

## Young Adult Prevention Services

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### Overview

Young adulthood is characterized by increased independence, greater decision-making autonomy, and reduced supervision, often leading to exploration in areas such as education, career, and romantic relationships. This period of rapid change can create both exciting opportunities and heightened psychological stress, which makes young adults especially vulnerable to risky behaviors, including substance use.

Recent data highlights a concerning trend: substance use and its related consequences peak during young adulthood.<sup>1</sup> According to the Washington Young Adult Health Survey, alcohol and cannabis are the most used substances among young adults in Washington State, and many report significant mental health impacts<sup>2</sup>:

- 75% of young adults used alcohol recreationally in the past year
- 46% of young adults used cannabis recreationally in the past year
- 14% experienced emotional or mental health problems related to cannabis use
- 10% experienced emotional or mental health problems related to alcohol use

### Statewide Collaboration

The Washington State Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) promotes collaboration among statewide partners to support the strategic planning of substance use disorder prevention efforts, drawing on diverse expertise and perspectives to create more effective and culturally relevant strategies for young adults aged 18-29 in Washington State.

#### State Prevention Enhancement (SPE)

#### Policy Consortium – Young Adult Prevention Workgroup

The SPE Young Adult Prevention Workgroup brings together state agencies to discuss behavioral

health problems and priority risk factors affecting young adults. By coordinating resources and engaging in strategic planning, the workgroup focuses on advancing substance use disorder prevention for young adults.

#### College Coalition on Substance misuse, Advocacy, and Prevention (CCSAP)

CCSAP is a coalition of professionals from higher education institutions across Washington State who collaborate to share information and develop prevention strategies addressing substance use on college campuses.

### Evidence-Based Programs

DBHR is committed to expanding the reach and impact of prevention services for young adults across the state, recognizing the unique challenges and transitions that characterize this critical developmental stage.

#### Check-in with Yourself

*Check-in with Yourself* is an online tool developed by the University of Washington to help young adults in Washington State reflect on feelings, learn coping strategies, and improve wellbeing. It is an anonymous and personal self-check-in tool that provides tailored feedback based on mood and emotions, optimism and social connections, stress and coping, alcohol use and non-use, and cannabis use and non-use.

Participants of the *Check-in with Yourself* program reported positive outcomes, including **notable increases in their perceived knowledge of coping skills, social skills, available resources, and alcohol and cannabis norms**. A significant amount of program participants also demonstrated positive behavioral changes, including:

- **72.4% reported some intention to change alcohol use**
- **73.3% reported some intention to change cannabis use**

8,720 young adults have completed the program since 2022, with **66.7% of participants stating they would recommend the program to a friend**, emphasizing its value and impact.

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<sup>1</sup> National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Washington Young Adult Health Survey, 2023

## First Years Away from Home

*First Years Away from Home* is a parent/guardian handbook developed by Washington State University that provides information, conversation starters, and activities that help parents and guardians navigate the relationship with their student during the transition to college. Handbooks provide information about topics such as the young adult brain, ways parents can make an impact through values and vision, and the three helpful parent roles (coach, cheerleader, safety monitor).

Participating universities received numerous emails from **parents expressing gratitude and requesting additional copies to share with friends, co-parents, and others**. Reflections from a *First Years Away from Home* program participant:

*“Greetings - just wanted to report that we completed the two activities (values & expectations) in the Parent Handbook you sent us earlier in the summer. What a fabulous experience! We were very excited to identify and address gaps in communication at this stage of our teen’s development. We even involved her younger teenage sister and did the exercises round robin style. It was meaningful, helpful, and super fun. Thank you for putting the guide together. We’re more excited than ever to have [student] join [university] later this month.”*

Since 2022, 45,788 families of young adults and transitional-age youth have received handbooks.

## eCHECKUP TO GO

*eCHECKUP TO GO* is an interactive, online program implemented through CCSAP that assesses and provides immediate, personalized feedback about an individual’s alcohol use and related variables. The program uses well-being tools to promote lasting behavioral change through brief, self-guided 20-minute modules. Campuses implement the program in a variety of ways, including for incoming students, those with conduct violations, and as a self-referral resource.

Since 2016, **over 72,000 students have participated in the eCHECKUP TO GO program, with an average of 10 higher education institutions subscribing each year.**

## Health Equity

DBHR allocated \$450,000 for Spanish language translation and cultural adaptation of the *Check-in with Yourself* and *First Years Away from Home* programs. By tailoring these programs to be linguistically and culturally relevant, DBHR can ensure that Spanish-speaking young adults have access to inclusive prevention resources that support their wellbeing.

## 2023-2025 Budget

DBHR allocated a total of \$600,000 in funding through the ARPA, SOR III, and SOR IV grants across the *Check-in with Yourself* and *First Years Away from Home* programs to support necessary updates and dissemination, with each program receiving \$300,000 in funding.

The two programs also received \$450,000 in OASA/OSF funds specifically for Spanish language and cultural translation services, ensuring the program’s accessibility and relevance to Spanish-speaking communities across the state. The *Check-in with Yourself* program received \$250,000 and the *First Years Away from Home* program received \$200,000.

DBHR allocated \$72,655 in SUPTRS funding to the CCSAP to support professional development through a series of webinar presentations and the Coalition’s annual conference. Additionally, this funding helped advance implementation of the alcohol and cannabis *eCHECKUP TO GO* programs.

## For more information

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