

THE UNC-CH
**COLOR OF
DRINKING**
PROJECT

An exploratory study on the impacts of UNC-Chapel Hill's alcohol culture on students of color and LGBTQ+ students.

CONDUCTED BY:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Color of Drinking survey examined the impact of University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill's (UNC-CH) alcohol culture on the experiences of undergraduate students of color and LGBTQ+ students. The Color of Drinking Survey was adapted from University of Wisconsin - Madison's (UW-Madison) Color of Drinking Study.¹ The purpose of this study is to understand how undergraduate students - particularly LGBTQ+ and students of color - perceive and experience alcohol culture at a predominately white institution along with examining the secondhand harms experienced by these populations. The survey was deployed January 24, 2022 and closed February 11, 2022.

PRIORITY POPULATION

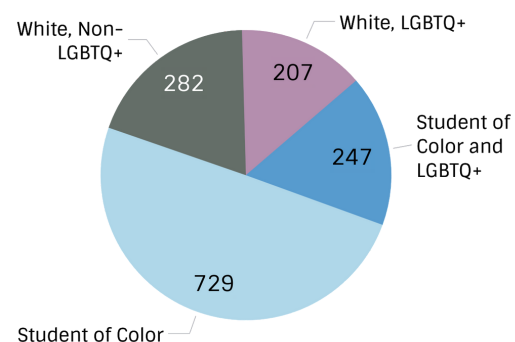
The survey was deployed via UNC-CH email to a census of 6900 undergraduate students of color and a random sample of 3000 white students. UNC-CH student records do not include demographic information on gender identity and sexual orientation, therefore the research team was unable to identify a census of LGBTQ+ students. For this reason, additional outreach efforts were prioritized to reach LGBTQ+ students and students of color. Flyers that included a link and QR code to access the survey were distributed across campus (i.e. student organizations, identity groups, on-campus housing, dining halls, student union, etc.) and on social media accounts to increase participation. For the purpose of this study, **a student of color was defined as someone who did not identify solely as white. A LGBTQ+ student was defined as someone who did not identify as cis-gender and/or heterosexual.**

METHODS

The UNC-CH adapted Color of Drinking survey was developed and administered in Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) to the target populations. The first 1200 students of color and LGBTQ+ students who completed the survey received a \$5 gift card to a local coffee shop, Epilogue Books, Chocolate, Brews. Responses from students with non-UNC-CH email addresses were excluded from analysis to ensure integrity of responses. Open ended responses were independently reviewed and tested by two team members. Any discrepancies in coding were discussed with the full team until an agreement was determined. The main themes occurring across open ended questions were summarized in reports using illustrative quotes. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively (frequencies, percentages) using SPSS.²

RESULTS

A total of 1788 participants responded to the survey. After excluding for responses that did not provide a UNC-CH email address, there were a total of 1465 responses that were included in the analysis. Of these 1465 responses, 282 were from white non-LGBTQ+ students, 976 were from students of color and 207 were from white LGBTQ+ students. 274 respondents identified as both students of color and LGBTQ+. Students across identity groups acknowledged harmful aspects of UNC's alcohol culture on mental health and sense of safety. While most students felt that the alcohol culture was harmful, some expressed positive experiences. Similar to UW-Madison's results, these harms were experienced disproportionately by students of color and LGBTQ+ students. Students of color and LGBTQ+ students at UNC-CH reported drinking less and experiencing disproportionate harm compared to their white, non-LGBTQ+ counterparts.



BACKGROUND

In recent years, researchers and policymakers alike have paid increasing attention to the topic of harms suffered due to others' drinking, often referred to as the secondhand harms of alcohol.³ Commonly reported secondhand harms of alcohol include physical and sexual assault, property damage, harassment, microaggressions, and noise disturbance among many others. A concerning theme in the research thus far on secondhand harms is the fact that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer and other identity (LGBTQ+) groups tend to experience more harms from others' drinking than those who are white and/or cisgender and heterosexual. Data from the 2014-2015 National Alcohol Survey revealed Hispanic (23.0%), Black (20.9%), and Asian/Other (23.6%) respondents to be more likely than white (17.8%) respondents to report suffering harm from someone else's drinking in the prior year.³ Furthermore, the same survey found that gay and lesbian respondents were 45% and 37% more likely, respectively, than heterosexual respondents to report experiencing physical assault, insults, threats, and vandalism from someone who had been drinking.⁴ One explanation could be that underserved populations are more likely to experience secondhand harms due to greater exposure to unsafe living and working conditions.⁵ Numerous studies have shown alcohol consumption – and even alcohol-related cues like a beer can – promote negative attitudes and aggressive behavior towards ethnic and sexual minorities.^{6,7,8,9,10} In addition, the role of alcohol consumption and alcohol cues in promoting biases is likely a contributing factor in this disparity.

The research on secondhand harms of alcohol consumption and drinking culture has also shown that LGBTQ+ individuals are comparatively more likely to experience sexual assault in binge drinking contexts.^{11,12,13,14,15} Another element of drinking culture that significantly harms the LGBTQ+ community is the high degree of harmful gender norms and LGBTQ+ discrimination seen in many drinking spaces. In a 2019 study conducted in San Francisco, many LGBTQ+ youth shared that they tend to avoid typical drinking spaces due to safety concerns, as these environments are viewed as straight and/or male-dominated spaces where it is common to see many forms of toxic masculinity such as aggression and entitlement.¹⁶

When discussing the harm experienced by vulnerable groups by other's intoxication, it is important to look at how this dynamic impacts collegiate settings where drinking culture and drinking-related harms are prevalent. While research on secondhand harms on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students is lacking, studies show that these groups of students are suffering disproportionate harm from others' drinking in college contexts. A 2015 study of over 75,000 U.S. college students found that transgender-identified students are more likely to experience alcohol-related sexual assaults than students who do not identify as transgender.¹³ Additionally, research has shown that students of color commonly experience racial microaggressions when participating in binge-drinking events.¹⁷ Studies also demonstrate that institutional racism can increase secondhand harms faced by students of color in college contexts. Examples include BIPOC students feeling unsafe at

BACKGROUND - CONT.

drinking events due to fear of police bias and not reporting alcohol-related sexual assaults due to a lack of trust in mental health and police services within their communities.^{18, 19}

The original Color of Drinking project at the UW-Madison confirmed the existence of disproportionate harms experienced by their BIPOC students due to other drinkers and the campus drinking culture. Notable themes from the study include experiences of alcohol-fueled racial microaggressions and harassment, avoidance of certain locations, and non-participation in drinking contexts due to fear of discrimination from other students and the police. The following study serves to evaluate the secondhand harms of others' drinking on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students at UNC-Chapel Hill. We aim to fill gaps in research related to this topic, and advocate for relevant policy change including additional resources and support for students, affinity groups, and identity centers that have been underserved by the campus and local community. Based on input we received during outreach regarding preferred language, we will use the terminology "students of color" when referring to non-white students for the remainder of the report.

METHODS

The UNC-CH Color of Drinking study was conducted in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, at the campus of the UNC-CH. Participants were recruited from the undergraduate student population, with the specific goal of oversampling students of color and LGBTQ+ students. Responses were solicited primarily by email, with the survey sent to a pre-selected list of students of all 6,900 undergraduate students of color and a random sampling of 3,000 white students. The racial demographics of the students chosen were identified using the North Carolina Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Additional participants were recruited through social media posts by campus and community partners invested in better understanding the campus climate and alcohol phenomenon at UNC-CH, as well as through campus flyering, tabling events, and word of mouth. This additional recruitment push prioritized recruiting LGBTQ+ students because the North Carolina Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System does not record demographics regarding sexual orientation or gender identity in the same way it does racial identities. Study participants received a \$5 gift card to Epilogue Books, Chocolate, Brews, a bookstore and coffee shop in Chapel Hill upon completion of the survey. A total of 1,788 responses were collected through Qualtrics over 18 days, from January 24th, 2022, to February 11th, 2022. Only responses which provided a valid UNC-CH email address were included to minimize duplicate and fraudulent responses, resulting in 1,465 responses included in our analysis.

The UNC-CH Color of Drinking survey adapted measures used in the UW-Madison study to explore students of color and LGBTQ+ students' experiences and better understand the campus culture at UNC-CH. Changes to the instrument were limited to the language of certain demographic questions and locations specific to UNC-CH. Suggestions for these changes were solicited from student organizations and campus centers associated with the study's priority populations.

METHODS - CONT.

Questions regarding the participants' personal experiences of microaggressions were presented only to students who identified as LGBTQ+ and/or as students of color, as microaggressions directed at other axes of identity, such as religion or disability, were outside our scope of the study. For this study, five categories of drinker and three categories of drinking rates were identified (See Appendix A for Drinker Categories, Appendix B for Drinking Rates).

Institutional Review Board approval for this study was deemed unnecessary by The UNC-CH Office of Human Research Ethics. The Gillings School of Global Public Health approved this project as a Health Behavior Master's Capstone Project. Funding for this study was provided by the UNC-CH Gillings School of Global Public Health, UNC-CH Student Wellness, and the Chapel Hill Campus & Community Coalition.

RESULTS

The results of the UNC Color of Drinking Survey exposed more information about the way in which UNC-CH's alcohol culture impacts the mental health and sense of safety of students. It is important to remember however, that few of the issues examined in this study are the cause of alcohol alone. While the particular alcohol culture of UNC-CH is distinct, and the individual experiences of students are unique, the secondhand harms of alcohol usage on underrepresented student populations are merely symptoms of deeper systemic issues. These systemic issues are likely to be present at any large predominantly white university, and are not unique to UNC-CH.

RESULTS - PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

<i>Demographics of Participants</i>		Count	Percent
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian/Alaskan Native	10	0.68%
	Asian/Asian American	487	33.42%
	Black/African American	154	10.51%
	Hispanic/Latinx	161	10.99%
	White/Caucasian	489	33.38%
	Middle Eastern/North African	4	0.27%
	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	4	0.27%
	Multiracial	156	10.65%

RESULTS - PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS CONT.

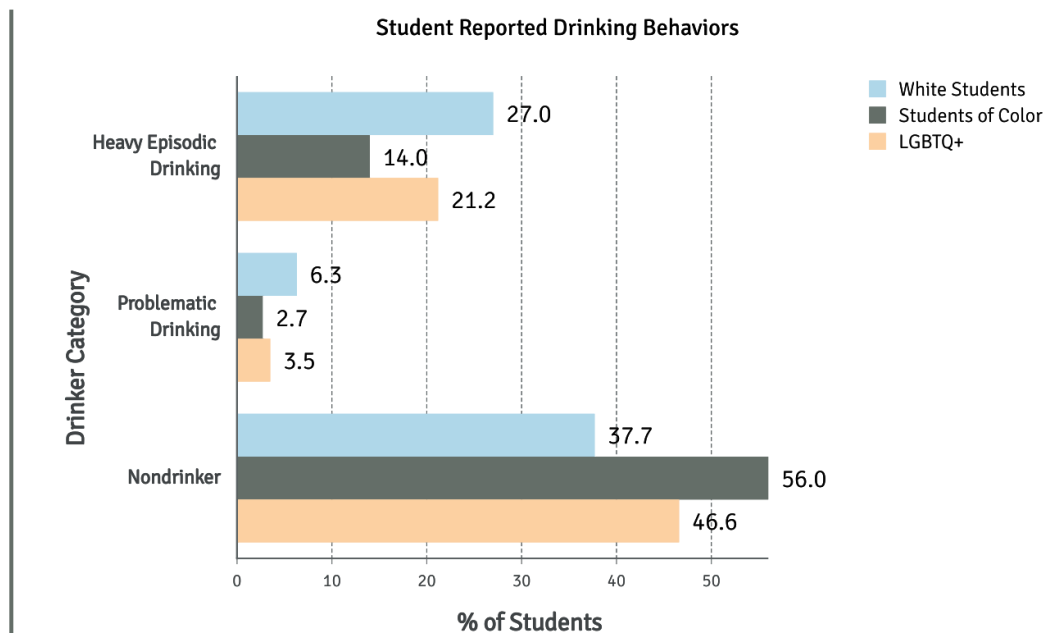
Sexual Orientation	Asexual	19	1.30%
	Bisexual	225	15.36%
	Gay	31	2.12%
	Heterosexual	937	63.96%
	Lesbian	58	3.96%
	Pansexual	31	2.12%
	Queer	38	2.59%
	Self-identify/Other	74	5.05%
	Prefer Not to Say	52	3.55%
Gender Identity	Cisgender Female	1103	75.29%
	Cisgender Male	249	17.00%
	Nonbinary/Agender/Genderqueer	58	3.96%
	Transgender Female/Transfeminine/Trans Woman	3	0.20%
	Transgender Male/Transmasculine/Trans Man	4	0.27%
	Self-Identify/Other	24	1.64%
	Prefer Not to Say	24	1.64%
International Student Status	International Student	80	5.46%
	Non-International Student	1385	94.54%
Disability Status	Identify as Disabled	121	8.26%
	Do Not Identify as Disabled	1344	91.74%
Stage of Academic Study	Freshman/First-Year	378	25.80%
	Sophomore	367	25.05%
	Junior	384	26.21%
	Senior	311	21.23%
	Senior+/Super-Senior	25	1.71%
Living Arrangement	Campus Residence Halls	737	50.31%
	Off-Campus	695	47.51%
	Private Residence Halls	33	2.25%
Personal Finances	Finances aren't really a problem	685	46.76%
	It's tight but I'm doing fine	673	45.94%
	It's a financial struggle	107	7.30%
	Well to do	212	14.47%
Family Finances	Comfortable	758	51.74%
	Enough to get by but not many "extras"	438	29.90%
	Not enough to get by	57	3.89%

RESULTS - UNC-CH ALCOHOL CULTURE

UNC ALCOHOL CULTURE

Students expressed drinking as being normalized and common among many UNC-CH students. Respondents expressed that UNC-CH’s alcohol culture is viewed as “normal” for a college setting. This normalization of the alcohol culture was contrasted by the harmful effects that students expressed it had on their mental and physical health. One student explained that the UNC-CH alcohol culture is **“normalized but not talked about enough to prevent harmful incidents from occurring.”** Students across identity groups also discussed how UNC-CH’s alcohol culture encourages heavy and frequent drinking. Students expressed that drinking was often higher among underage, underclassmen where the culture often revolves around pre-gaming and binge drinking. Additionally, students shared that the pressure to drink heavily can be encouraged by sorority and fraternity life. One student shared that the alcohol culture is **“over used”** and that **“blackout culture has been normalized”**. White students reported higher levels of heavy drinking than students of color and LGBTQ+ students and lower levels of non-drinking. Across identity groups, students reported the academic impact of the drinking culture on their academics including choosing to drink instead of study and having to find alternative study spaces due to drinking culture.

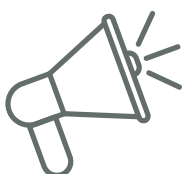
White students reported higher levels of heavy episodic and problematic drinking than students of color and LGBTQ+ students and lower levels of non-drinking.



Impacts of Drinking Culture on Academic Life of Students

% of students engaged in the following at least once in the past academic year:

- 13.3% have been too hungover to attend class
- 27.8% chose to drink instead of study
- 11.9% received a poor grade because I chose to drink instead of study
- 23.5% scheduled group work around drinking days
- 17.2% had to find alternative study spaces due to drinking culture
- 9.8% have missed class because of alcohol use
- 11.7% have performed poorly on an assignment due to alcohol use



“Quite prevalent, with many people who may shrug off genuine drinking problems as “having fun at college”. ”
- LGBTQ+ student

“It seems to be something that is very common, and it feels like as someone who does not drink often, I am the minority.”
- Student of Color

RESULTS - ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

The impact of UNC-CH's alcohol culture on student's mental health was a consistent theme observed across survey questions. Students who engaged in alcohol use expressed negative mental health impacts related to their own drinking. Non-drinking students reported negative impacts of other's alcohol use and a decreased sense of belonging exacerbated by the prevalent alcohol culture.

PERSONAL ALCOHOL USE

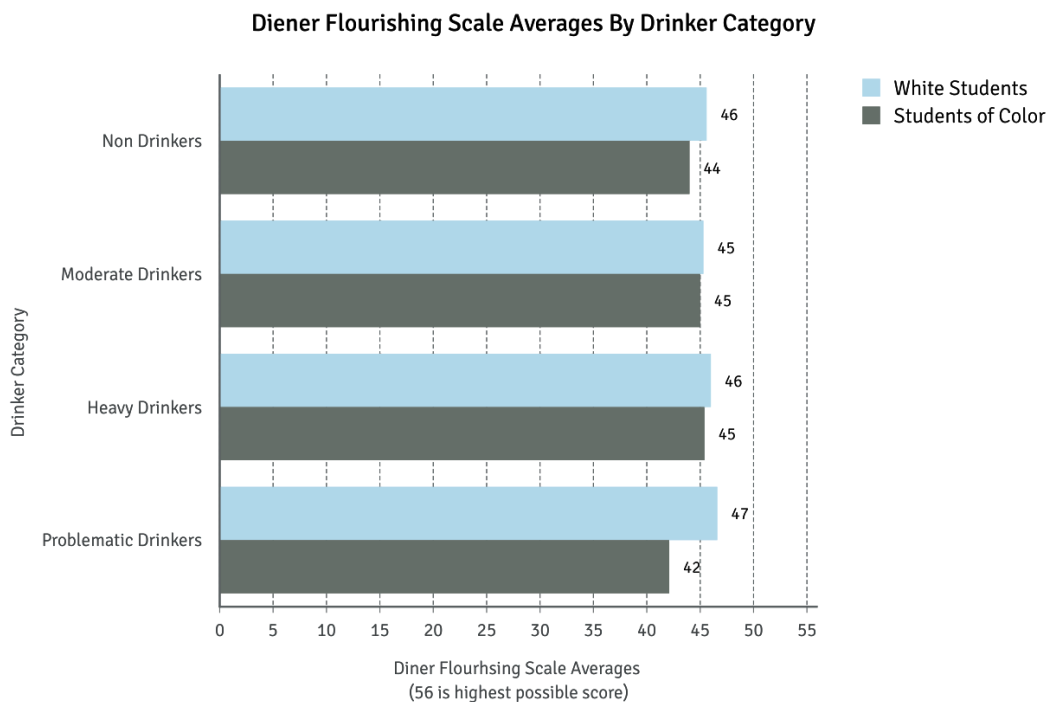
Students across identity groups discussed the impact of personal alcohol use on their mental health. Students expressed that **drinking worsened feelings of anxiety and depression that increased after periods of drinking.**

Students also shared instances of alcohol use as a coping mechanism during times of stress. Academic and social stressors were mentioned as reasons why alcohol was used to cope.

OTHER'S ALCOHOL USE

Students also reported the impact of other's alcohol use on their own mental health. Students across identity groups who chose not to drink reported feeling a **sense of shame for not drinking, feeling left out for not drinking, and finally feelings of isolation and exclusion.** A sense of shame could lead to withdrawal which can increase feelings of isolation and loneliness that are commonly associated with higher rates of depression.

White problematic drinkers scored higher on the Diener Flourishing Scale than students of color in any drinker category and white students in other drinker categories.



“ Sometimes it has been used as a distraction or coping mechanism, which in the end never has great outcomes, but in small quantities it is a nice distraction. ”
- Student of Color



“ Alcohol has exacerbated my depression and anxiety. ”
- LGBTQ+ Student of Color

“ Because I don't drink, people don't think I am cool and don't want to hang out with me. It makes me feel like something is wrong with me. ”
- White Student

RESULTS - ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

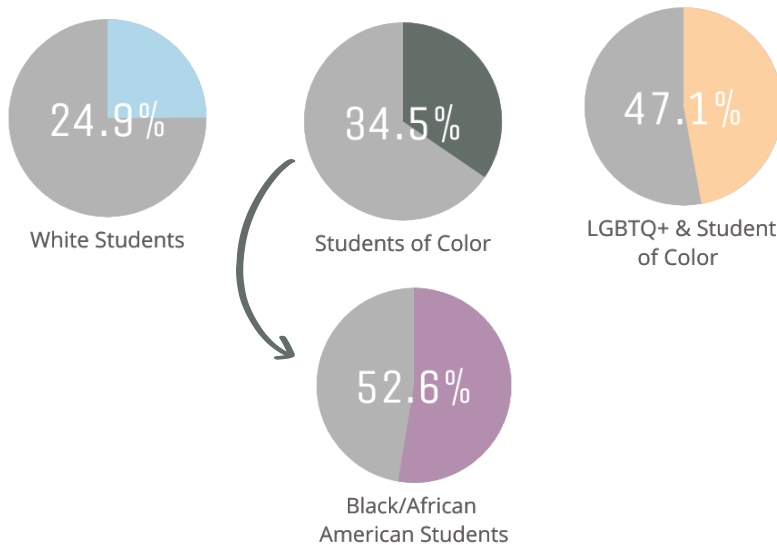
ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON SENSE OF BELONGING

A key theme that emerged throughout the survey is the impact of UNC-CH's alcohol culture on students' sense of belonging on campus. Students expressed using alcohol and alcohol-related activities to build community, establish new connections, and create a greater sense of belonging on UNC-CH's campus. One student explained that it **"allowed me to form connections that otherwise wouldn't have occurred."** Another student highlighted that alcohol helped them cope with their social anxiety, enabling them to feel comfortable expressing themselves in environments they typically would not.

However, the prevalence of alcohol-centered events on campus made students who choose not to engage in those activities feel disconnected and isolated from the broader campus community. One student expressed that it is **"hard to fit in socially if you don't drink"**, highlighting the feelings of social isolation from students that do not engage in UNC-CH's alcohol culture. This negatively impacted their sense of belonging on campus and ability to create bonds. Whether positive or negative overall experience with alcohol, students noted the prevalence of alcohol-centered events on campus.

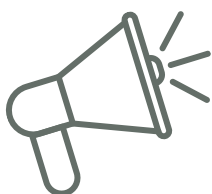
33.3% of all survey respondents indicated that they had considered leaving UNC-CH. While students' reasons for considering leaving varied, mental health was the top reason reported overall which sense of belonging may influence.

% Of Students Who Considered Leaving UNC-Chapel Hill



Students of Color and LGBTQ+ & Student of Color reported that they considered leaving UNC-Chapel Hill more frequently than white students. When stratified by race, **52.6% of Black/African American students reported that they had considered leaving UNC-Chapel Hill.**

“Not wanting to partake in drinking-focused white spaces, especially those in greek life. This is a major part of the university.”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color



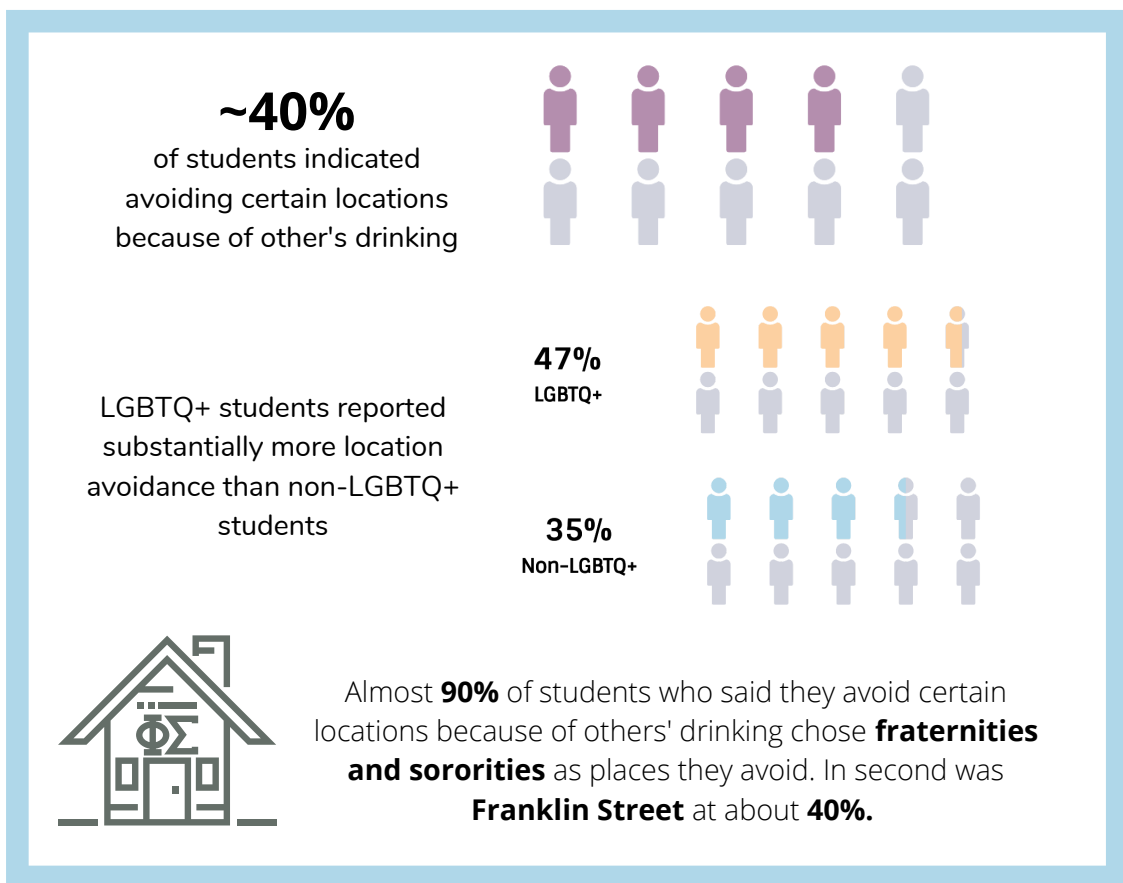
“Alcohol use of others has made it harder for me socially overall. Some of the student organizations that I had got involved in were hard to fit in socially if you didn't drink, which led to me eventually quitting/leaving the organization.”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color

“It has made me feel more a part of the community and less ostracized thus more comfortable expressing myself.”
-Student of Color

RESULTS - ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON SAFETY

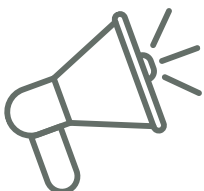
ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON STUDENT'S SENSE OF SAFETY

Many students reported decisions to avoid partaking in the university's alcohol culture due to feelings of danger as a result of others' drinking. Students who endorsed this view discussed intentionally choosing to not attend parties and social functions which involved alcohol and **39.2% of students stated that they avoid certain locations all-together because of the drinking that takes place at these locations.** Fraternities and sororities were by the far the most commonly chosen place(s) to avoid, with 88.6% of students who practiced location avoidance listing sorority and fraternity life settings as something they purposefully avoid. This was more than double the rate of the second most avoided location of Franklin Street at 42.7%. Furthermore, it appears that LGBTQ+-identifying students practiced location avoidance at a substantially higher rate than non-LGBTQ+ students. In our sample, 46.6% of LGBTQ+-identifying students stated that they avoid certain locations due to others' drinking, compared to only 35.0% of non-LGBTQ+ students.



“ It is a constant fear of being taken advantage of that impacts my desire to go to parties/large social functions on campus.”
- LGBTQ+ student

“ I get anxious anytime I have to walk past the frat courts or any parties because I feel unsafe.”
- Student of Color



“ I'm scared of going to areas (Frat Court) especially on drinking days and I am also scared of going out at dark which increases on drinking days.”
- LGBTQ+ student

RESULTS - ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON SAFETY

MICROAGGRESSIONS

For this study, microaggressions were defined as “any brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights, snubs, or insults that convey derogatory, hostile, or otherwise negative messages, thoughts, or insults towards underrepresented students” an adaptation of the original Sue et al. definition used by the UW-Madison study to better reflect our expanded population of interest.²⁰ Questions regarding the participants’ personal experiences of microaggressions were presented only to students who identified as LGBTQ+ and/or as students of color, as microaggressions directed at other axes of identity, such as religion or disability, were outside our scope of the study. Common themes in the microaggressions students reported included: harassment based on a student's race, ethnicity (or assumed race and ethnicity), stereotypes about race, ethnicity (or assumed race and ethnicity) in class room interactions, alcohol-related microaggressions, harassment around language or assumed language spoken, and harassment around one’s sexuality (or assumed sexuality/sexual identity/gender identity). Additionally, some students described being excluded from parties and other alcohol-related functions as a result of discrimination, such as being refused entry or being kicked out for their racial, ethnic, sexual, or gender identity.

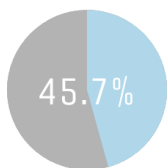
32%

of LGBTQ+ students and students of color reported having **experienced at least one microaggression** from a fellow student in the past year

16%

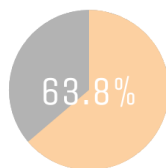
of LGBTQ+ students and students of color reported having **experienced at least one microaggression from an intoxicated student in particular** in the past year

LGBTQ+ students report witnessing microaggressions and intervening in microaggressions at higher rates than non-LGBTQ+ students*

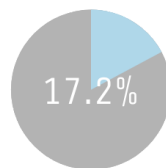


Non-LGBTQ+

Witnessed Microaggression

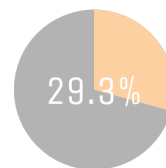


LGBTQ+



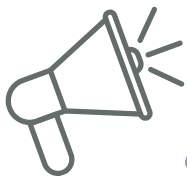
Non-LGBTQ+

Intervened in Microaggression



LGBTQ+

*Significant differences were not seen for non-LGBTQ+ students of color as compared to non-LGBTQ+ white students



“At parties, they talk about my culture and use racist language. Additionally, they use my culture as a party theme.”

-Student of Color

“Being kicked out of parties (only ones) for being brown”

-LGBTQ+ Student of Color

“You must’ve been smart to be able to get into this school. If it wasn’t for affirmative action you probably wouldn’t be here.”

-Student of Color

“Asking/assuming my race, touching me, my hair, grabbing me. Rude unnecessary comments.”

-LGBTQ+ Student of Color

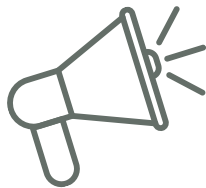
RESULTS - ALCOHOL'S IMPACT ON SAFETY

OVERT AGGRESSIONS

A number of the responses to our question about microaggressions rose beyond the scope of simple microaggressions and to the level of outright violence. Students reported experiencing a wide range of overtly aggressive encounters. These acts of violence ranged from being the target of slurs and verbal abuse, having racist “jokes” directed at them, and even sexual harassment/assault. While not solely directed at LGBTQ+ students of color, it would appear that students who experience marginalization on multiple identity fronts are at a higher risk of experiencing these more direct forms of violence. Though not all of our respondents reported that their assailants were under the influence of alcohol at the time of these encounters, they often occurred at locations in the UNC-CH and Chapel Hill communities which are strongly associated with alcohol consumption.

“Leaving a bar on campus being called a f*ggot, when I introduce my pronouns as he/they or they/them I still only get he.”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color

“My friends and I were called slurs at a restaurant by a drunk crowd when we sat at a table that they planned to sit at.”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color



“Someone airdropped me a racist photo at a football game”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color

“My friends and I were at a frat party, and we were forced to leave because one friend identified within the LGBTQ+ community, and the people hosting the party were not pleased by that. They called him names and we had to leave the party.”
-LGBTQ+ Student of Color



DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION

The UNC-CH Color of Drinking study revealed the harmful aspects that the alcohol culture has on undergraduate students across identity groups. Major themes across the study centered on the prevalence of alcohol use on and off campus and its negative effects on students' mental health and sense of safety. These harms were experienced disproportionately by students of color and LGBTQ+ students. This study adds to the existing literature suggesting that students of color and LGBTQ+ students suffer disproportionate harm from others' drinking in college contexts.^{1,13,17,18,19} Our study supported many of the findings in the UW-Madison Color of Drinking study¹ including students' location avoidance due to other's alcohol use, alcohol-fueled racial microaggressions and decreased sense of belonging for students who choose not to drink. While there were similarities, it is important to note that UNC-CH and UW-Madison are two unique institutions with unique cultures and student experiences.

Alcohol Culture. UNC-CH's alcohol culture was described as being prevalent and encouraging heavy and binge drinking behavior among undergraduates including underage students. While students across identity groups acknowledged the harmful impacts that the alcohol culture had on mental health and safety, student's experiences with the alcohol culture varied, highlighting the diverse factors influencing their experiences. While the majority of students felt the alcohol culture is harmful, some cited positive experiences often centered around the social opportunities it provided. Students explained that the pressure to drink, both internally and externally, was often influenced by one's friend group and social circle. Overall, white students reported higher frequencies of heavy episodic drinking compared to students of color and LGBTQ+ students (27.0%, 14.0%, 21.2% respectively). Conversely, students of color and LGBTQ+ students reported abstaining from alcohol for the past two weeks and/or year at higher frequencies than white students (56.0%, 37.7%, 46.6% respectively). These results suggest that white students are more likely to engage in the drinking culture than students of color and LGBTQ+ students. Part of the explanation for these findings may be that students of color and LGBTQ+ students avoid engaging in the alcohol centered events due to the disproportionate second-hand harms they experience from others' drinking.^{3,4,5}

Mental Health. The negative impact that the alcohol culture has on student's mental health was seen across survey responses. Notably, students reported that these negative impacts stemmed not only from their personal alcohol use but also from others' alcohol use. Students who reported not drinking commonly expressed feelings of shame, feeling left out, isolation and exclusion. Overall, these feelings appear to lead to a decreased sense of belonging among students who choose not to drink. These students explained that the majority of the social events at UNC-CH revolve around drinking, therefore it is more challenging to meet friends and socialize if they choose not to drink. Results from the Diener Flourishing Scale show that white problematic drinkers scored the highest (suggesting greater wellbeing) than students of color in any category and white students in other drinking category. While these results may seem counterintuitive considering the harmful effects of problematic drinking, one explanation may be the increased sense of belonging that white students in particular feel when they engage heavily in the alcohol culture. In contrast to the trends seen among white students, students of color who were classified as problematic drinkers scored the lowest compared to students of color in any other drinker category. A possible explanation for this may be attributed to the disproportionate second-hand harms that students of color experience from other's drinking which problematic drinkers may experience more frequently than those students who are in alcohol related settings less often.^{3,4,5} Our results demonstrate the spectrum of students' experiences and highlight race as a contributing factor.

Sense of Safety. One prominent finding from UNC-CH's study was the prevalence of not only alcohol-fueled microaggressions but incidence of more blatant acts of overt aggression directed at student's race, sexual-identity and/or gender identity. 37.8% of LGBTQ+ students and students of color reported having experienced at least one microaggression from a fellow student in the past year and 16.1% reported experiencing a microaggression from an intoxicated student. Reports of overt aggression often occurred at locations in the UNC-CH community which are strongly associated with alcohol consumption. **These findings suggest deeper, underlying issues of racism and homophobia at UNC-CH.** As described elsewhere, alcohol use and related cues (such as a beer can) can foster negative attitudes and aggressive behavior towards ethnic and sexual minorities.^{6,7,8,9,10}

Alcohol use and simply alcohol associated settings may uncover issues of racism and homophobia at UNC-CH. Our findings emphasize the critical importance of addressing these underlying stereotypes and attitudes. Addressing the harms of alcohol use at UNC-CH must go beyond the alcohol culture itself and tackle the deeper issues of racism and homophobia that it uncovers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results and feedback from outreach meetings with student organizations indicate an urgent need to change the alcohol culture at UNC-CH. The alcohol culture on campus impacts students, particularly students of color and LGBTQ+ students, in several ways, causing them physical, mental, and social harm. The culture significantly damages students' sense of belonging, leading them to contemplate withdrawing from the institution. Several recommendations will help combat the toxic culture on campus and its impact on students.

- 1. Increase alcohol free social opportunities:** The prevalence of alcohol at social events and activities exacerbates harm experienced by students; therefore, increasing outreach and funding for university-sponsored alcohol-free events and activities will expand options for students to socialize, build community, and create new bonds. This will improve a sense of belonging and decrease feelings of isolation for students that choose not to engage in the alcohol culture.
- 2. Increased investment in safety resources is needed to combat physical harm experienced by students:** Safety resources could include but are not limited to providing students with more ways to get home safely and increasing educational programming on consent and Title IX. However, students do not feel comfortable or safe with the police as a resource; therefore, increasing funding to this group may produce numerous unintended consequences and exacerbate harm.
- 3. Expand mental health resources:** Alcohol and its culture on UNC-CH's campus adversely affect students' mental health and well-being, thus, indicating a need to expand mental health resources. Expansion may include:
 - Increasing funding for CAPs.
 - Providing more outlets for students to practice self-care and healthy coping mechanisms.
 - Creating programs focused on peer-to-peer support.

Moving forward, it is critical to implement mechanisms for students to inform policies and programs that center their experiences and voices in decision-making at UNC-CH. The color of drinking report demonstrates the cross-section of ways alcohol impacts campus life, highlighting the dire need for a collaborative approach. Changing the alcohol culture at UNC-CH must be an institutional priority committed to uplifting and supporting the entire student body, especially students from historically marginalized communities. **On a deeper level, the results of the study reveal that racism, homophobia, and transphobia are serious issues at UNC-CH and are exacerbated by the alcohol culture.** More study and resources should be devoted to tackling these larger issues.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Student Drinker Categories

Drinker Category	Definition
Abstainer	A student who consumed no alcohol in the past year
Non-Drinker	A student who consumed no alcohol in the past two weeks, but may have consumed in the past year
Moderate Drinker	A student who, on the day of highest alcohol use in the past two weeks had 1-4 drinks (male) or 1-3 drinks (female)*
Heavy Episodic Drinker	A student who, on the day of highest alcohol use in the past two weeks had 5-9 drinks (male) or 4-7 drinks (female)*
Problematic Drinker	A student who, on the highest day of use in the past two weeks had more than 10 drinks (male) or more than 8 drinks (female).*

*No students who identified as non-binary reported highest drinking days of 4, 8, or 9 drinks, leading differences in drinker categorization due to sex to be irrelevant. Non-binary drinkers all fell within the overlapping ranges for both sexes.

Appendix B: Student Drinking Rates

Drinking Rates	Definition
Non-Drinker Rate	A combination of students (abstainer and non-drinker) who reported consuming no alcohol in one year and/or in the past two weeks.
Low-Risk Drinking Rate	Male students who report drinking 4 or fewer drinks, female students who report drinking 3 or fewer.
High-Risk Drinking Rate	Students who report consuming 4 or more on their highest day of alcohol use in two weeks.

Appendix C: Non-drinker rates by each POC group

Black/ African American	Asian/ Asian American	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Hispanic / Latinx	Middle Eastern/ North African	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	Biracia l	Multiracial	Different Identity
52	202	3	41	2	1	100	8	1
33.8%	41.5%	30.0%	25.5%	50.0%	25.0%	71.4%	72.7%	25.0%

APPENDIX

Appendix D: Affect on Academics by Group

White Student Expected Count	White Student Actual Count	Student of Color Expected Count	Student of Color Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
38.7	55	77.3	61	11.159	.001
Cisgender Heterosexual Expected Count	Cisgender Heterosexual Actual Count	LGBTQ+ Expected Count	LGBTQ+ Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
74.8	64	41.2	52	4.776	.029
LGBQ+ Expected Count	LGBQ+ Actual Count	Transgender Expected Count	Transgender Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
43.5	48	8.5	4	3.168	.075

Appendix E: Personal Alcohol Use's Affect on Mental Health

White Student Expected Count	White Student Actual Count	Student of Color Expected Count	Student of Color Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
55.7	76	111.3	91	12.472	.000
Cisgender Heterosexual Expected Count	Cisgender Heterosexual Actual Count	LGBTQ+ Expected Count	LGBTQ+ Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
107.7	86	59.3	81	13.903	.000
LGBQ+ Expected Count	LGBQ+ Actual Count	Transgender Expected Count	Transgender Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
67.8	68	13.2	13	.006	.939

APPENDIX

Appendix F: Other's Alcohol Use Affect on Mental Health

White Student Expected Count	White Student Actual Count	Student of Color Expected Count	Student of Color Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
58.4	81	116.6	94	14.888	.000
Cisgender Heterosexual Expected Count	Cisgender Heterosexual Actual Count	LGBTQ+ Expected Count	LGBTQ+ Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
112.2	88	61.8	86	16.707	.000
LGBQ+ Expected Count	LGBQ+ Actual Count	Transgender Expected Count	Transgender Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
69.4	66	13.6	17	1.246	.264

Appendix G: Location avoidance rates for each POC group

Black/ African American	Asian/ Asian American	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	Hispanic/ Latinx	Middle Eastern/ North African	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	Biracial	Multiracial	Different Identity
40.3%	39.4%	20.0%	42.2%	0.0%	50.0%	39.3%	45.5%	50.0%

Appendix H: Experienced Microaggressions from Students

White LGBTQ+ Student Expected Count	White LGBTQ+ Student Actual Count	Student of Color Expected Count	Student of Color Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
149.9	81	299.1	368	678.749	.000
Cisgender Heterosexual Student Expected Count	Cisgender Heterosexual Student Actual Count	LGBTQ+ Student Expected Count	LGBTQ+ Student Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
285.7	208	157.3	235	213.928	.000

APPENDIX

Appendix I: Experienced Microaggressions from Intoxicated Students

White LGBTQ+ Student Expected Count	White LGBTQ+ Student Actual Count	Student of Color Expected Count	Student of Color Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
64.1	38	127.9	154	679.107	.000
Cisgender Heterosexual Student Expected Count	Cisgender Heterosexual Student Actual Count	LGBTQ+ Student Expected Count	LGBTQ+ Student Actual Count	Pearson's Chi Square	2-Sided Significance
121.9	89	67.1	100	195.720	.000

Appendix J: Considered leaving rates for each group

POC	White	LGBTQ+	Non-LGBTQ+	POC & LGBTQ+	White & LGBTQ+
34.5%	30.7%	43.0%	27.5%	47.1%	37.7%

Appendix K: Reasons for considering leaving, broken down by group

	POC	White	LGBTQ+	Non-LGBTQ+	POC & LGBTQ+	White & LGBTQ+
Racial Climate	27.2%	4.5%	26.2%	15.6%	37.4%	7.3%
Climate Related to Sex and Gender Expression	5.6%	5.7%	10.9%	1.0%	10.8%	11.0%
Mental Health Reasons	56.0%	58.6%	68.3%	47.2%	66.2%	72.0%
Academic Reasons	58.9%	49.7%	52.0%	58.0%	53.2%	50.0%
Financial Reasons	27.7%	19.1%	25.3%	25.7%	29.5%	18.3%
Interpersonal Reasons	22.9%	23.6%	25.3%	21.2%	25.2%	25.6%
Alcohol Climate	1.6%	3.8%	1.8%	2.4%	0.7%	3.7%
Family Issues	12.5%	7.6%	7.7%	12.8%	8.6%	6.1%