

# Alcohol



camh

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

# Mental illness and addictions are 24-hour-a-day problems.

Now there's 24-hour-a-day help.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

*Visit us at:*  
Suite 3B,  
219 Dufferin Street,  
Toronto

*Walk-in:*  
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Monday – Friday

*Support Line:*  
(Available in English only.)  
3 p.m. – 9 p.m.  
Monday – Friday

*Information Line:*  
Staff-assisted calls:  
9 a.m. – 9 p.m.  
Monday – Friday

Recorded messages:  
24 hours a day,  
7 days a week

**Ontario Toll-free  
Information and  
Support Line:**

1 800 463 6273  
or  
**in Toronto,**  
416 595 6111

*Web site:*  
[www.camh.net/McLaughlin](http://www.camh.net/McLaughlin)



If you need someone to talk to about mental health or addiction problems, or just have a question, we can help.

Simply pick up the phone, your mouse or drop by our location in Toronto.

Real people with reliable answers. Totally confidential.

Sometimes knowing *who* to ask for help is hard.

Now finding *where* to ask isn't.



The R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre provides:

*Up-to-date information on mental health and addiction problems, trends, facts, programs, treatments, and prevention strategies through a toll-free Information and Support Line, a Web site, recorded messages and storefront.*

*Confidential and anonymous telephone support.*

*Our recorded messages span a wide range of topics, including:*

- *facts on mental health, alcohol and drugs*
- *information guides*
- *help for families.*

*Information about prevention, support and treatment resources in Ontario.*



There is help. There is hope.

Information is available in English and French.  
Some services are available in a variety of other languages.



Dear Readers,

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is proud to publish this series of mental health and addiction stories in photographs. It is our hope that the stories - which describe drinking, gambling, depression, drugs, and post-traumatic stress - will dispel common misconceptions about these illnesses, infuse hope that help is available and also stimulate action to secure such support.

Throughout the duration of this project, we collaborated with diverse community organizations to better understand the needs of each group. We hope that each language version provides helpful and accurate addiction and mental health information to communities that may not have had full access to such materials.

We would like to thank the many dedicated individuals, and community partners, who have given their time to assist us with the best approaches in disseminating this material for their respective communities. We also thank the Ontario Region Settlement Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which generously funded this initiative.

My colleagues and I hope that these resources help you to meet your information needs in an effective and informative manner. We expect, however, that there is room for improvement. Please do not hesitate to suggest ways of improving these materials, or strengthening access to such information, if you feel that your community might be better served. Many thanks for your kind consideration.

Akwatu Khenti  
Director, International Health  
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Telephone: 416 535-8501, Extension 6684  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Cheryl Rolin Gilman, Women's Program  
Vivian Del Valle, Addiction Treatment Program  
Rafael Iglesias, Addiction Treatment Program  
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## DEVELOPMENT

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) managed the OASIS contract. The project manager was Antoine Dérose, Project Consultant for Central East Region, and Saroj Bains was the photo-novellas' Project Co-ordinator/Consultant. For the reprint and new translations, the project manager was Akwatu Khenti, Director of International Health, and Norma Hannant was the photo-novellas' Project Co-ordinator/Consultant.

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Jean-Luc Durand, Principal, Le Collège français, to the staff and participating students.

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Supervisor – John Schellenberg  
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INSIDE THE SCHOOL -  
MAIN OFFICE

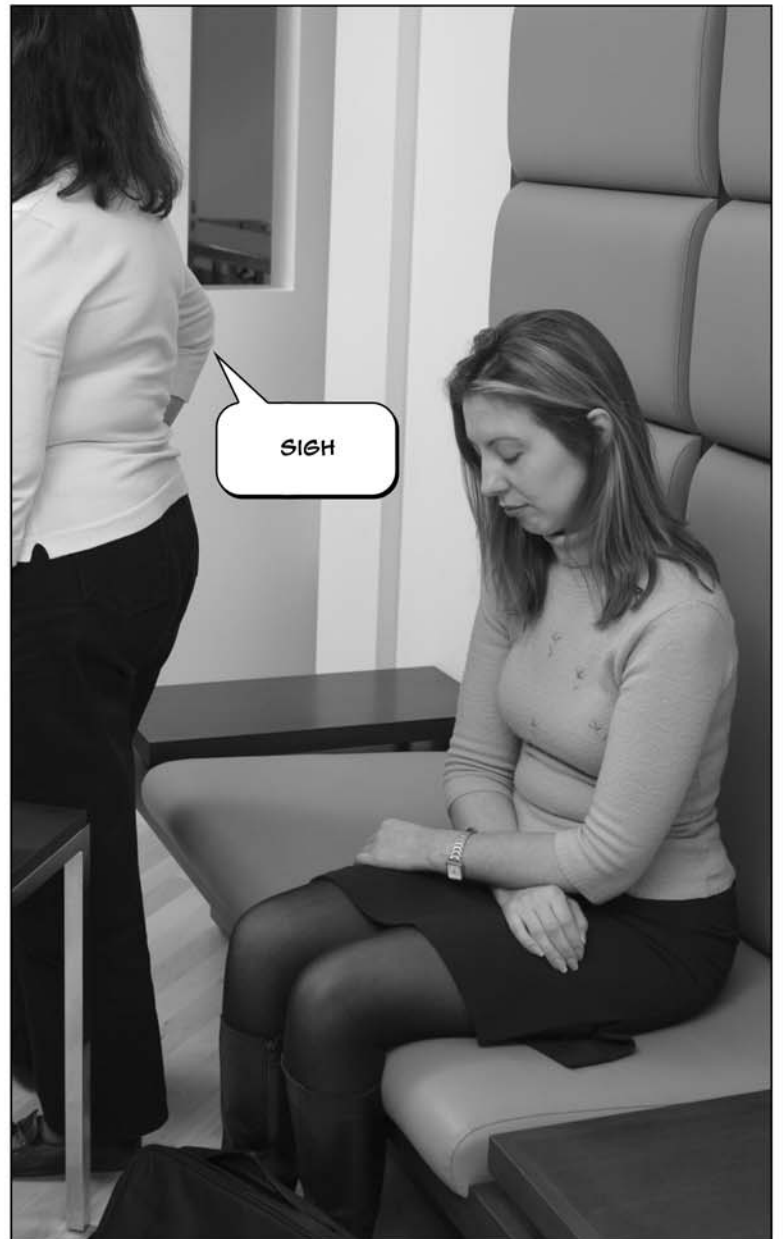


GOOD  
MORNING  
JUANITA!



IN THE STAFF ROOM.





JUANITA GRIFFITH'S CLASSROOM



TO BE OR NOT TO BE...



LOOK!



MS. GRIFFITH IS REALLY TIRED!



THE BELL RINGS. SCHOOL IS OVER



CLASS EMPTIES -  
MS. GRIFFITH IS ALONE



LATER IN THE STAFFROOM...





AT THE DINNER TABLE AT MARIA'S HOUSE

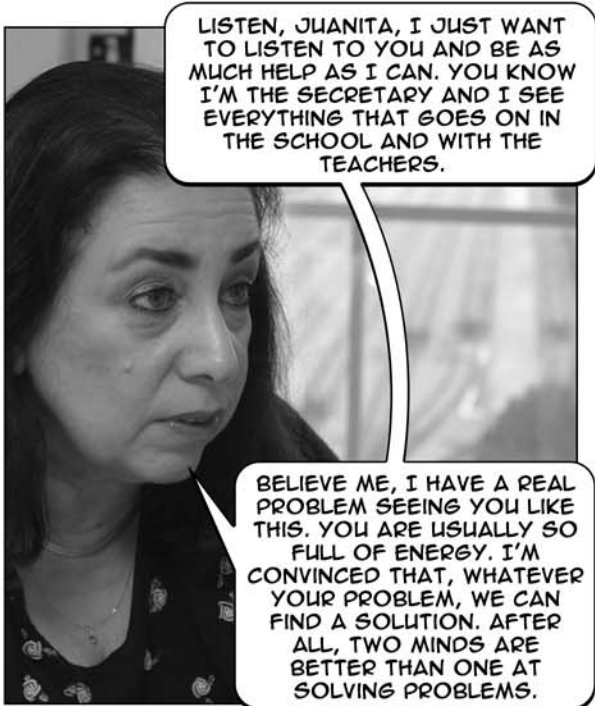


I SHOULDN'T BE HERE.



WHY NOT?

I HAVE TO GO HOME.



LISTEN, JUANITA, I JUST WANT TO LISTEN TO YOU AND BE AS MUCH HELP AS I CAN. YOU KNOW I'M THE SECRETARY AND I SEE EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THE SCHOOL AND WITH THE TEACHERS.

BELIEVE ME, I HAVE A REAL PROBLEM SEEING YOU LIKE THIS. YOU ARE USUALLY SO FULL OF ENERGY. I'M CONVINCED THAT, WHATEVER YOUR PROBLEM, WE CAN FIND A SOLUTION. AFTER ALL, TWO MINDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE AT SOLVING PROBLEMS.



I DON'T KNOW... EVERYTHING IS SO DIFFICULT AND CONFUSED... I'M NOT MYSELF RIGHT NOW, MARIA.

SO, LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING, AND YOU COULD TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG AND WHAT YOU'RE FEELING.

JUANITA UNSTEADILY TAKES A SIP OF COFFEE.

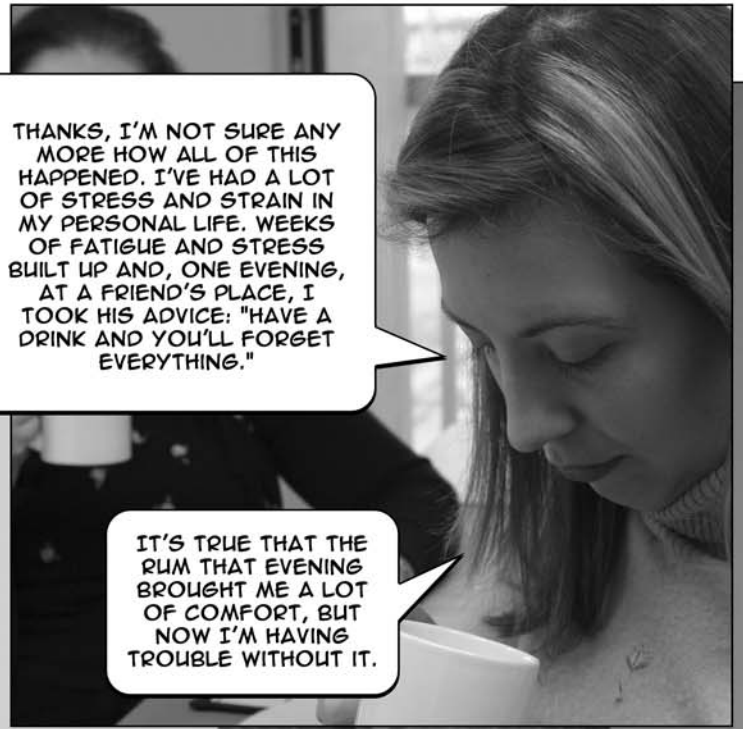


MARIA ENTERS THE KITCHEN






THANKS, I'M NOT SURE ANY MORE HOW ALL OF THIS HAPPENED. I'VE HAD A LOT OF STRESS AND STRAIN IN MY PERSONAL LIFE. WEEKS OF FATIGUE AND STRESS BUILT UP AND, ONE EVENING, AT A FRIEND'S PLACE, I TOOK HIS ADVICE: "HAVE A DRINK AND YOU'LL FORGET EVERYTHING."



IT'S TRUE THAT THE RUM THAT EVENING BROUGHT ME A LOT OF COMFORT, BUT NOW I'M HAVING TROUBLE WITHOUT IT.

ONE WEEK LATER, THIS SAME PERSON INVITED ME TO DINNER AND WE DIDN'T SKIMP ON THE COCKTAILS. WE WERE ABLE TO LAUGH AT EVERYTHING. THIS WAY, HE WAS VERY GOOD COMPANY.






MARIA, I REALIZE THAT STARTING THE DAY WITH A GIN AND TONIC IS NOT THE BEST THING TO DO. THE REPEATED MIGRAINES AT THE END OF THE DAY ARE NO JOY, BUT BELIEVE IT OR NOT, SOME WINE, WHISKEY OR RUM ALWAYS END UP MAKING ME FEEL GOOD.

AND AS LONG AS I STAY IN CONTROL OF MYSELF...



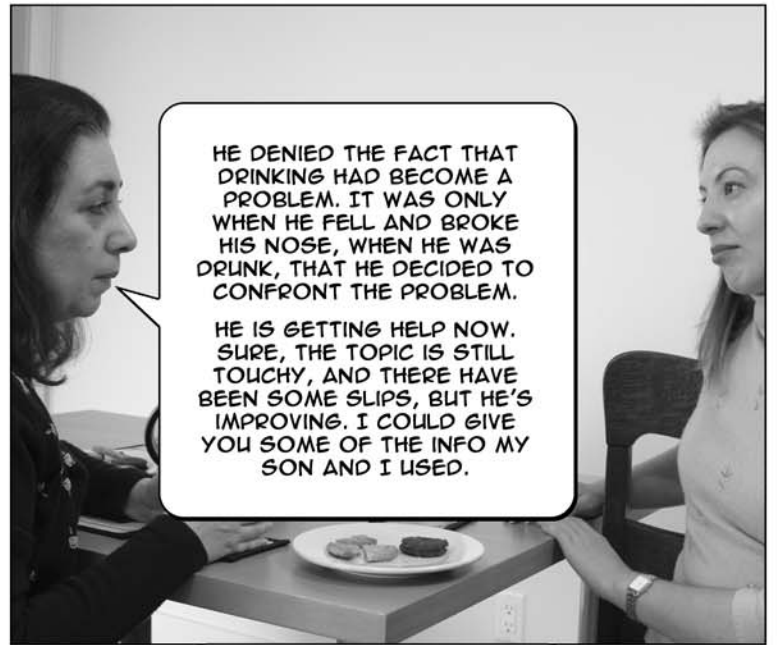
HAVE YOU TRIED TO STOP?



YES, ONCE. THAT DIDN'T WORK AT ALL.



YOU KNOW, I'M NOT A DOCTOR, BUT I HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE WITH MY SON. AN EXAM FAILURE, TROUBLE IN HIS LOVE LIFE... THERE REALLY IS NO EXCUSE FOR IT... HE JUST TOLD ME THAT HE FELT BETTER, STRONGER WITH ALCOHOL.



HE DENIED THE FACT THAT DRINKING HAD BECOME A PROBLEM. IT WAS ONLY WHEN HE FELL AND BROKE HIS NOSE, WHEN HE WAS DRUNK, THAT HE DECIDED TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEM.  
HE IS GETTING HELP NOW. SURE, THE TOPIC IS STILL TOUCHY, AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME SLIPS, BUT HE'S IMPROVING. I COULD GIVE YOU SOME OF THE INFO MY SON AND I USED.



IT'S JUST THAT I'M NOT THE SAME AGE AS YOUR SON. THINGS ARE MORE COMPLICATED WHEN YOU'RE NOT SO YOUNG.

I'M NOT SAYING THAT IT'S EASY, BUT YOU'RE ALREADY ON THE RIGHT TRACK JUST BY TALKING ABOUT IT. I'M HERE FOR YOU.



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND THE PAMPHLETS. I'M NOT MAKING ANY PROMISES, ONLY THAT I'LL READ IT.



SOUNDS GREAT!

## IS ALCOHOL A DRUG?

Alcohol is called a depressant drug, because it slows down your ability to think clearly and react on time. It does not matter whether the alcohol comes in beer, wine, or liquor. It is the amount of alcohol that you drink, not the type of drink, that affects you.

Most Canadian adults drink alcohol, spending about \$12 billion a year in retail stores, licensed restaurants, bars and taverns. And most people who choose to drink do so responsibly and safely.

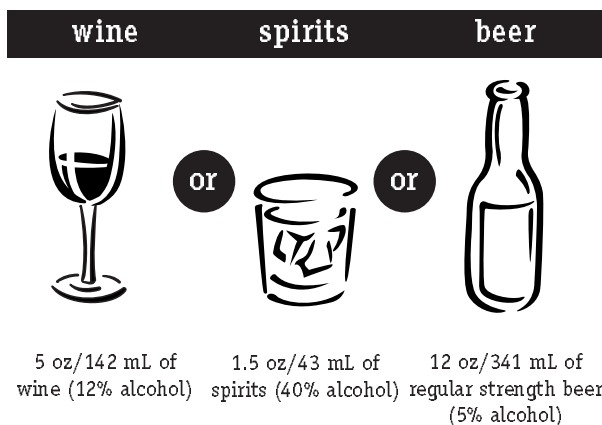
However, the abuse of alcohol cost Canadians about \$14.6 billion in 2002, mainly in increased health care, law enforcement costs and reduced productivity.

## WHAT IS LOW-RISK DRINKING?

While there is no risk-free level of drinking, healthy people who choose to drink and who are of legal drinking age can minimize the risk of alcohol-related problems – such as health and social problems, injuries and alcohol dependence – by following the Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines, which state:

- Drink no more than two standard drinks on any day.
- Limit weekly intake to 14 or fewer standard drinks for men and nine or fewer standard drinks for women.
- Drink slowly to avoid intoxication, wait at least one hour between drinks, take alcohol with food and drink non-alcoholic beverages.

**1 standard drink = 13.6 grams of alcohol =**



Higher-alcohol beers and coolers have more alcohol than one standard drink.

Some people should not use alcohol, or should drink less than indicated by the guidelines. People who are pregnant, who have certain medical conditions such as liver disease or mental illness, who have a family history of cancer or other risk factors for cancer, who are under legal or other restrictions on drinking, or who will be driving a vehicle or operating machinery, should avoid alcohol. If you belong to any of these groups or if you are concerned about how drinking may affect your health, check with your doctor.

The heart-health benefits of alcohol apply mainly to people over the age of 45. However, eating healthy, exercising and quitting smoking are better ways to improve your health than drinking.

## **WHAT IS PROBLEM DRINKING?**

Alcohol drinking becomes a problem when it gets in the way of your daily life. Drinking is a problem if you:

- drink to get drunk
- drink when you should be doing other things
- use alcohol as a way of coping
- have a change in personality when you drink, such as being too generous or getting upset.

Your drinking has become a problem if it creates problems with friends, loved ones or on the job.

## **FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD)**

Drinking during pregnancy may increase the risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth and other problems. Alcohol use during pregnancy may also cause fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). FASD (previously called FAS, fetal alcohol syndrome, and FAE, fetal alcohol effects) is the leading cause of preventable developmental delays in newborns. When a pregnant woman drinks any form of alcohol (wine, beer or spirits), the alcohol enters the developing baby's body. This alcohol affects the developing tissue and may cause permanent changes to the baby. These changes may include growth and facial abnormalities as well as permanent brain deficits. There is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, so women should be advised that it is best not to drink while pregnant.

## **WARNING SIGNS OF PROBLEM DRINKING**

Think about getting help if any of these things are happening to you, especially if they happen often, as a pattern:

- drinking more, or more often, in response to stress
- drinking more than you meant to
- being late or missing school; falling grades
- being late or missing work; performance problems
- spending too much money on alcohol
- getting into arguments or fights while drinking
- having trouble concentrating or poor memory
- having an upset stomach or stomach pain during or after drinking
- having trouble sleeping
- feeling sad, tired, low in energy
- drinking and driving.

## **WHERE TO GET HELP**

Here are some places you can contact if you or someone you know needs help for problem drinking:

Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART)

London, Ontario: (519) 439-0174

Toll-free: 1 800 565-8603

Website: [www.dart.on.ca](http://www.dart.on.ca)

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre

Toronto: 416 595-6111

Toll-free number: 1 800 463-6273

Website: [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)

Alcoholics Anonymous

Website: [www.alcoholicsanonymous.org](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org)

## **ALCOHOL INFORMATION FOR MOTHERS**

Motherisk

Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline

Toronto: 416 813-6780

Toll-free: 1 877 327-4636

Website: [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

Motherisk has information about the effects of alcohol, as well as prescription, over-the-counter and illegal drug use, during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

## **OTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

Find a Doctor Service

Toronto: 416 967-2626

General Inquiries

Toronto: 416 967-2603

Toll-free: 1 800 268-7096

Website: [www.cpso.on.ca](http://www.cpso.on.ca)

For information on addiction and mental health issues or other resources, please contact CAMH's R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre:

Ontario toll-free: 1 800 463-6273 • Toronto: 416 595-6111

To make a donation, please contact:  
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation  
Tel.: 416 979-6909 • E-mail: [foundation@camh.net](mailto:foundation@camh.net)

If you have questions, compliments or concerns about services at CAMH, please call our Client Relations Co-ordinator at:  
Tel.: 416 535-8501 ext. 2028

Website: [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)



Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

A Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization Collaborating Centre  
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