

What to do if alcohol or drugs are causing problems in your life

Are alcohol or drugs causing problems in your life? Do you need some help? Are you unsure of what to do? If you are worried about your alcohol and/or drug use, there are services in your community that can help.

Drinking too much alcohol or misusing drugs can cause problems for you and others. Warning signs that you might have problems related to alcohol or drugs include:

- financial issues;
- having difficulties with family/friends;
- missing work or school;
- getting into trouble with the law;
- causing injuries to yourself or someone you care about;
- having health problems; and
- getting into vehicle crashes.

Alcohol misuse is more common than severe alcohol dependence.

If alcohol is causing problems in your life what can you do?

Consider your drinking patterns:

“The CAGE Screening Questionnaire

- Have you ever felt you should **CUT DOWN** on your drinking?
- Have people **ANNOYED** you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or **GUILTY** about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning (an **EYE OPENER**) to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

Males: Two “yes” responses suggests a current or past alcohol problem.

Females: One “yes” response suggests a current or past alcohol problem (Bradley et al., 1998).¹¹

A health care provider such as a physician and/or Addictions

Counsellor may be able to assist. They can further assess if you have a drinking problem and help you determine ways to lead a healthy life, if needed. This could include suggestions that you cut back on your alcohol use or stop drinking alcohol.

Regarding alcohol and/or drug misuse, consider the following:

- **Recognize that your alcohol/drug use is causing problems in your life;**
- **Decide that you must do something** to deal with your situation knowing that if you don’t, the problems you are having could continue and even get worse; and then
- **Get help and support.** There are many community services available to help you build a healthier life, including: outreach services, outpatient counselling, detox centres, in-patient treatment services and community-based self-help programs.

The first thing to do is contact someone who can help you. An Addictions Counsellor can help you think about your options. Please see the contact information section at the end of this fact sheet.

Why is support important?

It can be difficult to reduce or stop using alcohol/drugs. You will have a better chance of reaching your goals if you have people in your life who support and encourage you. Addictions Counsellors can help you develop a recovery plan so that you can build a healthier life.

An Addictions Counsellor can help you:

- figure out if you are dependent on alcohol/drugs;
- set and reach goals;
- find out information about alcohol/drugs;
- work through issues you are dealing with;
- learn how to tell others what you need;
- learn how to recognize and deal with your feelings;
- figure out what your interests are;
- cope when you crave alcohol/drugs;
- deal with your relationships; and
- get connected in your community.

Surround yourself with people who can support you to make positive changes. Supportive people can include your family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, religious leaders and other professionals. As you begin to lead a healthier life, an Addictions Counsellor can help others adjust to the changes you are making. Self-help support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Al-Anon may also be able to offer support.

An Addictions Counsellor can also help you...

Deal with your alcohol/drug use behaviour

If you have trouble resisting alcohol/drugs, try to figure out which situations put you at risk for this. An Addictions Counsellor can help you take a look at your alcohol/drug use. A counsellor can help you find ways to quit or reduce your use.

“People who are physically dependent on alcohol can develop withdrawal symptoms, such as sleeplessness, tremors, nausea and seizures, within a few hours after their last drink.”²

Get connected to your community

Communities offer a range of services that can help you get your life back on track. Services may be offered through schools, libraries, public health offices, self-help groups and recreation centres. Connecting with others can help you:

- have strong positive relationships;
- take part in social and recreational opportunities;
- find employment;
- eat healthy food;
- get a quality education; and
- find safe housing options.

Whom to contact

Contact your local Addictions/Mental Health Services office, doctor or other health care provider if you need more information. To locate Addictions/Mental Health Services near you:

- visit saskatchewan.ca/addictions;
- check the green pages of your phone book for your local health region's services;
- visit HealthLine Online at healthlineonline.ca; or
- contact HealthLine at 811 and ask to speak to an Addictions or Mental Health Counsellor.



NOTE: This material is for information only and should not replace advice from an Addictions or Mental Health Counsellor, doctor or other health care provider.

To access fact sheet sources please contact the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health at (306) 787-7239.

1 CAGE primary source: Ewing, J.A. (1984). Detecting alcoholism: The CAGE questionnaire. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 252 (14), 1905-1907. Used with permission from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) at <http://knowledge.camh.net>.

2 Alcohol (Is alcohol addictive?) (2012) by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at <http://www.camh.ca>.