

# **Mental Health, Coping & Addiction**

One in four Americans suffer from a mental illness. Almost 3 in 5 people with mental health challenges will not receive treatment or medication. In 2019, an estimated 19% of adults in the United States (47.6 million) dealt with a mental health challenge, but only 43% received any kind of mental health care (Johns Hopkins). People often turn to alternative methods to cope with issues that are uncomfortable topics to speak about. These reasons include turning to drugs, alcohol, food, etc. Coping mechanisms are habits formed over time that serve to help a person manage difficult situations or high stress levels. These mind-altering substances are sometimes used as coping mechanisms for stress, difficult emotions, physical ailments, focusing, and other issues. Drugs and alcohol can provide a temporary moment away from the reality of everyday life. Substances can enhance the feelings of pleasure, decrease feelings of anxiety and restraint. Substance use can be an unhealthy coping mechanism. Not all coping mechanisms are destructive or fail to provide appropriate or adequate adjustment to the environment or situation; however, addiction is both.

Before using drugs as a coping strategy here are some recommendations for a healthier mindset. The main goal is to identify the “void” or issue and work towards healing. In the meantime, experts recommend diet and exercise as great places to start. Schedule a visit to your Primary Care Physician and a Professional Counselor if needed. Quality sleep is also a major factor in the stabilization of a healthy mind. Surround yourself with people who are supportive and good examples. Keep in mind that finding balance in life is an ongoing process. Lastly, don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

For general questions about the FCPS Substance Abuse Prevention Program, please contact the Office of Student Safety & Wellness at: (571) 423-4270.

## **Resources:**

- [Substance Use Disorder info](#)
- [FCPS Social Work](#)

**For further information & support:**  
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