



# Student Success and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Challenges

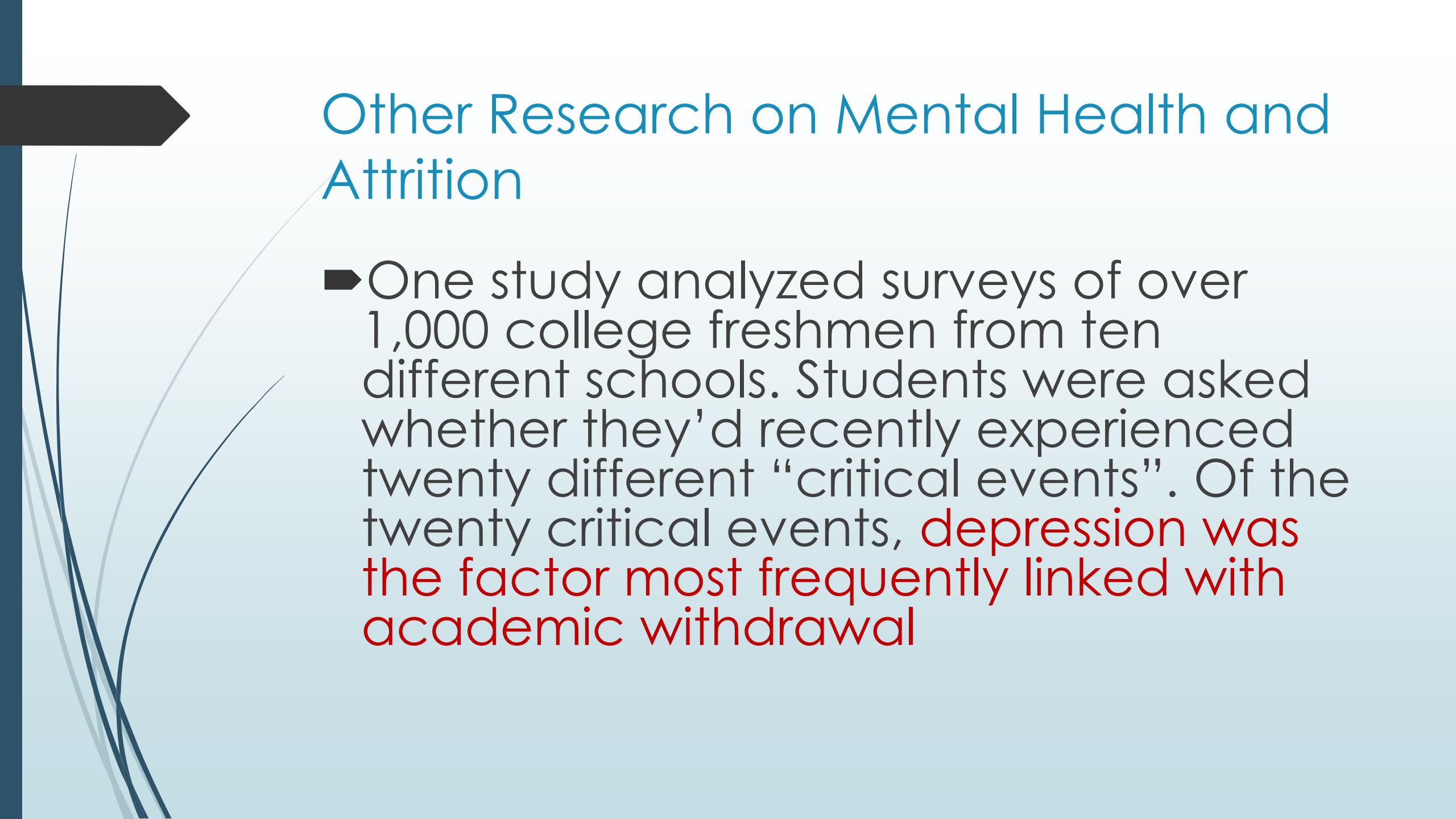
Amy Thompson

Professor of Public Health

Co-Director, Center for Health and Successful Living

# Mental Health and Academic Performance

- Many students meet criteria for psychiatric disorders—such as depression, bipolar, or anxiety disorders—and in a large study of college students nearly half say that their mental health affected their academic performance during the past month.
- Even when students are able to persist in college, their grades are likely to suffer in proportion to their mental health symptoms.



## Other Research on Mental Health and Attrition

- One study analyzed surveys of over 1,000 college freshmen from ten different schools. Students were asked whether they'd recently experienced twenty different "critical events". Of the twenty critical events, **depression was the factor most frequently linked with academic withdrawal**

# ATOD Prevalence in College Students

- ▶ On average, 77% of college students drink alcohol
- ▶ 16% meet criteria for an alcohol use disorder,
- ▶ 44% report having used Marijuana (6% use daily)
- ▶ 2% report Opioid use
- ▶ Nonmedical use of prescription medications can also be a serious problem, but this use varies significantly across colleges. Moreover, excessive drinking and drug use often overlap.

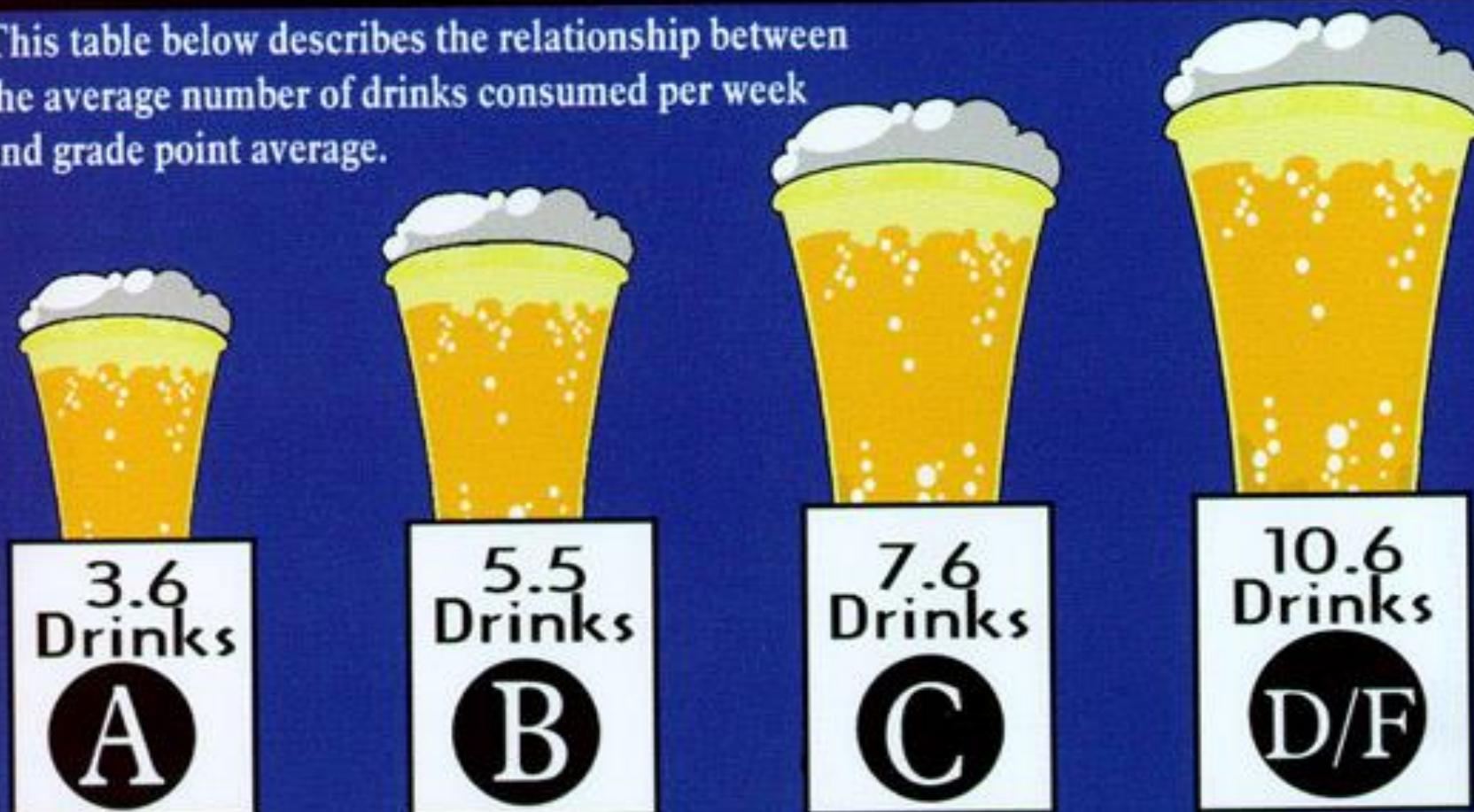


## Academic Impact of ATOD

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Task Force on College Drinking reports that **about 25 percent** of college students report academic problems caused by alcohol use, such as earning lower grades, doing poorly on exams or papers, missing class, and falling behind.

# ALCOHOL & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

This table below describes the relationship between the average number of drinks consumed per week and grade point average.



\*Sponsored by FAU Center for Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention

- ▶ As with excessive drinking, drug use—especially marijuana use—appears to contribute to college students skipping more classes, spending less time studying, earning lower grades, dropping out of college, and being unemployed after college. This can also lead to social problems and suicide
- ▶ In a recent issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, Arria and her colleagues reported that students with high levels of marijuana use (more than 17 days a month) were twice as likely as those with minimal use (less than a day a month) to have an enrollment gap while in college. But even students who used pot less often, in the range of three to 12 days a month, were more likely to experience enrollment gaps.
- ▶ Another study found that the more drinks a student consumed per drinking occasion, the less time they spent studying, which led to predictable negative effects on their GPA.