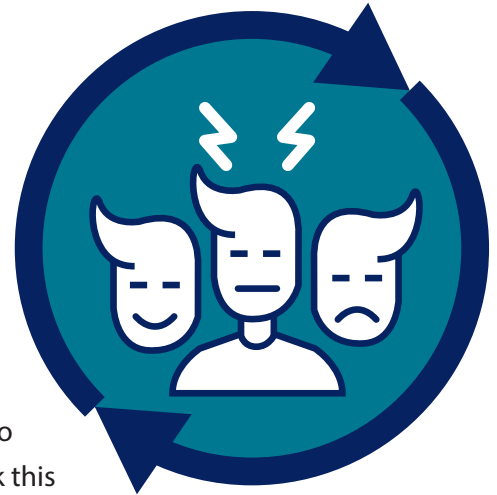


# ALCOHOL AND MOOD

Depression and anxiety are very common mental health conditions that can have a big impact on a person's life. Feelings of depression or anxiety can be overwhelming, and people need to find ways to cope with these difficult feelings. Some people drink alcohol to try to help them feel better, but for people who struggle with anxiety or depression, alcohol usually makes these feelings more intense. This can lead to a vicious cycle of feeling bad, drinking to feel better, and then feeling worse. But there are things people can do to break this cycle and start feeling better.



## WHAT'S THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ALCOHOL AND MOOD?

Alcohol causes changes in how we think, act, and feel. The more we drink, the more affected our nervous system becomes. This can change our mood in the short term: having a few drinks can make us feel more relaxed at first, but it often makes us feel worse within a few hours, and this feeling can last for days.

Also, when we regularly use alcohol to relax, it becomes harder for us to relax without it, and over time we may have to start drinking more to feel the same effect. This means we can get into a cycle of feeling bad, drinking to feel better, feeling worse, and then drinking again. Once we've gotten stuck in this cycle, it's hard to get out of it. This can be especially hard for people who suffer from depression or anxiety.

Alcohol can have other consequences too. People who drink often might find that they don't feel rested when they wake up in the morning, that they get hangovers, or that they get withdrawal symptoms (like shaking, sweating, or vomiting) if they go too long without drinking. All of these things can have a big impact on a person's overall mood.

### COLD TURKEY IS DANGEROUS!



If you experience withdrawal symptoms (like shaking, sweating, or vomiting) when you don't drink, **cold turkey (stopping drinking suddenly) can be life-threatening.**

If you plan to stop drinking, you will need some extra medical support to do it safely.

[www.metaphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pamphlet\\_AlcoholWithdrawal.pdf](http://www.metaphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pamphlet_AlcoholWithdrawal.pdf)



## WHAT SHOULD I DO?



Alcohol problems and mood or anxiety disorders are very closely connected to each other, and there are lots of ways to make a change. You may want to try reducing or stopping your alcohol use—if so, an anti-craving medication like naltrexone, acamprosate, or gabapentin might be helpful for you. There are also medications that can help depression and anxiety.

[www.metaphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pamphlet\\_AUDMedication.pdf](http://www.metaphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pamphlet_AUDMedication.pdf)



Counselling can also be really helpful for people with mood, anxiety, or alcohol use issues. A health care provider can work with you to decide what will work best for you so that you can start feeling better. If you're looking for a health care provider, a rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinic might be a good option.

<https://www.metaphi.ca/raam-clinics>

## I'D LIKE TO CHANGE MY DRINKING, BUT IT'S HARD TO COPE WITH MY MOOD

If you've been using alcohol to cope with feelings of depression or anxiety for a while, it will take time to start feeling better. If you want to start using alcohol in a less harmful way, it's important to find new ways of coping with your feelings. You can experiment with different things to see what works best for you. Here are some suggestions:



Check in with yourself. Are you **Hungry**, **Angry**, **Lonely**, or **Tired (HALT)**? Give your body what it needs, whether it's a snack, a glass of water, a nap, or some exercise or stretches.



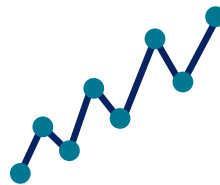
Write down your thoughts and feelings. This helps get them out of your head.



Reach out to someone you trust.



Practice deep breathing and mindfulness (focus on *right now*, on purpose, without judgment).



Remember that it can take weeks, months, or years for your mood to start getting better, and progress isn't always a straight line. Be patient and try to accept where you are today.



Be kind to yourself. Remind yourself that you'll get through this.

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

If you have any questions about the connection between mood, mental health issues, and alcohol use, ask your health care provider. You can also find more information and resources on the META:PHI website.