

ALCOHOL / DRUGS / GAMBLING



**THERE'S  
NO MAGIC  
FORMULA  
STAY IN CONTROL**

DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

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Québec  

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

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**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 commit to a sport rather than play a musical instrument or vice versa
- Creatively: when you write, work on a project, compose a song, dance, and so on
- By participating in activities you identify with in various settings, such as at school, at work, in your community, etc.



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





# ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, AND GAMBLING

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**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, those around you 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 that can have negative consequences for you or for others. It might be a situation where you feel uncomfortable about what others are doing or asking you to do.

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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.**



**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 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 or a dinner with friends, for example, bring some soft drinks too. It's best to drink slowly, alternate between alcoholic and soft drinks, and not drink on an empty stomach.
- 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.
- Avoid mixing things up. Don't drink while also using another drug, and don't take more than one drug at a time. Mixing alcohol and any drugs—even in small amounts—can cause major, uncontrollable complications. These complications can lead to severe intoxication and possibly death from overdose.
- 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

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**"I USED DRUGS AND ALCOHOL A FEW TIMES, BUT THEN FELT LIKE IT WASN'T ENJOYABLE ANYMORE. AT FIRST IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO SAY NO, BUT AFTER I TALKED TO JOSIE, I REALIZED SHE FELT THE SAME WAY! AT PARTIES WE BOTH HAVE A LOT MORE FUN DANCING—PLUS IT MEANS WE CAN SAVE OUR MONEY TO GO TO SHOWS."**

**- ROXANNE**

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## 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. Excessive consumption of alcohol (five or more drinks in one session) and habitual excessive consumption of alcohol are dangerous and can result in short- and long-term negative consequences.**

**TRUE.** When you're under the influence of alcohol, your judgment is impaired and your inhibitions are lower than usual, which means you may 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 may have negative consequences. While drinking alcohol always involves risk, excessive consumption of alcohol and habitual excessive consumption of alcohol increase these risks and can have a number of effects:

- **PHYSICAL HEALTH:** significant increase in the risk of accidents causing injury or death, increase in unsafe sexual behavior that can result in a sexually transmitted infection or an unplanned pregnancy, effects on brain development that can cause impulsive behaviors, and impacts on the development of certain cancers, liver diseases, high blood pressure, and brain damage
- **MENTAL HEALTH:** increased risk of abuse or dependency, depressive and disinhibiting effect of alcohol may cause someone with suicidal thoughts to act on those thoughts, depression
- **PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS:** relationship problems, problems at work or at school, criminal acts, delinquency, violence committed by or against you

**2. 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.

**3. 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 may 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.

**4. Binge drinking, or consuming a large quantity of alcohol in a short period of time (chugging), can have serious consequences.**

**TRUE.** Binge drinking can lead to repetitive vomiting, breathing difficulties, loss of consciousness, and even death. If someone presents these symptoms, call 911 and do not leave them alone.

**5. Mixing an alcoholic drink with an energy drink reduces the effects of alcohol.**

**FALSE.** Mixing the two only impedes your ability to recognize the symptoms of alcohol intoxication. This type of drink can give you the impression of being totally in control when you're far from it. So people who mix energy drinks and alcohol may have to consume more alcohol to experience the desired effect. The risk of becoming severely intoxicated is magnified.

**6. It's impossible to know exactly what's in synthetic drugs found on the black market.**

**TRUE.** These drugs are produced by underground chemists. A dose might contain the desired substance in its pure state, the substance mixed with other products, or a substance altogether different from what you think you're getting. As for any drug sold on the black market, you can never be sure of what a synthetic drug is made of. They're often cut with other products or drugs that can make them very dangerous.

**7. On some gambling websites, the chances of winning are higher during the free trial periods than when you're betting with real money.**

**TRUE.** Research has shown that during free trial periods, certain sites are designed so that players have a higher chance of winning, giving them an incentive to bet using real money. However, when real money is at stake, the odds of winning go down.

**8. Driving a vehicle under the influence of cannabis poses no risk whatsoever.**

**FALSE.** Because cannabis impairs the senses and leads to poor coordination of movements and balance, driving a vehicle after smoking cannabis can cause accidents and injuries. Driving under the influence of cannabis is illegal, like it is for alcohol or other drugs. The police can detect it, and it can result in fines and legal proceedings.

**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 OF ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE.**

If you're worried about your consumption or that of a friend or loved one, or if you're experiencing difficulties at home, at school, or elsewhere in your community, talk to an adult you can trust, either at school (teacher, principal, social worker, etc.) or in your community.

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You can also call a helpline in your area or:

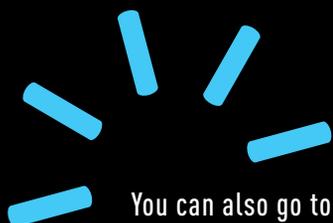
**TEL-JEUNES**  
**1-800-263-2266**  
**(OR TELJEUNES.COM)**

**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.**

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You can also go to:

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