

Controlling Your Drinking During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Objective

To avoid using alcohol to deal with stress and anxiety during the coronavirus outbreak.

You Should Know

Drinking can be an easy escape from fears and anxiety caused by the coronavirus pandemic. You may find that you are drinking more than usual since the outbreak started, but this is not a good way to deal with stress and we all know that drinking can lead to many other physical and mental health problems. Obviously, this will be more of a concern for people who have had a problem with alcohol or drugs in the past.

This worksheet will help you keep track of your drinking habits and offer healthier ways to cope with stress and anxiety.

What to Do

Use the following chart to track your drinking habits, including when you drink, what stressful situation or thought cause you to drink, and the type and amount of alcohol you drink. Make copies of this chart if necessary.

There are number of things you can do to cope with your anxiety and stress in healthier ways:

- Connect with friends and family by phone or email. Share your concerns and feelings with people you trust.
- Journal, write poetry, or express yourself through arts or crafts project.
- Play with your pet.
- Practice deep breathing or meditation, using an app or online video.
- Cook or bake.
- Take an online class or watch an instructional video.
- Attend free virtual museum tours, concerts, and other online entertainment.
- Enjoy leisurely activities, such as streaming TV shows or movies or reading a book.
- Listen to music that makes you relaxed or happy.
- Start a project you have been putting off: reorganizing the basement, painting a room, or do-it-yourself home repairs.
- Relax in a warm bath or shower.
- Take breaks from pandemic news and social media and watch funny videos on YouTube instead.
- Add your own ideas here:

Now, select at least three activities from the list above that you plan to do to manage your stress and anxiety. Write them down below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Reflections on This Exercise

Which activities were most effective in managing your stress and anxiety?

How easy or difficult was it to replace drinking with healthier coping activities? Explain.

Were you able to reduce your drinking? Describe your experience.

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
