

## 8. WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DRINKING

### Are you always the one who overdoes it?

Do you find yourself getting aggressive? Or getting into risky situations?

Do you feel horribly ashamed the next day or, worse, don't remember what you did or said? Is all your money going on booze? Are hangovers stopping you working? Are you using alcohol for confidence or to sleep?

Cutting down may not be easy but it can be done. Here are some painless tips:

- **Delay** the time you have your first drink
- **Eat before you drink:** food slows down alcohol absorption. You are likely to drink less if you are full.
- **Switch to lower strength drinks, smaller sized bottles/ glasses.** Increase the amount of mixers you use in your drinks
- **Alternate drinks with water or a soft drink:** this means you drink less alcohol, keeps you hydrated and helps you feel better the next day. It will also save money.
- **Don't drink alcohol at all.** If you're drinking at home, experiment with different soft drinks or teas. Drinking alone may have become a habit but increases your risk of feeling low.
- **Sip and enjoy;** drinking for speed and quantity might get you drunk quicker but it also diminishes the

pleasurable effects of alcohol and increases the negative effects.

- **Stop**; when you've had enough.
- **Don't mix**; stay with the same drink.
- **Keep an eye on how much you are drinking**; count your drinks – this will make you more aware of how much you are consuming.
- **Take a break from boozing**; have at least 2 (preferably consecutive) alcohol free days a week. Set aside an alcohol-free period every now and then. This respite will boost your health no end and help break the habit.
- **All your social life revolves around drink**; spend time with other friends; find an activity that isn't alcohol related. You'll be surprised that it is possible to have fun and not be pissed (or stoned).
- **You need a drink to boost your confidence**; in the long run this doesn't work. Invest in building your confidence. Learn how to relax, use calming thoughts, breathing techniques.
- **You rely on alcohol to sleep**; find out more about 'sleep hygiene'. Get into a bedtime routine without alcohol. Exercise, look after yourself better. Your sleep will improve once you stop using alcohol.

See the Counselling and Wellbeing website for helpful online resources on Alcohol and Drugs: [students.leeds.ac.uk/counsellingandwellbeing](https://students.leeds.ac.uk/counsellingandwellbeing)