Chris Packham was living the dream. The 1995 San Jose State alumnus had a wife, kids and his dream job as a professional fighter, competing overseas in the K-1 martial arts organization in Japan.

But like many in that line of work, the end came unannounced and unexpected after he suffered a ripped iris and “completely detached” retina, leaving him blind in his left eye.

“That’s when his life seemed to fall apart. “After that,” depression hit in,” Packham said. “And when depression hit in, drinking and other drugs became available. For two years, I kind of destroyed myself.”

According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, one-third of adults who suffer from substance abuse also experience depression. Packham turned to methamphetamine and vodka.

“The reality is, Packham is far from alone. Substances such as meth and alcohol are traditionally regarded as “social drugs,” but some experts theorize those substances cover up underlying problems.”

Mary Cook, program coordinator for the Alcohol and Drug Studies program at San Jose City College, estimates that about 10% to 15% of people go down the “substance-centric path.”

“People often use socially, fairly heavily, in their 18 to early 20s,” Cook said. “Once people hit their mid-twenties, they choose a path, one of which can be moderation. Some people cut heavy use of substances out of their lives once settled.”

“On the other hand, you have people who are 30 and still hitting the bars every weekend and it’s still heavily embedded in their world,” Cook said.

Packham said at age 30, his addictions were very much still entrenched.

When depression hit in, drinking and other drugs became available. For two years, I kind of destroyed myself.

SJSU alumnus recounts path from addiction to recovery; counselors say legislative leniency for drug offenders promotes rehabilitation

BY AUSTIN TURNER

Chris Packham
1995 SJSU alumnus, drug and alcohol counselor

“Alcohol helped numb the emotional pain,” he said. “And meth helped really numb it.”

Packham was arrested for fraud and faced six years in prison. His wife then took their kids and returned to her original home in Mexico.

“She left,” he said. “That was my lowest point.”

SJSU needs more addiction resources

BREAKING THE HABIT

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ILLUSTRATION BY CINDY CUellar

SPECIAL ISSUE

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VIRAL VIRTUAL ELECTIONS

By Austin Turner

Senior Staff Writer

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‘On the other hand, you have people who are 30 and still hitting the bars every weekend and it’s still heavily embedded in their world,’ Cook said.

People who go down that path are often masking feelings such as loneliness, trauma and loss, Cook said.

‘[Young adulthood] is when folks really start facing some demons,’ said William Armaline, director of the SJSU Human Rights Collaborative and former professor of the Drugs and Society course. ‘One of the ways that folks cover these demons is drug use.’

Packham said at age 30, his addictions were very much still entrenched.

He had never run into trouble with the law, but in 2004 he was arrested for fraud and faced six years in prison. His wife then took their kids and returned to her original home in Mexico.

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Experts tie mental health to addiction, often undiagnosed in undergraduates

By Mauricio La Plante

Strained counseling services and isolation to peers often contribute to the untreated addiction, according to SJSU's student health services.

"Right now, during a pandemic, we're in a very different situation," said Emily J. Armaline, director of the Alcohol and Drug Services program at San Jose City College. "The one on one, in person interaction that we've had is not as prevalent for people in person, but that doesn't mean it's not there." Among people who struggle with addiction, said Armaline, "it has certainly been more challenging than what we've seen in the past." 

Despite the difficulties, Armaline, Packham and other experts said that students who come forward can be given the resources they need to help them make healthy choices.

"They need to relate to each other," said Armaline.

"We need to be just as efficient with substance use disorders as we are with medical illnesses," Packham said.

In turn, this can make the creation of effective forms of counseling much more challenging, Cook said. "There are some addicts who would rather just be given a pill, diagnose my drug use, and admit that they have an addiction problem," he said. "I can see, some would rather be a math addict than to believe they have clinical depression." 

However, recent research shows that Alcoholics Anonymous anonymity meetings are more effective than clinical services.

According to a study published in the Cocaine Database of Systematic Review, people who have gone to AA meetings reported higher rates of abstinence than people who went to clinical services.

For years, medical professionals have debated the effectiveness of programs such as AA and the right choice sometimes, but sometimes we will. We might be in jail, yet just buying time and learning how to do scams.

In 2014, California voters also approved Proposition 47 which recategorizes non-violent drug offenses from a felony to a misdemeanor. "True freedom comes from choosing," he said. "If we can choose, we have a disconnect at general AA sessions, Cook said. "Patients who struggle with addiction are as with criminal justice," Cook said. 

Although Jeff was not seeking help for his depression, which he believes is one of the causes of his excessive drug and alcohol use, he was referred to a cocaine habit as it is for someone tech executive out here to deal with. "I've had countless students that their depression, which Packham said, "is not the same for everyone. We have to solve the puzzle of whether it fits your criteria or not a will we or won't we accept people for those things without problems," he said. However, young people could feel a disconnect at general AA meetings, Cook said.

"We still talk to what young people do it is a network of mind that beacons, you know, they don't relate to somebody who's 60," Cook said. "They need to relate to each other." 

Cook said students can build stronger counseling programs for students with substance use disorders by launching awareness campaigns and working with outside groups to combat it. However, Santa Clara County's shelter-in-place order has limited online groups. In turn, the timeline can be deadly for addicts, Cook said.

SJSU's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Committee, which focuses on substance misuse prevention and interventions, is deliberating on how to connect with students online in groups such as AA, said Maria Miranda, the committee's Associated Student Representative. "Due to the shelter-in-place order, there are people who are part of Alcoholics Anonymous might not be able to talk to their sponsors or attend meetings," Miranda said. "So we're trying to think of ways to just support them in a little bit more and give them, like, another point of contact.

Several of one committee's biggest struggles is connecting to as many students as possible, both in-person and online, during the pandemic and the shelter-in-place order.

"It's a very different time for people and we might see an increase in abuse problems," Miranda said. "So we're taking it a little bit harder with AA and CAPS just seeing what we can all do together to see what we can do to support students going through a difficult time."
By Erica Lizarrago

Beyond Football, San Jose State’s community outreach program for football players, has focused its recent efforts on teaching student-athletes to become advocates against impaired and drunk driving.

A 2014 Santa Clara County Public Health report found that more than 10% of traffic collisions in the county during 2013 involved alcohol.

Additionally, a 2012 survey by the California Office of Traffic Safety showed that 14% of drunk drivers in the state that year were student athletes.

“I think that our student-athletes have a platform that gives them an opportunity to have a voice that other general students may not necessarily feel they have,” said Peirano, who was also Beyond Football Coordinator.

“I want Beyond Football’s presence known in the larger SJU athletic community, not just football players through Beyond Football. We added that she doesn’t want Beyond Football’s partnership with MADD to be a one-time thing, but that it should get the wider SJU community involved going forward.

“We want it to be a long-lasting impression that’s a part of our culture, a part of who we are and what we do,” she said.

While there are hopes for all students to become involved, Blaine said student-athletes play a large role behind spreading these ideas.

“It’s greater than just doing an event,” Blaine said. “They have a platform and we are trying to help foster that development and empower them to use that platform for good.”

Follow Erica on Instagram
@erica.lizarrago

Drunk driving statistics

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10% of traffic collisions involved alcohol use in 2011 in Santa Clara County.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

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**Defining dependencies**

Four common behaviors can lead to vindictive vices

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Addictive behaviors have major repercussions on all aspects of one’s life mentally, physically and emotionally. The four lifestyle addictions explained here are not included in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, an encyclopedia published by the American Psychiatric Association to help diagnose mental illnesses.

SJSU psychology professor Erin Woodhead said there are a range of disorders associated with addictive behaviors and the steps toward rehabilitation often mirror real addiction recovery plans. The Spartan Daily has curated information on these four lifestyle addictions to explain what could make behaviors toward them seem harmless, but could become harmful.

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**Tattoos**

Tattoos can be a frightening concept to some, but an admirable one for others. Joshua Medeiros, a tattoo artist at Playa ink in San Jose, said that tattoos can absolutely be considered an addiction, but in a different light.

“The people who come in here and get tattooed frequently, they refer to it as an addiction, but more times than not they actually tell me they want to get one because they just want to,” Medeiros says.

He said people come in to get tattoos for many reasons and every reason is just as valid.

“As a form of release, for some reason the pain helps them through whatever the cause of the tattoo is... or it’s their way of proving their skin to get happy or to get satisfaction,” Medeiros said.

Sophia Beasley, business marketing senior at University of San Francisco, makes a living as a tattoo artist and often sees her friends as well as to get tattooed at Playa ink.

“They love it,” Beasley said. “After the first one, I was already planning my second.”

She said she feels her confidence and happiness some rushing back when she goes upon the finished product on her arm and back.

Medeiros said every client has come back for more, some even drive as much as six hours for a tattoo.

“They actually look at it and go ‘Oh shit,’ because whatever they came in here to feel, they felt it,” he said.

Whether it is to feel better, to feel confident, to feel feminine, to feel masculine, to bring tribute to someone else, Medeiros said tattoo can give a person whatever it is that they need and that those feelings can be addictive.

“It’s definitely addicting,” Beasley said. “I feel like so many of my friends who have tattoos would agree with me.”

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**Social media**

It’s midnight and you can’t sleep, so you launch the Facebook app on your phone, promising yourself that you’re only going to scroll until you get sleepy.

But your cousin just reposted some funny meme and you can’t help but click it. So you click on your friend’s page and see that they’re on the app too.

It’s impossible for the person to control when they do the behavior, how long it goes on or when or if they could ever stop.

The consequences follow: increased satisfaction in the behavior, impairment of social relationships, emotional trauma or even physical danger.

Although these lifestyle addictions are not diagnosed as actual addictions, they do encourage addictive behaviors and the steps toward rehabilitation often mirror real addiction recovery plans. The Spartan Daily has curated information on these four lifestyle addictions to explain what could make behaviors toward them seem harmless, but could become harmful.

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**Love and sex**

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, an organization which specializes in a 12-step recovery program, acknowledges the characteristics of sex or love addiction.

The list includes staying in destructive relationships, using sex and emotional involvement to manipulate, having low healthy boundaries, being sexually distorted by romantic or sexual obsessions and learning about them by sublimation of love and desire.

The costs of sex and love addiction can be monstrous, affecting all aspects of the individual’s life as well as the lives of loved ones.

“Treatments for behavioral addictions typically focus on increasing motivation for change, understanding a person’s thoughts about the behavior, and substituting healthier addictions,” Woodhead said.

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**Workaholism**

Workaholism is a term used to describe the behavior of individuals who are primarily motivated by the desire to work and experience high levels of stress and burnout when they are not working. Workaholics are often characterized by a need for control, perfectionism, and a lack of healthy boundaries.

In workplaces that put a premium on productivity, it’s common for some people to overwork themselves, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. According to a 2011 study by Evaluation & Research Institute, workaholics are more likely to experience stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact their mental and physical health.

According to a 2014 article published in the Journal of Management, psychological consequences of work addiction include poor stress management, burnout, decreased job satisfaction and poor physical health, according to researchers within the psychology field. Additionally, workaholism can lead to feelings of isolation, decreased social relationships, and decreased job satisfaction.

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**Lifestyle Addictions**

By Chris Padilla • Staff Writer

Four common behaviors can lead to vindictive vices

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The Addiction Center, social media addiction affects 5% to 6% of Americans and it has real-life consequences that are hard to ignore.

According to the Addiction Center, social media addiction is defined as an inability to control oneself with the world online. It is a growing concern as technology becomes more integrated into people’s lives.

Social media addiction has been linked to a variety of negative outcomes, including decreased productivity, increased anxiety and depression, and a decreased ability to maintain face-to-face relationships.

In addition to the negative effects on mental health, social media addiction can also be harmful to physical health. Studies have shown that excessive use of social media can lead to sleep disorders, skin problems, and even eating disorders.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, social media addiction can be diagnosed as a “behavioral addiction,” which is a new category of addiction that includes behaviors that are not related to the use of substances.

Social media addiction is considered a behavioral addiction because it is a behavior that is performed in the absence of物质 that are known to be addictive, such as alcohol or drugs.

The signs and symptoms of social media addiction include:

- Spending a significant amount of time on social media
- Feeling guilty or anxious when trying to limit social media use
- Experiencing physical symptoms, such as headaches or digestive problems, when trying to limit social media use
- Neglecting other important responsibilities

Social media addiction can be treated with therapy, medication, or a combination of both. It is important to seek help if you believe you may be suffering from social media addiction.
Sometimes it’s not all fun and games

Video games have always been a fun escape to a fantasy world. However, an escape from reality can be dangerous and addictive at times. Long hours spent staring at screens makes sense in a few cases. Streamers or professional gamers who play competitively in tournaments for money will need to play consistently because it’s their livelihood. However, there is a point when a casual gamer has gone too far with their gaming sessions.

The American Addiction Centers describes video game addiction as a process addiction, similar to compulsive gambling, because of the similarities in repetitive action with the similarities in repetitive action with the interest of winning big in the end. There are some groups, such as parents and select Psychology Today contributors who protest the comparison to gambling, arguing that it is too extreme. Deniers of video game addiction say video games simply enhance cognitive skills, but there are numerous examples that state otherwise.

With video games being accessible to players in home consoles, PCs, handhelds and smartphones, it is significantly easier for someone to become more hooked to gaming rather than gambling. Some can argue that compulsive gambling involves real-world money while video games only involve game currency and experience points.

The thinking is that a loss while playing a video game has no real-world equivalent to crippling debt. Most video games cost real-world money and many have in-game currency that can be acquired through spending actual money. In-game purchases, also known as microtransactions, are often criticized by players. But the reason games have the option of payments in game is so that developers have the funds to manage and maintain it and develop future content for the game or future releases. It is a simple process that involves entering payment information and pressing a button on a controller. That simple process is something that proved to be a major issue for 54-year-old Maine resident Bettyuse Higgins.

According to a 2011 Kotaku article, a popular gaming website, Higgins embezzled $166,000 from her company to help pay for virtual coins in the Facebook games "Mafia Wars" and "YoVille." This compulsive spending isn’t limited to just older gamers. According to the Irish Mirror, one unnamed mother in Ireland let her son use her debit card to buy "FIFA 18" on the PlayStation 4. Her son still had access to the card information because it was linked to his "Fifa" account and continued to use it. This was my first Christmas working full time and then to go to your bank account and find it empty with the whole month’s pay and overtime in the buildup to Christmas just gone is horrendous, the mother said in the article. Sony refused to refund any of the money that was spent on the game. People can go overboard spending money in video games, causing significant financial repercussions. Not only could you find your wallet empty from gaming, but it can also result in death. People can go overboard spending money in video games, causing significant financial repercussions. Not only could you find your wallet empty from gaming, but it can also result in death.

Andrew Glenn
Staff Writer

24-year-old David Katz suffered a loss in a “Madden NFL 19” tournament in Jacksonville, Florida. In retaliation he shot at his fellow competitors, according to The Guardian. Two were killed and nine were injured before he turned the gun on himself. According to CNN, authorities and others in attendance, there was no other motive for the shooting aside from Katz’s loss. It cannot be denied that there are those who take a game too seriously, which results in the destruction of their life or the lives of those around them.

Follow Andrew on Twitter @SaviorElite10

Have a story idea? Contact us at spartan_daily@gmail.com.
Highs and lows of caffeine addiction

Purging excessive energy drinks and coffee helped reboot my system

Chris Padilla

I start every day with a cup of coffee. If I don’t, life gets a whole lot harder. It starts with fatigue and then drowsiness sets in, then it becomes difficult to focus. And then comes the headache, every across my brow, accentuated by a dull throb in the back of my head. I am dependent on caffeine and have been for a long time. Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, energy drinks and some sodas, among other things.

Caffeine affects the central nervous system, granting a feeling of alertness and some symptoms of withdrawal if you quit. To its effects, which leads to a tolerance. A regular amount of it can manifest in damaged muscle fibers ending up in the bloodstream, which leads to kidney damage and other complications, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

An energy drink can have up to 240 milligrams of caffeine, more than double the amount in a single cup of coffee. On top of that, energy drinks may contain a whopping 62 grams of sugar, six times the amount in one Krispy Kreme donut. One of the deadly side effects is rhabdomyolysis, manifesting in damaged muscle fibers ending up in the bloodstream, which leads to kidney damage and other complications, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Purging excessive energy drinks and coffee helped reboot my system. Suddenly, I was faced with all the negative aspects of caffeine addiction without any of the benefits. I was constantly exhausted, in pain or both. I slept all the time and was moody when awake. A headache, sharp across my brow, accentuated by a dull throb in the back of my head. It starts with fatigue and then drowsiness sets in, then it becomes difficult to focus. And then comes the headache, every across my brow, accentuated by a dull throb in the back of my head. I am dependent on caffeine and have been for a long time. Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, energy drinks and some sodas, among other things.

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To put it bluntly, the cost is too high

Backwoods cigar companies target youth to sell product

Kellen Concenixe
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Now that marijuana is legal in 11 states, cannabis has become a multi-billion dollar industry in America. In Downtown San Jose, you can’t walk around without smelling weed smoke whether it’s from a pipe, a joint or a blunt. When I want to get loaded, I prefer to smoke my cannabis wrapped in Backwoods Wild’N Mild Cigars. My New Year’s resolution for 2020 was to stop smoking tobacco entirely. I lasted about two weeks. Unlike most cigarillos, Backwoods are made from hand-rolled natural tobacco leaves. It gives them a distinct taste and texture when rolling and smoking, complementing the taste of cannabis. Honey Berry and Russian Cream are still my go-to flavors and are some of the most popular flavors among young people looking to try out smoking. Tobacco companies engineer alluring flavors as a tactic to encourage young consumers who will inevitably smoke for years. The prominence of these products has become so severe that several Bay Area counties have passed local ordinances that ban or limit the sale of Backwoods and other flavored tobacco. Tobacco has been a major part of the U.S. economy since Jamestown, Virginia was established in the 1600s, according to the historic Jamestown website. Over four centuries, Americans have made the substance stronger. The amount of nicotine has been increasing in American cigarette products such as Newport and American Spirits, with an average increase of 1.78% per year from 1998 to 2005, according to a Tobacco Control report. I was only a high school freshman when I lit my first Backwood. My health from smoking tobacco is something I always keep in mind, but it never stopped me from going to the store and getting a five-pack. What was holding me back was the amount of money I was spending. I am aware of how much I am smoking. With the high I get from Backwoods, it was always my first choice when rolling up some weed.

Traditional flavors such as Sweet Aromatic are the highest sellers, sold in five-packs for about $8 at convenient stores like 7-Eleven. But there is a market for more exotic flavors, such as vanilla and grape, which can go for $40 a pack. A heavy smoker like myself can easily smoke five Blunts in one day. If I bought a five pack of Backwoods every day for a whole year, it would be about $3,200. It can add up, especially since some days I go through two or three packs. Backwoods are just different. Mac Dre said, “If it ain’t a Backwood, it ain’t all that good.” Regardless of the negative effects, Woods are the choice for a lot of stoners. We see them being smoked in all the rap music videos and in Instagram posts. Money spent on Backwoods could be used for something else, like buying more cannabis. Going broke over cigars is not something I intend to do, but smoking a joint just isn’t the same.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTIAN TRUJANO AND MARCI SUELA

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OPINION
The perils of overprescribing

How abusing opioids eventually left me in more pain than before

Brian So
STAFF WRITER

Addictions can start out innocently enough. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, prescription opioid misuse starts out as a prescription to manage chronic pain. It turns itself as part of that percentage. When I broke my clavicle, I was prescribed opioids to manage my pain. Although the break happened on a Saturday, I was told by an on-call doctor in the emergency room that I would have to wait two whole days to see a specialist. I was given a 90-day prescription of hydrocodone – a Schedule II opioid. The road to my addiction started at this crucial moment. After a specialist confirmed my diagnosis, I underwent surgery to repair my clavicle. Following that, I was prescribed 90 days’ worth of oxycodone – another Schedule II opioid.

Prescribing just an extra month’s worth of opioids is already a dangerous choice. To do so without checking a patient’s medical history or past prescriptions shows audacity and blatant stupidity on any doctor’s part. Fortunately, this is all too common, given the surplus of the global supply of opioids in consumed right here in America, according to CNBC. Complicating the issue further, approximately 99% of doctors prescribe an excess of the recommended three-day dosage, according to HealthDay, a medical news resource.

The first few months after surgery went well. I took painkillers whenever the pain came back, especially when I needed to sleep. But as time went on, I became accustomed to the good feelings I got from taking the painkillers that it became less about pain management and more about the high. Even after the pain had fully subsided and I had no residual effects from the broken clavicle, I still continued to take painkillers as if they were candy. I couldn’t sleep without it. I couldn’t focus without it. I would get extremely anxious whenever I went too long without painkillers. My whole life revolved around painkillers. All of these symptoms are indicative and characteristic of opioid addiction, according to the American Addiction Centers, a nationwide network of addiction rehabilitation facilities.

Within three months, I spiraled out of control and had taken my entire six-month supply of prescribed opioids. After I ran out, the withdrawal symptoms started and they were unbearable. I couldn’t focus without it. I couldn’t sleep without it. I had “the runs,” severe diarrhea and no focus, even with the smallest tasks. I had the worst week of my life. I had “the runs,” severe body aches, insomnia and no focus, even with the smallest tasks. I had to wait two whole days for a specialist to confirm my diagnosis, I underwent surgery to repair my clavicle, and I still continued to take painkillers as if they were candy.

People use opioids for a variety of reasons, including to deal with pain or anxiety. However, opioids can be addictive, and withdrawal symptoms can be severe. In this case, the author also developed a psychological addiction, which is common among those who use opioids for a long time. This addiction has left me with muscle and joint pain, insomnia, and more about the high.

Physically, I had the worst week of my life. I had “the runs,” severe body aches, insomnia and no focus, even with the smallest tasks. It’s been five years since I stopped taking opioids, but some of the effects still linger from my addiction.

There are moments where I still have the urge to take pills and I contemplate alternative methods of getting my hands on some. I have muscle and joint pain that over-the-counter medication cannot help with anymore. I tend to be in a mental fog more than I used to be. This constant fog has left me mentally drained and exhausted. Whether you want to call it depression or not, I do not have the mental stamina to carry me through the day like before. Addiction is a scary and dangerous path. Regardless of what you may think, addiction can happen to anyone and people can become addicted to anything. Please, with everything you do in life, proceed with caution.

Follow Brian on Twitter @sobrian31

Drugs college students often misuse

Prescription drug misuse occurs when drugs are taken in a different manner than the prescription called for, such as increasing the dosage or using another person’s pills. Commonly misused drugs include opioids (Vicodin, OxyContin), depressants (Valium, Xanax) and stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin).

OxyContin
Adderall
Ritalin
Xanax

OxyContin, an opioid, is often prescribed after surgery to reduce severe pain for a short time. But it can lead to dependency and withdrawal symptoms when taken to stop. Opioid misuse is an American epidemic, but from 2013-15, the number of college students misusing opioids dropped to 50%.

College students endure a lot of stress, so depressants, such as Xanax, that can treat panic attacks and acute stress reactions are often appealing. However, there has been a “gradual decline” in college students misusing depressants, including Xanax, from 2013-15.
San Jose State leaves its students with very few resources to help them battle addiction. The education and counseling SJSU offers to students about addiction is not adequate to help them leave harmful dependencies in the past.

SJSU has an Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention Committee that should be working hard to help the student community face these issues, but its website, which should guide students to their recent 2018-19 committee report, has not been updated since 2017.

The university has a responsibility to consistently help its students understand and fight addiction, particularly because college students are a high-risk demographic.

According to the Center for Addiction in 2015, many students between ages 18-24 who live on campus reported using prescription drugs, such as Adderall, commonly known as the “study drug,” without a prescription. Many use it with the assumption that it will help them perform during long hours of studying. Not only are college students vulnerable to falling into harmful substance dependencies, but they are also often isolated and stressed, making it especially important for SJSU to tell them that help is available.

According to research by Sky Factor, an organization that assesses the success of academic policies, 58% of first-year college students feel separated and 50% feel stressed, defined as feeling distant from a person, location or object – making it hard to function in classes. New students are most at risk, especially those who left behind friends and family at home to come to the Bay Area. These students may use party culture and addictive substances as a crutch to help make it through the grind of student life. A 1998 report from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study showed that four out of five fraternity and sorority members are binge drinkers. The study described binge drinking as “male students who had five or more drinks and female students who had four or more drinks in a row at least once during a two-week period (the 5/4 measure)” which would be nearly impossible for the university to try and stop harmful party culture, but it does have to address the inevitable consequences that party culture promotes and recognize that students will need guidance to deal with the substances in which they are exposed. It is hard enough for all students to find help with their addictions, but for students who do not have health insurance or cannot use a health care provider in Santa Clara County, it is vital that SJSU supplies those students with resources to help them better themselves.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 7.2% of California residents do not have health insurance. SJSU has responded to students’ lack of health insurance by only supplying short consultations in a campus environment where consultation on any issue is hard to come by, let alone for a specific need like addiction. Under non-pandemic circumstances, setting up a one-on-one appointment with a counselor from the university’s Counseling and Psychological Services office can take more than two weeks, with an eight-session limit for every academic year, leaving only one session per month, according to past Spartan Daily reporting.

Although SJSU offers 20-minute alcohol and drug consultations, these sessions are not frequent enough to keep up with students who are struggling with serious addictions affecting their everyday lives. SJSU should follow the footsteps of other colleges that have put more effort into educating students about addiction and helping them recover from it. Fresno State operates “Buildings 4 Recovery,” a program run by the university to guide students to abstinence from the substances causing them problems.

With a combination of dedicated counselors and a program set up around education and rehabilitation, students could find help more easily and learn how to help their own communities.

Students may struggle with their drug and alcohol use not as an easy task, but SJSU needs to be ready to aid all students who have nowhere else to turn when ready to get clean.

If the Student Wellness Center presently dedicated to helping students combat boredom and raised awareness about this necessity, students would know they are not on their own.

Screen shot of a Spartan Daily student’s device.

Breaking the cycle

SJSU needs more addiction education and resources for students

With a combination of dedicated counselors and a program set up around education and rehabilitation, students could find help more easily and learn how to help their own communities.

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