

FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

Give out **WORKSHEETS 6 & 7**. Go through each sheet and explain that, in moderation, there is nothing wrong with alcohol. What we are concentrating on is over-drinking. Explain that different people can tolerate different levels of alcohol.

It is not necessarily the amount that is of concern (although, of course, heavy drinking is a serious problem) but it is the effect that alcohol has on our lives.

Many people use alcohol to accomplish things that they feel they cannot do without alcohol. They have therefore lost the power of choice. They no longer **choose** whether to drink or not – drink rules their lives.

Ask the group the following:

- Can you choose **not** to drink? How does this make you feel?
- Do you feel there are times when you **must** drink? (eg. parties, nights out, after work, to unwind etc.)

Explain that, if we feel we **must** drink, we have lost the right to choose and are allowing alcohol to dictate what we should do. We must make an informed decision to take control of our lives again.

Give out **WORKSHEET 8** and explain the dangers of drinking in these situations.

Highlight the fact that drinking affects our ability to function properly. It is dangerous to operate certain machinery under the influence of alcohol. Do they realise that initially, they have a choice – to drink or not to drink.

WORKSHEET 6

FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

- There are 100 – 150 calories in every glass of wine or beer
- Alcohol has a very high sugar content
- Alcohol makes it difficult for your body to process vitamins and calcium. It interferes with the bodies ability to make energy
- Alcohol stops the body absorbing nutrients

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

- ◇ Upset stomach and vomiting
- ◇ Diarrhoea
- ◇ Skin problems
- ◇ Sleeping problems
- ◇ Headaches

WORKSHEET 7

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Heavy drinking can cause:

- Stomach ulcers (raw sores in stomach walls)
- Cancer of the mouth and throat
- Gastritis (inflammation of stomach walls)
- Liver disorders including hepatitis, cirrhosis of the liver and fatty liver
- Pancreatitis – inflamed pancreas
- High blood-pressure
- Anaemia

MENTAL EFFECTS

- Depression – alcohol is a depressant
- Loss of inhibitions – this can lead to behaviour that you would not otherwise indulge in
- Memory loss
- Inability to function – eg. talk, walk, drive etc.
- Aggression
- Drowsiness

WORKSHEET 8

WHEN NOT TO DRINK

Can you think of any situations where it would be unwise to drink?

Think about the following:

WHEN DRIVING

Your body develops a tolerance for alcohol. If you drink regularly, you will need more and more alcohol to make you feel high. You may feel that you are not drunk and that you can drive without any hesitation when, in actual fact, you are a danger to yourself and others.

After just one drink your reflexes become slower. You will not be able to judge a situation as well as you can when you are sober. You may feel over-confident and more inclined to take risks.

It is very dangerous to drive after just one drink.

Why take the risk?

WHEN PREGNANT

Look back at the physical effects of drinking. Do you really want to inflict these symptoms on your unborn child? The effects of alcohol on a tiny foetus are much more severe than on a fully-grown adult. An adult chooses to drink – an unborn baby has no choice. Babies have been born with an addiction to alcohol. The effects of the withdrawal symptoms on a tiny baby are painful and dangerous.

The basic fact is – YOU HAVE A CHOICE!!