



People often use alcohol or drugs to make themselves feel better. Addiction occurs when substances become the focus of your life. All your energy and time is spent thinking about substances. You use them because you have to and you find it takes more and more of the substance to get the same effect you received in the past.

## Using substances has many negative effects on your mind and body. These may include:

- An increase in your blood pressure and heart rate.
- An increase in depression, anxiety and irritability.
- Sleep problems.
- Impaired memory and judgement.
- Impotence.
- Permanent damage to your heart, brain, liver and kidneys.
- Psychosis, delusions and mania.
- Seizures, stroke and heart failure.

## If you feel you have a drug or alcohol problem, it is very important that you:

- Tell your doctor or nurse.
- Make a commitment to yourself to deal with the problem.
- Become informed. Read all the information you can find.
- Find a support group or person you can talk with.
- Understand how your medication works. Do not “self medicate”, talk to your doctor instead.
- Find something else to take the place of the substance.
- Give yourself time. You may struggle but keep trying. Do not give up.