The theme is important; a strong theme sets a tone and provides continuity for an event. Be creative when you choose a theme. Good themes can generate excitement among students before they even hear what activities will be involved. The following items of consideration can help guide you when choosing a theme:

- What time of year is it? Are there any big events taking place nationally/globally around that time?
- How many activities can be tied into your theme?
- Is the theme universally appealing and inclusive of the student population?

#### **Choosing Locations for Activities:**

When selecting locations for alcohol-free programming events or activities, there are several considerations to keep in mind:

- Size of event
- Whether permits are required
- Access to electrical outlets
- Access to connectivity devices if virtual
- Sound, visual requirements
- Accessibility
- Cultural inclusivity

### **Late Night USC Book Club**

Campus Activities Virtual Book Club offers the opportunity to meet new people and discuss favorite books.

### **USC Campus Labs, Virtual Events**

Event calendar of virtual and local opportunities that enhance the Trojan experience.

### **USC Event Calendar**

Event calendar of campus-wide and virtual events to build community and foster leadership through curated programming.

### **USC Visions & Voices**

Event calendar of university-wide arts and humanities focused programming.

### **USC Recreational Sports, Virtual Classes**

Interactive group online fitness training sets and classes.

### **Tips for Creating Accessible Virtual Events**

#### **Creating Accessible Content**

#### **Alcohol Free Social Events with descriptions**



# References

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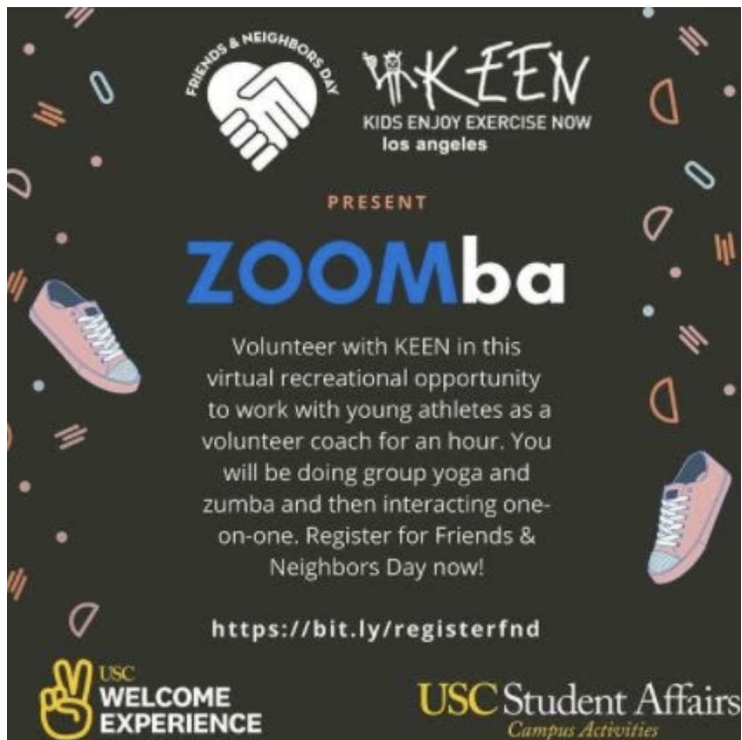
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National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2015). *College Drinking*. October 2016. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/CollegeFactSheet/CollegeFactSheet.pdf>

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2015). *College Alcohol Intervention Matrix*.

Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems. (2016). *Reducing alcohol use and related problems among college students: A guide to best practices*. Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD and the Center on Young Adult Health and Development, University of Maryland School of Public Health, College Park, MD.

# Produced Examples



**FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS DAY**  
**KEEN**  
KIDS ENJOY EXERCISE NOW  
los angeles

PRESENT

## ZOOMba

Volunteer with KEEN in this virtual recreational opportunity to work with young athletes as a volunteer coach for an hour. You will be doing group yoga and zumba and then interacting one-on-one. Register for Friends & Neighbors Day now!

<https://bit.ly/registerfnd>

**USC WELCOME EXPERIENCE** **USC Student Affairs**  
*Campus Activities*

The poster features a black background with colorful geometric shapes and sneakers. It includes logos for Friends & Neighbors Day and KEEN, along with the USC Welcome Experience and Student Affairs logos.



## VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

USC Student Affairs

- USC Hosted Activities
- Cooking
- Fitness
- Games & Puzzles
- Music & Art
- Trojans 360
- Volunteer Online
- Wellness

VISIT: [bit.ly/virtualusc](https://bit.ly/virtualusc)

The graphic is set against a yellow background and features a tablet interface with eight activity categories in white circles. A mouse cursor points to the 'Volunteer Online' category.

**USC Student Health**

# **Office for Health Promotion Strategy**

## **Backbone for the USC Well-being Collective**

The Office for Health Promotion Strategy, backbone for the USC Well-being Collective, is embedded in USC Student Health and serves as the administrative core to support campus partners in aligning their strategic objectives with student wellbeing. The Office for Health Promotion Strategy works with participating partners, the Steering Committee, and most importantly, students to activate change at USC.

For additional questions, please contact: USC Student Health, Office for Health Promotion Strategy, Backbone for USC Well-being Collective at [wellbeingcollective@usc.edu](mailto:wellbeingcollective@usc.edu)

**USC** Well-being Collective

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