

PEER HEALTH EXCHANGE

IS IT TOO MUCH?

UNDERSTANDING MY MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING MECHANISMS

Sometimes, when we are struggling with our mental health, we may start to cope in unhealthy ways—whether that is drinking too much, exercising too much, not eating enough, etc. Taking some time to reflect on how a coping strategy has actually affected you can help you decide if it is the right strategy to keep using.

Use the following questions to determine if your ways of coping have become unhealthy:

1. Am I doing this behavior more than usual?



2. Why am I doing this behavior?



3. Does this behavior make me feel better when I do it?



4. Does this behavior make me feel better after I do it?



5. Does this behavior get in the way of me doing what I need to do?



6. Does this behavior impact the people around me?



7. Should I stop or significantly cut back on this behavior?



8. Would I need support in cutting back or stopping this behavior?

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Darren would occasionally drink with his friends before social distancing began. If someone was holding a party, he'd have a beer or two because he felt more comfortable with something in his hand. Since social distancing began, Darren has struggled to fill his time. After dinner he has been taking some of his parents' liquor from the cabinet to drink in his room until he falls asleep.

I guess I've been drinking more than normal. I used to only have maybe two drinks a week and now I'm having more than that each night.

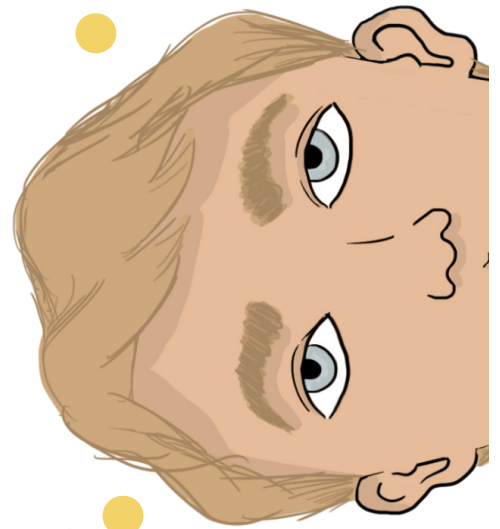
Now that I'm home all the time, I don't have much to do and sometimes when I'm just sitting by myself, I start to worry about not seeing my friends, someone in my family getting sick, and more. Drinking alcohol helps distract me from those worries, make the night go by faster, and helps me relax enough to get to sleep.

Drinking helps me forget about my worries, sometimes when I drink too much I start to get a little dizzy though.

I've noticed that when I wake up, I often have a headache and I don't remember much from the night before. Drinking helps distract me in the moment but once I'm done the worries come back.

I still do all of my school work but I no longer do things like read, play games online with my friends, or walk outside.

My drinking doesn't really impact my family because I'm in my room the whole time. My mom has said that she wishes I did more with the family though.



These questions can help you to identify your choices and understand the outcomes of those choices, but you are the only person who can decide what you care about when making a decision. In Darren's case, he might care that drinking is helping him relax and get to sleep, but it is hurting his relationships with his family and his physical health too much to continue. This can help Darren to make decisions about whether or not his coping strategy is the right one, if he needs help stopping, or if he should find a new strategy.