

## Mental Health, Coping & Addiction

One in four Americans suffers from a mental illness. Almost 3 in 5 people with mental illness will receive no treatment or medication. In 2019, an estimated 47.6 million adults (19% of the country) had a mental illness, but only 43% received any kind of mental health care (Johns Hopkins). There are many reasons why a person may turn to drugs or alcohol initially, including using these mind-altering substances as a coping mechanism for stress, difficult emotions, physical ailments, and other issues. Drugs and alcohol can provide a temporary respite from reality and everyday life. They can enhance pleasure and decrease inhibitions and anxiety. Drug use can be an unhealthy coping mechanism. Coping mechanisms are habits formed over time that serve to help a person manage situations or stress levels. Not all coping mechanisms are maladaptive or destructive; however, addiction is both.

Before using drugs as a coping strategy here are some recommendations for a healthier mindset. The 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. See your Primary Care Physician and a therapist if needed. Quality sleep is also a major factor in a healthy mind. Surround yourself with good people and 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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