



## **In The News**

Addiction specialists have said it is possible for people who are drinking heavily during COVID-19 to develop a problem they did not have before. The boredom of staying home, and the anxiety produced by the pandemic, have been attributed to possible factors that could trigger more serious drinking problems and even create new drinking problems for people who have never had issues with alcohol use previously. Addiction specialists have stated it would be unlikely for someone who has never tried alcohol before to start drinking for the first time and immediately develop an alcohol use disorder. However, the spike in heavy drinking would be seen as more of a risk in people who were already drinking. Their alcohol use may escalate.

“Harmful drinking” is defined as drinking to excess, in a way that leads to health problems. Alcohol dependency is characterized by cravings that are difficult to control and a preoccupation with alcohol that leads to continued drinking, even when a person knows it will have negative consequences in their life. Those who consume alcohol at risky levels are encouraged to seek help if they continue to drink even when it causes problems, or if their drinking begins to get in the way of everyday responsibilities like working.

During this time, people who want to reduce how much they drink instead of abstaining have gotten creative around their approach to safe drinking. Some have started measuring their drinks, refrained from buying certain types of liquor, and others have started a garden, or other hobbies, to take their mind off alcohol.

Morning Consult, a digital media and polling company, found that 16% of 2,200 respondents said they were drinking more during the pandemic, while 19% said they were drinking less. A narrow majority, 55%, said their drinking habits remained unchanged. Still, addiction specialists say they are watching carefully to see how isolation will affect drinking and drug use in general.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/health/coronavirus-alcohol-addiction.html?searchResultPosition=5>

## **Self-Care Corner**

### **Setting Boundaries During COVID-19**

The last few months of the pandemic has challenged our boundaries in new ways. As stay-at-home orders are being lifted, anxiety levels are increasing because many do not know what to expect with the “new normal” that comes along with this transition. Many are wondering how to manage making decisions on what is safe to do when it feels like we are living in a grey zone full of uncertainty around what activities are safe.

Before you can set boundaries with others around what feels safe for you, you need to know what your boundaries are. Deciding what you feel comfortable doing is a great first step. Once you know what you feel safe doing, you can communicate your limits to others. Be clear and straightforward. There is no need to apologize or justify your decision. Give yourself permission to set limits. During these stressful and uncertain times, it is especially important that we pay attention to our feelings and needs – and prioritize taking care of ourselves first.

Setting boundaries during this time can be tough, especially after months of being at home and trying to balance the eagerness your loved ones may feel around reconnecting and spending time with you. When setting boundaries here are a three tips to keep in mind:

1. Be clear about the boundaries and limits that you need to set.
2. Write them down.
3. Notice what makes it hard or prevents you from following through on your boundaries.

## **Coach-Connect**

Today we would like to highlight Kim Taylor, a Peer Recovery Coach at Sinai Hospital who supports OB/GYN patients at the hospital center and associated outpatient clinics. Kim's previous role in the Emergency Department at Sinai Hospital for 14 months prepared her for the world of Peer Recovery Coaching.



***“Without courage I cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. I can't be kind, true, merciful, generous or honest. I can only become truly accomplished at something I LOVE!!!” – Kim Taylor***

**“THE ONLY PERSON YOU ARE DESTINED TO BECOME IS THE PERSON YOU DECIDE TO BE.”**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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