Strategies for Lowering Risks Related to Drinking

Students often find it helpful to have a plan for reducing their drinking-related risk.
Which of the following strategies might work for you?

Plan ahead

- Consider reasons why you might choose not to drink on a given day, week, or longer period
- Plan activities that take the emphasis off drinking (e.g., bowling, sporting event, dinner, show)
- If hosting, have a fun variety of non-alcoholic beverage options available
- Set limits before drinking (e.g., on the total number of drinks, the number of drinks per hour, a BAC of ≤.05%, and/or the amount of money to spend on alcohol)
- Have a plan for turning down a drink
- Ask a friend to help hold you accountable to drinking less, pacing, etc.
- Use the buddy system – stick together with trusted friends
- Plan for safe transportation there and back (DD, Uber, taxi, BOSS)

In the moment

- Eat something before and while drinking
- Pay attention to serving sizes (1 drink is a 12 oz. beer, 1.5 oz. 80-proof liquor, or 5 oz. wine)
- Measure and mix your own drink
- Count the number of servings consumed each hour
- Sip instead of slam
- Space drinks to about 1 per hour (allows time to feel the effects of the previous drink before having another, and keeps BAC lower)
- Avoid drinking games and doing shots
- Alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, like water
- Hold a 'decoy' cup
- Avoid using alcohol with other drugs
- Leave with a friend(s) if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe

Any time

- Spend time with friends who don't drink or don't make drinking the main event
- Engage in more activities that don't involve alcohol
- Enroll in Friday classes
- Drink less often
- Respect another person's decision not to drink
- Tell someone about your commitment not to drink heavily and let them know how they can support you
- If you choose to drink less or not at all, enjoy the extra time, energy, and money you'll have for other interests