

Student Scenario: Substance Use

STEPS FOR INTERVENING

- PREPARE
- REACH OUT
- EXPLORE, AFFIRM, AND REFLECT
- SUMMARIZE AND REFER
- FOLLOW-UP

SCENARIO

Kevin has always been a lively presence in your classes, cracking jokes and supporting his classmates. He says he broke his ankle a couple of weeks ago while playing on his intramural team. Lately he's asked for a lot of extensions on assignments and explains his frequent absences as doctor's appointments. Although he's still his friendly self when he does show up for class, he's often late and appears tired.



PREPARE

Review what makes you concerned:

- Chronic Tardiness/Absenteeism
- Sudden Tired Appearance
- Requests for Extensions
- Recent Injury

REACH OUT

A post-class conversation with Kevin could start with:

Faculty Member: "Kevin I've been meaning to ask you how your ankle's been healing up! Do you have a few minutes to catch-up?"

Kevin: "Oh yeah sure thing, thanks for asking. It's been going okay, just feels like it's taking forever."

EXPLORE WHAT'S GOING ON

Faculty Member: "I bet. Must be hard to not be as active as you normally like to be."

Kevin: "Yes! It's the worst."

Faculty Member: "If you don't mind, I wanted to talk to you about how you've been lately in general?"



Kevin: *"{Sighs} Fine I guess. Just ready to get off these crutches!"*

AFFIRM AND REFLECT

Faculty Member: *"I bet! I know the injury is probably throwing off your routine. I noticed you've been coming to class late a lot and that's not normally like you."*

Kevin: *"Yeah, I feel bad about that. I don't mean to, like you said, my whole routine is just thrown off. I'm used to going to practice or playing games in the evenings, but now...I don't know...I just end up staying up late and missing stuff the next day."*

Faculty Member: *"It must be really tough to sit out. If you don't mind me asking, what do you do to pass the time?"*

Kevin: *"It's so frustrating! But yeah...honestly, just playing a lot of video games, having a couple beers, you know, just chilling until I can get back to it."*

Faculty Member: *"Sometimes drinking can actually really mess with our sleep - maybe that's throwing you off?"*

Kevin: *"Hmmm, maybe. It's hard to say, I usually just drink on the weekends and sleep in, so I never noticed. I really need to cut back during the week though so I don't keep missing your class."*

Faculty Member: *"Any ideas on what would work for you?"*

Kevin: *"Not really. Just need to commit to it I guess."*

SUMMARIZE AND REFER

Faculty Member: *"Sometimes it's still hard to change something even if we want to. You've shared that you really miss being active and your normal routine. It's been hard for you to not fill that extra time without distractions like gaming and drinking, and it's been affecting your academics, which I know is really important to you. If it's alright, I'd like to share an idea that might help."*

Kevin: *"Definitely. I'm open to any ideas."*

Faculty Member: *"I know that over in the Counseling Center, they have people to talk to that actually specialize in helping people with cutting back on drinking, and they'd probably be great to talk to in general while you're feeling off your game right now."*

Kevin: *"I don't know if I need that, isn't that for people that can't stop drinking?"*

Faculty Member: *"No not necessarily. They're very nonjudgmental and it's confidential. Just a conversation, that's all. I can give you their website if you want to just get more information."*

Kevin: *"Alright I'll check it out, thanks. I haven't really talked about this much, so I really appreciate you checking in."*

MAKE A PLAN TO FOLLOW-UP

Faculty Member: *"Of course! Always here. Let's talk again soon though, I want to hear how things are going and we can talk about your ideas for your practicum."*

Kevin: *"Sure thing, thanks!"*