**Alcohol myths**

It’s time to challenge some of the most common lies about alcohol:

**Myth: Alcohol gives you energy.**
Nope. It’s a depressant. It slows down your ability to think, speak, move and all that other stuff you like to do.

**Myth: A cold shower or a cup of coffee will sober someone up.**
Not on your life. Nothing sobers you up but time. With coffee, you’re simply a wide-awake drunk!

**Myth: Alcohol makes you sexier.**
The more you drink, the less you think. Alcohol may loosen you up and make someone more interested in sex, but it interferes with the body’s ability to perform. And then there’s pregnancy, AIDS, sexual assault, car crashes and worse, to worry about. Not sexy at all.

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**Self-help stuff**

Check out the self-assessment tools on our website. These screens for a variety of problems such as depression, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and generalised anxiety. See: [http://sta.uwi.edu/caps/](http://sta.uwi.edu/caps/)

**How to contact CAPS?**

Call us: **662 2002 ext 2491**.

Email: **counsellor@sta.uwi.edu**

Or pop in and see us. We are located in the Health Service Unit (HSU), between Trinity Hall and the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

**Opening hours**

CAPS is available throughout the year, Mondays to Fridays, from 8:30am to 8pm during term-time. During vacation, we close at 4:30pm

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**Main Symptom of Alcohol Abuse**

...is continuing to drink alcohol, even when it causes recurrent problems in the person’s life, and even if it causes him/her to miss work, classes or deadlines; drive drunk (or take other big risks); shirk responsibilities; and sometimes get into trouble with the law.

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This leaflet prepared by the Counselling & Psychological Services, UWI, St Augustine.
Do you know someone who drinks a lot and you worry that he/she may be an alcoholic? Read on and discover what differentiates a drinker, even a heavy drinker, from an Alcoholic or someone who is dependent on alcohol.

Answering the following 4 questions can help you find out if you or a loved one has a drinking problem:

- Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
- Have people annoyed you by criticising your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

One "yes" answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. More than one "yes" answer means it is highly likely that a problem exists.

**Early signs and symptoms of problem drinking.**

- Needing a drink to calm nerves, forget worries, or boost a sad mood.
- Being drunk frequently.
- Feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking.
- Drinking in dangerous situations (e.g. before driving or before engaging in unwanted or unprotected sex).
- Blacking out after drinking, not remembering what happened, or how you got home.

Drastic & uncharacteristic changes in behaviour while drinking (e.g. becoming angry or violent).

Causing harm to yourself or to someone else as a result of drinking.

**An alcoholic or alcohol dependent person is likely to exhibit at least 3 of the following symptoms:**

- Consuming excessive amounts of alcohol over a longer time than intended.
- **Hiding or lying** about drinking habits.
- **Needing more & more alcohol** in order to achieve the same results.
- Spending a great deal of time getting alcohol & drinking alcohol.
- His/her control is impaired… attempts to cut-down or stop are unsuccessful.
- He/she continues to use of alcohol despite the negative impact on physical and/or psychological well-being.
- He/she suffers **withdrawal symptoms** when alcohol is stopped.

These symptoms can include: sweating, shakiness, high level of anxiety, agitation, hallucinations, convulsions and nausea.

The Counselling & Psychological Service (CAPS) offers counselling that is free and strictly confidential to all UWI students. Don’t hesitate to call us. We can help you.