

ALCOHOL / DRUGS / GAMBLING



**THERE'S
NO MAGIC
FORMULA**

STAY IN CONTROL

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

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WHEN IT COMES TO ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, OR GAMBLING, THERE'S NO MAGIC FORMULA FOR AVOIDING THE RISKS AND MAKING THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES DISAPPEAR.

ASSERTIVENESS IS THE KEY TO STAYING IN CONTROL OF ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ASSERTIVE?

BEING ASSERTIVE MEANS EXPRESSING WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU THINK, WHAT YOU WANT, OR WHAT YOU FEEL, WHILE RESPECTING THE THOUGHTS AND NEEDS OF OTHERS. YOU CAN BE ASSERTIVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS:

- By stating your opinion, communicating your needs, expressing your thoughts and feelings
- Every time you make a decision, about anything, for example, when you decide to decorate your room or play basketball rather than play a musical instrument or take up dancing, etc.
- Creatively: when you write, work on a project, draw, sing, and so on
- By participating in school life, any way you choose



Being assertive means making your own decisions, sharing your ideas, and expressing your preferences. Asserting who you are!

ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, AND GAMBLING

**THE BETTER YOU
KNOW YOURSELF,
THE MORE
ASSERTIVE
YOU CAN BE**

KNOWING YOURSELF BETTER, APPRECIATING WHO YOU ARE, AND RESPECTING YOURSELF ARE KEY ADVANTAGES TO HELP YOU MAKE GOOD DECISIONS IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE, INCLUDING WHEN IT COMES TO ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, AND GAMBLING.

When you know yourself well, it's easier to say what you think, what you want, and what you feel, while respecting what others think, want, and feel at the same time. Being assertive means allowing yourself certain rights in relation to others, such as the right to ask questions, respond, refuse, etc.

Of course, your friends also assert themselves and behave in ways that can influence you. There are two types of influence.

- POSITIVE INFLUENCE

For example, this is when someone invites you to try new experiences that help you get to know yourself a bit better, that fit with who you are, and that are good for you, such as when a friend suggests you try a new sport together.

- NEGATIVE INFLUENCE

For example, this is when someone asks you to do something disrespectful to others or to yourself. It might be a situation where you feel uncomfortable about what others are doing or asking you to do, such as when someone tries to persuade you to do something that can have negative consequences for you or for others.

Sometimes, being assertive is more difficult depending on the situation or who's there. Then you might feel uncomfortable or stressed. When your opinion is different from other people's, it might be more difficult to express your point of view for fear of being rejected or ridiculed. That's completely normal.

It's always best to say what you really think and feel. That way you keep your self-respect and you help others get to know you, see who you are, what you want, and so on.

ASSERTIVENESS MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD AND INCREASES YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE. IT ALSO HELPS YOU MORE EASILY RECOGNIZE THOSE AROUND YOU THAT YOU CAN RELATE TO, THAT MAKE YOU FEEL RESPECTED, AND THAT YOU ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH.



DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE CAN BE RISKY AND LEAD TO NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN THAT HAPPENS YOU CAN'T GO BACK IN TIME AND MAGICALLY MAKE EVERYTHING GO AWAY.

Here are a few ways you can be assertive with others to reduce or prevent the risks and consequences of drug or alcohol use and gambling.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DRINK OR DO DRUGS:

- Just say NO. If others persist, say NO again, in other ways: "No thanks," "I'm not interested," and so on.
- Try making a joke out of it: "No thanks, I am actually pretty attached to my brain!", "No thanks, I'd rather stay in control and keep my head on straight!", and so on.
- Suggest doing something else. There's so much more to life than drugs and alcohol!
- And if they still insist, walk away! That might be a bit drastic, but it will make you feel more in control of the situation.

Take a good look at your circle of friends and ask yourself which ones make you feel comfortable and share your likes, interests, or values. Don't you feel more relaxed in their company? Why not try to get to know them better?

IF YOU DECIDE TO USE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL:

- When you bring your own drinks to a party, for example, bring some soft drinks too. It's best to alternate between alcoholic and soft drinks.
- Decide ahead of time to limit your drug or alcohol use or not to use a certain substance and talk to a friend who will help you stick to your decision.
- Plan your transportation ahead of time to avoid injuring yourself or putting your life and the lives of others at risk.
- Set a maximum amount to gamble, in a card game for example, and talk to a friend who will help you stick to your decision.

TRY WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU. MAYBE YOU'LL FIND THAT SOME METHODS ARE EASIER THAN OTHERS. IT'S YOUR CALL!

THERE'S NO MAGIC FORMULA STAY IN CONTROL

"I DRANK A FEW TIMES, BUT THEN FELT LIKE IT WASN'T ENJOYABLE ANY MORE. AT FIRST IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO SAY NO, BUT AFTER I TALKED TO MAGGIE, I REALIZED SHE FELT THE SAME WAY! AT PARTIES, WE BOTH HAVE MORE FUN DANCING."

- ANNABELLE

KNOW THE FACTS AND STAY IN CONTROL

Learning about yourself is a lifelong process. As situations arise, you will discover facets of yourself that you never knew existed.

The same is true for what you know about alcohol, other drugs, and gambling. Here's a *True or False?* questionnaire to test your knowledge of this topic.

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. High school students are using more and more alcohol and cannabis every year.

FALSE. Young people have generally reduced their use of alcohol, cannabis, and other drugs since 2000.

2. Drugs such as alcohol or cannabis always impair brain function.

TRUE. Among other things, drugs and alcohol affect communication between nerve cells. If your brain is impaired due to alcohol or another drug, you are more likely to do things like:

- Make decisions you wouldn't have made if you hadn't used
- Say hurtful things, even to people you care about
- Pick a fight (even with a friend)
- Have unprotected sex and contract a sexually transmitted infection or face an unplanned pregnancy

3. Drug and alcohol use can lead us to make decisions we wouldn't otherwise have made.

TRUE. For example, we might say hurtful things to a friend, have unprotected sex, or engage in behavior that will result in injury to ourselves or others. These behaviors can have negative consequences, such as losing friendships, contracting a sexually transmitted infection, or facing an unplanned pregnancy.

4. Cannabis is not that bad for the health because it's natural.

FALSE. For example, weight for weight, a cannabis joint contains 50% more tar than an ordinary cigarette. Because the smoke is often inhaled deeply, joints can cause as many pulmonary problems as four to ten cigarettes. In addition, smoking cannabis can cause mental health problems and, in some people, psychoses and severe anxiety.

Just like alcohol, cannabis impairs brain function, leading to poorer judgment and a loss of inhibitions. This means you might act inappropriately or in a way you didn't really want to. You're more at risk of making decisions you wouldn't have otherwise made and doing things that can have negative consequences.

Over the long term, excessive and regular cannabis use can lead to decreased motivation and interest, as well as memory and concentration difficulties.

5. Tricks and strategies can help you win at poker more often.

FALSE. Poker is a game where player skill and luck both play a role. Even when two players are equally matched, luck always plays a role.

THERE'S NO WAY TO MAKE THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, OR GAMBLING MAGICALLY DISAPPEAR. LEARNING TO GET TO KNOW YOURSELF BETTER AND BE ASSERTIVE HELPS YOU STAY IN CONTROL IN ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE, EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL.

Have questions about drinking, other drugs, or gambling?

Worried about yourself or a friend when it comes to drinking or doing drugs?

Confide in someone you trust, such as a family member, friend, teacher, or healthcare professional.

You can also call:

TEL-JEUNES
1-800-263-2266
(OR TELJEUNES.COM)

DRUGS: HELP AND REFERRAL
1-800-265-2626
OR 514-527-2626 (MONTRÉAL AREA)

GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL
1-800-461-0140
OR 514-527-0140 (MONTRÉAL AREA)

Someone will answer
your call in confidence
24/7.



You can also go to:

RESTEENCONTROLE.GOUV.QC.CA