



MAKING A PLAN

Going back to previous ways of behaving

It is difficult to change the way we do things – to change our behaviour. So sometimes, especially when you are trying something for the first time, you may go back to the way you previously coped with situations and you start drinking in ways that harm you and others. Sometimes people call this 'relapse' but it is better to think of it as you falling into ways of past behaviour like drinking heavily again. This may be due to perhaps something that has gone on in your life. Remember you drink for reasons.

Changing the way you deal with things can get a lot easier with time, especially if you are learning other ways to handle your stress and to have a more balanced life.

Recognise the danger signals

There may be signs that you can begin to recognise that you are falling into previous patterns of behaviour. These may be:

- Distancing yourself from other people and your support – you feel bored and lonely a lot of the time
- Getting irritated easily – relationships becoming tense
- Thinking you will never be able to sort your drinking out – there is no point carrying on
- Not working out stresses and problems at the time but letting them build up till they reach a crisis – and then drinking
- Not handling negative feelings such as boredom, loneliness or anger
- Ignoring your feelings – cravings or urges to drink
- When you are under stress you don't see any other way to cope apart from drinking

Thinking ahead

- Think about the old ways of drinking before it happens. Write your feelings down
- Work out the best way for you to handle these feelings and how you will deal with life after you have had a heavy drinking session