

- You have postponed travelling with friends or family so you can spend more time drinking or using drugs.
- You have used alcohol or drugs late at night, or throughout the night, even though the following morning you were expected to be at work or school very early.
- You have used more alcohol or drugs than the quantity you were planning to use.
- You have said to yourself that you will drink or use “only that much” but you actually drank or used “quite a lot”.
- You have bought alcohol or drugs to last you for “a long time” but you used it all at once. You have bought alcohol or drugs for yourself and your friends but you have deducted “a small portion” from your friends dosage.
- You have bought alcohol or drugs for someone else but you ended up using it yourself.
- You have tried to sell alcohol or drugs but ended up using it all yourself.
- You have sworn that from now on you will only use a certain amount of alcohol or drugs but you cannot keep this promise.
- You have abused alcohol or drugs and as a result you have been sick or you were taken to Emergency Unit of a hospital, even though, you were not planning to harm yourself.
- You feel that unless you use alcohol or drugs you are unable to function properly and/or feel normal.

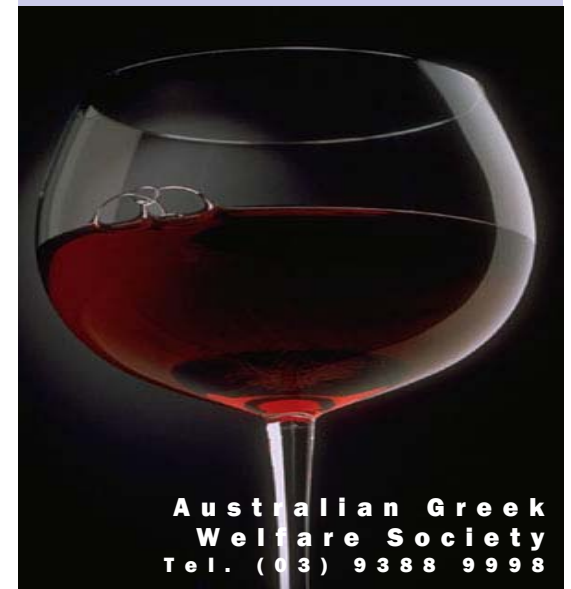
- If by reading the above, you have answered “yes” to most statements, it might mean that you are unable to stop using alcohol or drugs. This is one of the many signs of chemical dependency. You have bought alcohol or drugs for yourself and your friends but you have deducted “a small portion” from your friends dosage.
- You have bought alcohol or drugs for someone else but you ended up using it yourself.
- You have tried to sell alcohol or drugs but ended up using it all yourself.
- You have sworn that from now on you will only use a certain amount of alcohol or drugs but you cannot keep this promise.
- You have abused alcohol or drugs and as a result you have been sick or you were taken to Emergency Unit of a hospital, even though, you were not planning to harm yourself.
- You feel that unless you use alcohol or drugs you are unable to function properly and/or feel normal. **

If by reading the above, you have answered “yes” to most statements, it might mean that you are unable to stop using alcohol or drugs. This is one of the many signs of chemical dependency. There are a lot of services available in various areas which can assist you with your decision to become free of your addiction. Dealing with your dependency might not be an easy thing, but if you have the appropriate support, then you are on your way to recovery.

Bibliography: **Be Your Best”, Dr. Thomas Gordon, ****You can Free Yourself from Alcohol & Drugs”, Dr. Doug Althausser

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Alcohol & Drug Dependency & Harm Minimization



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What is Harm Minimisation?

Harm Minimisation is the philosophy that both the Commonwealth and State governments have adopted recently when it comes to drugs. Harm Minimisation acknowledges that people are likely to take risks and try new experiences including drug taking. Harm Minimisation is about alcohol, drugs (legal and illegal), their effects and risks associated with drug taking and how to reduce those risks through appropriate education and prevention strategies. Harm Minimisation is about minimizing the damage that drugs and alcohol may cause. It focuses on demand, supply and harm reduction. It also focuses on healthy alternatives to substance abuse.

Harm Minimisation says no to drugs, but at the same time acknowledges that there are thousands of people who are already chemically dependent and others who are about to experiment with drugs or have just done so. Harm Minimisation is about caring for all those people. A big part of Harm Minimisation is about safety. Safety for the drug user and the rest of the community. It acknowledges that you do not need to drink in order to have a good time, but if you do decide to drink, then you do not have to get drunk in order to have fun.

However, in case that you do get drunk, then you should have some strategies and support in place so you don't harm yourself and/or others. If harm is inevitable, then minimize it as much as possible. This is the main rationale of Harm Minimisation.

An example of Harm Minimisation is no drink and drive. However, Harm Minimisation acknowledges that at times, if the desirable outcomes are not realistic (as there will always be people who will drink and drive), then we need to have appropriate strategies in place to ensure that we minimize the harm. Thus, if you do drink and drive, then make sure that the level of alcohol in your bloodstream does not exceed .05. Through Harm Minimisation, strategies are set in place so the harm does not take place, but in the unfortunate event that it does, then it can be minimized as much as possible.

Are you chemically dependent?

Many times people drink or use various legal or illegal drugs without been dependent on them. Some people though will develop dependency and they may or may not realise it. Chemical dependency has three basic characteristics. Firstly, when you decide to use drugs or alcohol, you cannot always predict how much you will use. Secondly, you are not always able to predict exactly what will happen when you use alcohol or drugs. Thirdly, this is a permanent and not a temporary problem. *

Signs of chemical dependency.

You may be chemically dependent if:

- You spend more money on alcohol or drugs than what you have planned.
- You have put a limit on yourself (for example, only \$50 for drinks), which you have exceeded by the end of the night.
- You have exceeded your credit card limit in order to buy alcohol or drugs.

- You have used an ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) many times within the same day in order to buy alcohol or drugs.
- You have borrowed money from your colleagues, your children, low income relatives and friends or even pawn brokers, in order to buy alcohol or drugs.
- You have spent on alcohol or drugs money that was there for another reason (for example, your rent, your car's payment, your child's school fees or money that you had set aside for bills and emergencies).
- You have served your children or other family members strange meals (for example, cold cornflakes for dinner or left overs for breakfast), because you had spent all the money you had for groceries on alcohol or drugs.
- You have dedicated longer time than what you had planned on using alcohol and drugs.
- You have missed an important appointment due to your alcohol or drug use.
- You have been late to an important meeting or appointment due to your alcohol or drug use.
- You have cancelled appointments, meetings or invitations to dinners and parties due to your alcohol or drug use.
- You have put aside a promise due to your use.
- You have chosen not to attend some important family gatherings due to your alcohol or drug use.