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Jean Spence

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Is It Addiction?

Contributed by Jean Spence

People often want to know if their family member, student, friend, or patient is addicted. The following questions, put together by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, are designed to help people decide whether or not they have a drinking problem.

1. Do you occasionally drink heavily after disappointment, a quarrel, or when the "boss" gives you a hard time?
2. When you have trouble or feel under pressure, do you always drink more heavily than usual?
3. Have you noticed that you are able to handle more liquor than you did when you were first drinking?
4. Did you ever wake up on the morning after and discover that you could not remember part of the evening before, even though your friends tell you that you did not pass out?
5. When drinking with other people, do you try to have a few extra drinks when others will not know it?
6. Are there certain occasions when you feel uncomfortable if alcohol is not available?
7. Have you recently noticed that when you begin drinking you are in more of a hurry to get the first drink than you used to be?
8. Do you sometimes feel a little guilty about your drinking?
9. Are you secretly irritated when your family or friends discuss your drinking?
10. Have you recently noticed an increase in the frequency of your memory "blackouts"?
11. Do you often find that you wish to continue drinking after your friends say that have had enough?
12. Do you usually have a reason for the occasions when you drink heavily?
13. When you are sober, do you often regret things you have done or said while drinking?
14. Have you ever tried switching brands or following different plans for controlling your drinking?
15. Have you often failed to keep the promises you have made to yourself about controlling or cutting down on your drinking?
16. Have you ever tried to control your drinking by making a change in jobs, or moving to a new location?
17. Do you try to avoid family or close friends while you are drinking?
18. Are you having an increasing number of financial and work problems?
19. Do more people seem to be treating you unfairly without good reason?
20. Do you eat very little or irregularly when you are drinking?
21. Do you sometimes have the shakes in the morning and find that it helps to have a little drink?
22. Have you recently noticed that you cannot drink as much as you once did?
23. Do you sometimes stay drunk for several days at a time?
24. Do you sometimes feel very depressed and wonder if life is worth living?
25. Sometimes after periods of drinking, do you see or hear things that aren't there?
26. Do you get terribly frightened after you have been drinking heavily?

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence says if you answer yes to any of the above questions, you have some symptoms that may indicate alcoholism. People who answer yes to questions 1-8 are said to be in the early stages of alcoholism, which typically last from 10 to 15 years. YES answers to questions 9-21 indicates the middle stage of alcoholism, which usually lasts from 2 to 5 years. YES answers to questions 22-26 indicate the beginning of the final stage.

Alcoholism can kill. Learn more please, by contacting SAISD (Substance and Alcohol Intervention Services for the Deaf) V/TTY (585) 475-4963, or 475 4978. Email: wmdgrl@rit.edu. Website: www.rit.edu/sa/coun/saisd