



CREATING A DRUG FREE WORKPLACE: A GUIDE FOR AJR STUDENTS

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Source: AJR Academic Catalog

To the greatest extent possible, the Administration and Core Faculty of AJR take responsibility for the spiritual and psychological guidance of each student throughout their career at the Academy. There may be times when a student requires more guidance or support than the institution is able to give or proves to be unsuited for further training. When this is determined, it is the school's duty to ask the student to leave the program. Grounds for suspension or expulsion include misuse of drugs and/or alcohol and illegal possession or distribution of drugs or alcohol (particularly to minors).

HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Source: <http://www.opioidpreventionatwork.org/>

Substance use disorder is a brain disease because the drugs can cause long-lasting changes to the way the brain functions. Different substances carry with them different risks, such as the following:

Opioids: Opioids attach to receptors in the brain, spinal cord, and other organs. This allows them to block pain messages from other parts of the body. They increase dopamine, a chemical that produces euphoria and relaxation. Opioids include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription.

The risks of using opioids include:

- Respiratory depression, or slowed breathing resulting in reduced oxygen to the brain and other organs, is the biggest risk associated with opioids.
- Mixing opioids with other substances—such as alcohol, sleeping pills, and anti-anxiety medications—can enhance respiratory depression and lead to a person passing out, stopping breathing, or dying.
- Common side effects of opioids include drowsiness, confusion, nausea, and constipation.

- Serious reactions may include muscle weakness, low blood pressure, respiratory depression (slowed or stopped breathing), and coma or death.
- Opioids carry a risk for tolerance, physical dependence, and overdose.
- Opioids are dangerous because the difference between the amount needed for someone to feel their effects and the amount needed to kill someone can be very small.

Marijuana: Marijuana is the dried cannabis plant, which contains the mind-altering chemical THC and hundreds of other compounds. Marijuana’s effects on the brain include altered senses, mood changes, impaired body movement, and difficulty with thinking. There is ongoing research exploring potential medical uses for cannabis compounds. CBD is a compound in cannabis that is not intoxicating, but may have medical uses, including reducing pain and inflammation, controlling epileptic seizures, and possibly treating mental illness.

The risks of using marijuana include:

- Dependence and withdrawal symptoms.
- Problems with learning, memory, and concentration.

Stimulants: Stimulants are substances that increase norepinephrine and dopamine (both are neurotransmitters, or messengers) in the brain. This can lead to mental stimulation, increased energy, and euphoria (feeling a “rush”). Prescription stimulants increase alertness, attention, and energy. They are generally prescribed to treat attention deficit disorder, narcolepsy and to control appetite.

The risks of using stimulants include:

- Misuse of prescription or illicit stimulants can have serious side effects that may lead to a substance use disorder or overdose.
- Side effects include nervousness/acting “jittery,” fast heart rate, sleep problems, headaches, dizziness, appetite loss, stomach pains or diarrhea, and dry mouth.
- Overdose symptoms include agitation, hallucinations, psychosis, lethargy, seizures, heart rhythm abnormalities, high blood pressure, and increased body temperature.
- Overdose can lead to stroke, heart attack, or organ problems caused by overheating and can result in death.

Psychoactive Substances/Synthetic Drugs: New psychoactive substances, like “synthetic marijuana,” are chemically similar to the mind-altering compound in marijuana, but these chemicals are man-made, unregulated, unpredictable, and potentially very dangerous. Bath salts, another new psychoactive substance, are chemicals created as inexpensive substitutes for illegal stimulants like cocaine.

The risks of using Psychoactive Substances/Synthetic Drugs include:

- paranoia, hallucinations, panic attacks, and extreme agitation and violent behavior.

Alcohol Use:

The risks of using alcohol include:

- Motor vehicle crashes, alcohol poisoning, liver disease, high blood pressure, and various cancers (for example, breast cancer).
- For some health problems, there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption.
- Binge drinking and heavy alcohol use (binge drinking on 5 or more days in the past month) can lead to heart damage, liver problems, inflammation of the pancreas, and increased risk of developing cancer of the mouth, esophagus, throat, liver, and breast.

For more information regarding the health risks of substance abuse, see the Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration's [resource on Drugs of Abuse](#).

APPLICABLE LEGAL SANCTIONS UNDER STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL LAW

STATE AND LOCAL LAW

Summary of [New York Drug Possession and Sale Crimes](#):

Penalties for drug crimes in New York range from fines under certain circumstances to a maximum of life in prison for operating as a major trafficker. The law requires each sentence for one of these offenders to include a period of post-release supervision. For class B, C, D, and E felonies, except for selling controlled substances to a child, the law allows the court to impose an alternative sentence of up to one year in prison under certain circumstances. The court must consider the crime's nature and circumstances and the defendant's history and character to determine that the sentence that would otherwise apply would be unduly harsh (NY Penal § 70.70).

On March 31, 2021, New York legalized the possession of up to 3 ounces of marijuana and up to 24 grams of marijuana concentrate for adults who are at least 21 years old, among many other important reforms. New York's Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act repealed Article 221 and enacted [Article 222](#) where all of the new marijuana reforms are contained. More information from the office of cannabis management is available [here](#).

FEDERAL LAW

The Controlled Substances Act (CSA) – Title II of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 – is the federal U.S. drug policy under which the manufacture, importation, possession, use and distribution of certain narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, anabolic steroids, and other chemicals is regulated. It places all substances which were, in some manner, regulated under existing federal law into one of five schedules (i.e., I – V). This placement is based upon a substance’s medical use, potential for abuse, and safety or dependence liability. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) implements the CSA and may prosecute violators of these laws at both the domestic and international level. Individuals who order, handle, store, and distribute controlled substances must be registered with the DEA to perform these functions. They must maintain accurate inventories, records and security of the controlled substances. Components of the CSA may be viewed in [Title 21 United States Code \(USC\) Controlled Substances Act](#).

For federal laws relevant to controlled substances, see [here](#).

RESOURCES FOR DEALING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Mental Health Resources in the New York Area

- Free, confidential mental health support through [NYC Well](#). Speak to a counselor via phone, text, or chat and get access to mental health and substance use services, in more than 200 languages, 24/7/365. For 24 hour/seven days per week information and referral, call **1-888-NYC-WELL** (1-888-692-9355).
- More mental health services for New Yorkers are available online and by phone, accessible through the [Mayor’s Office of Community Mental Health](#).

National Resources for Mental Health and Harm Reduction:

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) hotline 800-950-NAMI (6264)
- [National Harm Reduction Coalition](#) provides harm reduction resources and services for people who use drugs.
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) is a peer support network for people who use alcohol.
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#) is a peer support network for people who use drugs.