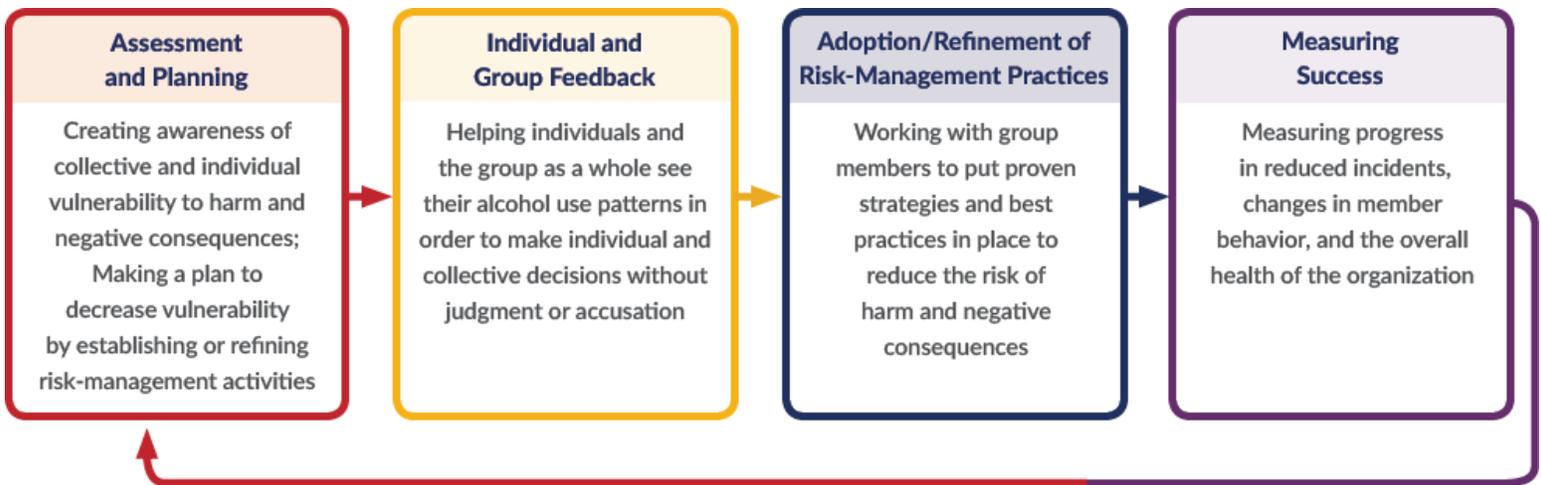## What Is failsafe?

FailSafe is a toolkit for student leaders like you. Its purpose is to help you guide the members of your student organization to successfully manage their risk-taking when using alcohol.

The FailSafe tools are designed to help you create a plan that addresses the unique needs and issues of your group's members. We know that you may have concerns about the risks your group members are taking with alcohol, and we know you'd far prefer addressing these issues on your own rather than facing sanctions and other disciplinary measures from campus administrators. We also know that taking charge of this issue is going to put you in a much better position with your college/university and the community.

## How Does the failsafe Toolkit Work?

The toolkit guides you through a process to recognize and address the risk vulnerability of your student organization. Nine tools take you through the four stages of the FailSafe process:

| Assessment and Planning | Individual and Group Feedback | Adoption/Refinement of Risk-Management Practices | Measuring Success |
|---|---|---|---|
| Creating awareness of collective and individual vulnerability to harm and negative consequences; Making a plan to decrease vulnerability by establishing or refining risk-management activities | Helping individuals and the group as a whole see their alcohol use patterns in order to make individual and collective decisions without judgment or accusation | Working with group members to put proven strategies and best practices in place to reduce the risk of harm and negative consequences | Measuring progress in reduced incidents, changes in member behavior, and the overall health of the organization |

Short videos explain the concepts behind the tools. The tools include:

- **Member Alcohol Profile**: An assessment and feedback tool that helps each member of your organization become aware of their risks related to alcohol use. The tool also provides you, as the group leader, with a profile of the group's risk-taking so you can identify and address potential problems.
- **Leader Awareness and Planning Tool**: An assessment tool to help you identify common group practices that can lead to potentially serious consequences.
- **Group Feedback Tool**: A tool to help you talk to your members about their risk-taking in ways that foster insight and collaboration and minimize defensiveness.
- **Living Policies Tool**: A set of templates to help you communicate and model policies that reduce risks in group and individual activities.
- **Risk Mentor Tool**: Guidance for having planned conversations between older, more experienced risk-takers and newer, younger members to build skills related to expectations, assessing risk, and making better choices.
- **Stepping In Tool**: Templates and talking points to help members intervene with each other when things may be getting out of hand.
- **Party Planner Tool**: A complete planning tool to help your group host formal and informal events where everyone has fun and the risk of problems is diminished.

- **Check-In Tool**: Approaches to confronting a member after a failed risk to help them recognize the impact and make new choices. Includes resources for you and the member.
- **Success Measure Tool**: Guidance for measuring your success in becoming FailSafe and communicating your success to members, administrators, and others.

> **failsafe**
>
> *The FailSafe toolkit consists of the nine tools listed above, which you can access at Failsafetools.org.*

## Is This an Anti-Alcohol Thing?

No. This toolkit does not tell you or the members of your organization that you can't drink alcohol. It will enable you to understand high-risk alcohol use and help you and the members of your organization make better choices about whether to drink, how to drink, and how to do a better job of managing risks related to alcohol use. Deciding not to drink if the risks are too great may be the right choice for some of your group's members, but the goal of this toolkit is to help the entire organization manage risk more effectively.

## Why Focus on Risks Related to Alcohol?

Because that's where the problems are! The harm and negative consequences from alcohol use are the most common source of problems for college students, student organizations, and institutions of higher education.

Chances are, many of the problems in your student organization—from unpaid dues, to low member involvement, to a poor reputation on campus, or tense relationships with campus administrators—can be connected to high-risk alcohol use among your members.

For many student organizations, especially those known for partying, the harm and negative consequences related to alcohol use are much more serious than unpaid dues or lack of member engagement in planning group events. For example:

- Researchers estimate that more than 1,800 college students die each year from drunk driving, alcohol poisoning, and injuries caused by excessive alcohol use.
- Hundreds of thousands of students experience assault, sexual assault, and injuries from excessive alcohol use.
- Many campus towns use a huge amount of resources—paid for through local taxes—to deal with the emergencies and crimes resulting from students' excessive use of alcohol.
- Colleges and universities also use a huge amount of resources—paid for through students' tuition—to deal with the problems caused by students' excessive use of alcohol.

Losing a friend or seeing a fellow student seriously injured as a result of alcohol use changes the college experience forever. But it can also destroy a student leader's future. When a student dies or is injured as a result of high-risk drinking by a member (or members) of a student organization, the results can include judicial sanctions and closing or suspending the organization. It can also lead to criminal prosecution, lawsuits, and/or jail time for student leaders. Colleges and universities are taking tougher actions to reduce liabilities related to student parties on and off campus, requiring student organizations to take action to reduce risks.

## How Was This Toolkit Created?

The FailSafe tools are based on strategies that have been used and researched in college settings. The toolkit was designed by people who have worked in alcohol prevention on college campuses and was guided by an advisory board of leading researchers, practitioners, university faculty, and student affairs staff who work with student organizations on alcohol issues. Each tool was reviewed and tested by fellow student leaders who, like you, know the difference between a great social life and potentially destructive partying.

## What Is the Role of College Administrators and Group Faculty Sponsors?

FailSafe enables student leaders to address issues of high-risk drinking in their organization with complete autonomy. But a little support is also a good thing! There's special guidance for administrators, faculty, and staff at your institution so they can support you and other student leaders on your campus in this effort. We think it's a good idea to let the administrators of the following departments know what you're doing and ask for their support:

- Student Affairs

- Student Involvement/Student Activities

- Student Organizations

- Your faculty or alumni advisors

- Your national office or corporation (if there is one for your organization)

- Dean of Students/Judicial Affairs

- Campus Health Promotion/Alcohol and Drug Education or Counseling

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