

APRIL: Alcohol Awareness Month

In 2019 The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) indicated alcohol use was the third-leading cause of preventable death killing an estimated 88,000 Americans a year, more than all illicit drugs combined.

Authorities and parents have been known to turn a blind eye or to minimize the effects of alcohol use especially with the fears about overdose deaths in the past several years. The misguided justification “at least they are only drinking” can be costly, even deadly.

In February of this year the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported there were more than 81,000 drug overdose deaths in a recent 12 month period making it the deadliest 12 month period in history. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has played a major role in the increase of drug use as well as alcohol without the typical access to treatment programs or community based face to face support meetings. By the summer of 2020 alcohol sales had increased 28 percent year over year as many tried to cope with the effects of the pandemic while spending significantly more time at home.

In a recent weekly mortality and morbidity report from the CDC findings indicated more than 93,000 died of alcohol related causes in 2020, still outpacing drug overdose deaths by more than 12,000.

According to NIAAA, >10% of children in the US live with a parent that has an alcohol problem. Additionally 16.6 million adults 18 years of age or older had an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in 2018, nearly two thirds were men.

A widely used, simple test to evaluate individual drinking as a potential problem is the John Hopkins University CAGE test, comprised of 4 questions which will help determine if the drinking is problematic.

1. Have you ever felt you needed to **C**ut down on your drinking?

Yes No

2. Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?

Yes No

3. Have you ever felt **G**uilty about drinking?

Yes No

4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning (**E**ye-opener) to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Yes No

Any yes answer could indicate the presence of an alcohol use disorder and further evaluation is recommended.

For help or an evaluation for an alcohol/other drug problem call

LECSA EAP (631)-851-1295

You can also call the NY State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) Hopeline 24 hours a day at **1-877-8-HOPENY**