

“In The Mix” With AOD

“In The Mix” With AOD Episode Eleven- St. Patty’s Day Safety Tips

Hey everyone, what’s up! I’m Bethann Long and this is another episode of “In The Mix” with AOD, a podcast provided by the Alcohol and Other Drug Services here at Grand Valley. It’s that time of year where we are all replacing our laker blue with shamrock green and celebrating St. Patrick’s Day! Considered to be one of the biggest drinking holidays of the year, St. Patrick’s Day is a time when college students love to go out and have a great time. In this episode, we are going to be discussing some safety tips to keep in mind when celebrating this St. Patrick’s Day, the resources that are available right here on the Grand Valley campus to help keep students safe, and also ways to have a fun substance free St. Patrick’s Day if a day of drinking is not something you want to do.

First let’s go over a few tips on how to be safe this upcoming St. Patrick’s Day whether you are going out or hosting a party at your place. Make sure that before going out, that you and a group of friends are setting a plan in place for getting home safely. Make sure to select a designated driver among those that are going out, arrange a ride with a service such as Uber or Lyft or even have another friend coming to pick you up. Also remember that the Laker Line is always an option for getting home safely as there are bus stops all throughout campus and around the off-campus apartment complexes. Ensure that no matter what, neither you or any of your friends are driving while under the influences of alcohol and any other substances. If you are somewhere that is within walking distance of your house and choosing to walk home at the end of the night, make sure to be with someone that you trust and are using extra caution because walking under the influence can be dangerous. That is a great time to have the Laker Guardian App on hand as well! This is a service that is available on all of the Grand Valley campuses provided by the Grand Valley Police Department. The emergency call button can send an immediate alert to GVPD with a single push, providing them with the user’s information and location. Users can also send texts or photos directly to GVPS if they witness something suspicious. Another feature is the Safety Time which provides your status and location to those that you trust. You can set it up when you are heading somewhere unfamiliar or anytime that you would like someone to check in on you.

While out having a good time with friends, make sure that you are always using the buddy system! Plan ahead by taking a trusted friend with you who always has your best interest in mind and stay together the whole night. It’s important to have a conversation with your group before going out to make sure that you are all looking out for the safety of one another. Next, make sure you eat well and stay hydrated between all of the festivities throughout the weekend! An effective strategy is to eat it with protein and fat before and during drinking. It also helps to alternate a non-alcoholic beverage, such as water, with any

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alcoholic drinks you consume. Eating and drinking water also can decrease the likelihood you'll have a hangover. It's also important to set a limit for yourself before going out. We all are affected by alcohol and other substances differently, so we all have different limits when it comes to consumption and our tolerances may look different. Remember to go at your own pace regardless of what others are doing! While out at a bar or party, make sure you are never leaving your drinks unattended. Even if you're not drinking alcohol, it is easy for someone to put something in your drink unless you see it opened or prepared.

Whether you are in recovery or just don't find drinking to be a fun time, there are ways to celebrate St. Patrick's Day without substance use! Many big cities host St. Patrick's Day parades can be a great way to celebrate and spend time with friends. These events aren't built around drinking so there aren't chances of temptations around. Another way to celebrate would be to have a substance free get together with friends and serve Irish-themed foods or drinks. One of the most iconic options would be a McDonald's Shamrock Shake that most of us college students know and love, but definitely not the only option! Many restaurants add an Irish twist onto their meals around the holiday and turn their popular meals green. However, you can also take a stab at cooking some holiday themed food this St. Patrick's Day as well! If you are someone who loves to stay athletic, this holiday is a great time to get some friends together and participate in a 5K. These runs are usually an amazing time to add some Irish flair by dressing up and many are day events with lots of food and fun activities for friends and family. If you are in recovery or find yourself struggling on holidays such as this one, it is always important to have a plan in place to help you get through the day. Make sure to surround yourself with sober friends who care about you and are willing to spend the day with you away from substances. If you feel as though you need to talk to someone, the Alcohol and Other Drugs office here at the Counseling Center has multiple resources available to you to feel as though you have the support you need.

This is a weekend full of festivities that is meant to be spent having fun with friends whether it is going out to the bars, a house party, or finding a way to have a great time away from substances. Celebrating St. Patrick's Day can bring some of the best memories for you and your friends, but it's best to ensure that you are celebrating responsibly and keep each other's safety in mind no matter how you choose to celebrate. This has been the eleventh episode of “In The Mix” with AOD, I hope you all have an amazing and safe St. Patrick's Day and I will be back soon with more episodes for you all!