

Substance abuse program stays open during holidays

The University's Substance Abuse Prevention Program is providing counseling as well as a hot chocolate bar

By Athanasios Fkiaras
Freelance Reporter

Drew Carter's memories of past winter holidays are not as bright as he would like them to be. Christmas was a time of isolation for him.

"I used to build a wall between me and my family, and I would get depressed," he said.

Carter, 32, became a drug abuser at age 14. He said that substances provided a form of entertainment and a chance to fit in with his peers. However, after being arrested for possession of marijuana and going through court-mandated rehabilitation at age 22, he began to look at his life differently and experienced what he deemed his "turnaround."

"Being faced with consequences opened my eyes," he said.

Carter stayed sober and has been helping out Oregon youth since the

rehabilitation allowed him a chance to re-evaluate his past choices. He said he aspires to be a positive role model for students who might be going through what he experienced as a teen. Now preparing to graduate from Pacific University with a degree in school counseling, he is interning at the University Substance Abuse Prevention Program for his work sample.

"SAPP provides comprehensive curriculum to inform students on how choices will impact their lives," Carter said.

SAPP courses are open to all students who want to take them, and they are mandatory for others who have been charged with alcohol or drug offenses of possession, selling, allowing or furnishing.

SAPP Director Miki Mace said that the reason students continue to return to SAPP is because the program offers practical and meaningful solutions that students can apply to their everyday lives. Mace pointed to the two primary reasons youth might turn to substance use as pleasure and/or pain. She said that students

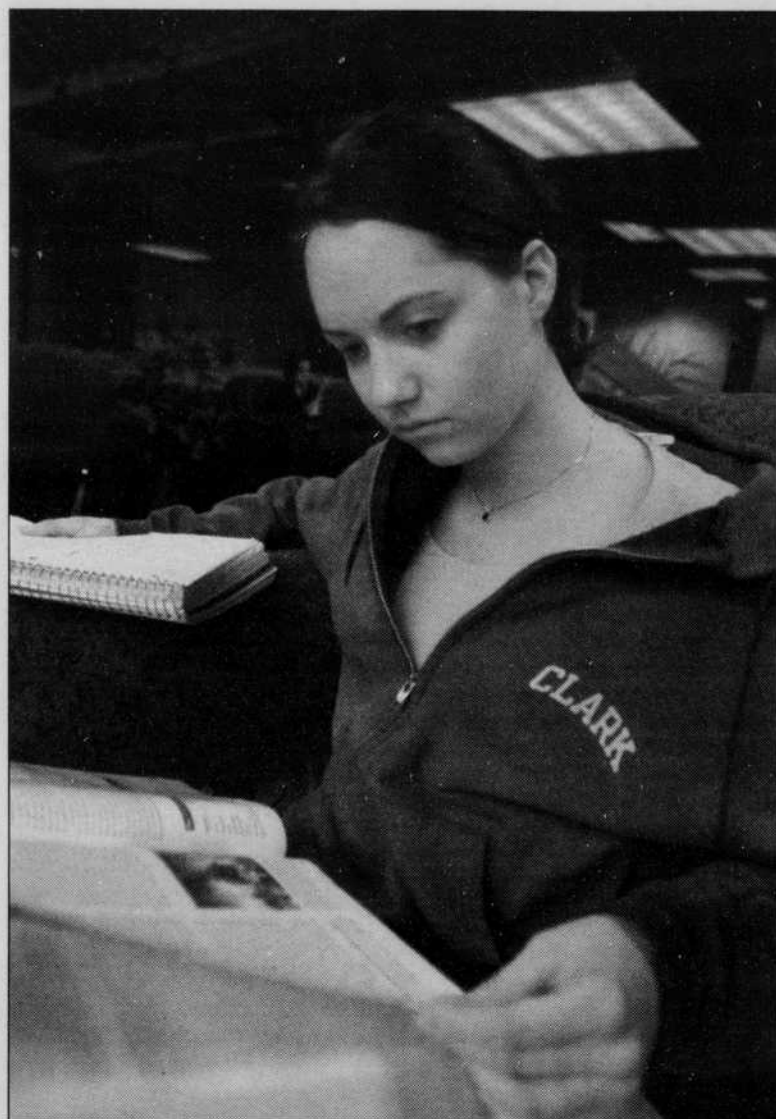
are especially vulnerable during the holiday season, when anger, hunger, tiredness and loneliness become issues for various persons with or without families and a home to turn to. This is why she and her staff keep the office open to all students who might need support of any kind.

"Students are always welcome here, whether it be for a class because they are in a crisis, or simply for a place to go," she said.

Mace and her staff make it a point every month to have some sort of free refreshment stand in the office so that students can come by and have a place to socialize, relax and feel at home. For the month of December, the SAPP office will be furnishing a hot cocoa bar, and Mace said all are welcome.

"Even if (the program) was just to help one student, it would be worth it," staff member Ann Kokkeler said. The University Substance Abuse Prevention Program office is located at 180 Esslinger.

Athanasios Fkiaras is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.



Tim Kupsick Freelance Photographer

Freshman Martha Fuchs studies on Wednesday in the EMU for her four finals next week.

STRESS IS A SCREAM



Lauren Wimer Photographer

Undeclared student Nikki Lamb (right), helped organize the "Let it Out: Join Others De-stress" event on Wednesday in the EMU Amphitheater. Journalism major Jordan Bailey and undeclared student Caley Tapfer participated in the event aimed toward letting students relieve stress through screaming.

HABITS

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someone's sitting there, usually I'll try to wait until they leave."

Durham said she's not sure if it helps her study, but it's a habit she has gotten used to. She said she thinks it is a "comfort issue" that helps her concentrate.

The Psychology Department's Head Undergraduate Advisor Pam Birrell agreed this method can help students concentrate better.

"It's conditioning yourself to doing only that activity in that place," she said.

Changing study habits before an exam can also affect concentration.

Nuetzman said although she doesn't advocate drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes, if that's what students do while they study, it's not a good idea to stop doing it just before an exam.

"Any habit change can throw you off," she said.

Birrell said this is called "state-dependent learning," which is useful for connecting studying with exams.

"You want to make sure you're in the same kind of psychological state," she said. If students do not normally drink coffee when they study, they should not drink coffee right before an exam because it alters their state of mind, she added.

As a study skills class instructor, Nuetzman has heard of some interesting habits she said can be useful for exams. She said she knows students who chew the same flavor of gum while studying and then again while taking the exam.

"That can actually trigger the memory on recreating context," she said.

She said taking an exam in the same seat as the class lecture can also ease test anxiety by making students feel more comfortable.

"The psychological conditioning is

really useful," she said.

Nuetzman also recommends active studying. Rereading notes and textbooks isn't necessarily the best way to retain information, she said. More active methods include summarizing chapters, writing essay questions and even forming quizzes.

"Any time students are using the information ... they're generally more successful," she said.

She said students tend to think rereading is a good study habit, but it's a passive method that does not allow students to absorb the material.

"People oftentimes construe a very low level of thought as studying," she said.

Birrell said repeatedly reviewing material over a period of time is more beneficial than cramming the night before an exam.

"Memory doesn't work if you cram," she said. Information needs to make it to a student's long-term memory to be recalled later, she added.

Birrell also suggests taking a lot of breaks while studying.

"When your mind gets tired, you don't absorb the information as well," she said.

Nuetzman said students often find they have studied the wrong information once they begin an exam.

She suggests students attempting to predict test questions by examining the syllabus and the course objectives to see what the professor emphasizes.

One of the most basic and important tips she recommends is to stay healthy. She said eating well and getting enough sleep can help students with their finals.

"Taking care of one's self is so important," she said. "Your brain can stay a little bit more awake."

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.

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