


Think Tank April 2015

Focus: Are You Aware of Your Alcohol Intake?



April is Alcohol Awareness month and so we thought we'd talk a bit about, well, *awareness*. Unlike say, fattening desserts -it's easy to increase your alcohol intake without even realizing it. Gradually eat more chocolate pie and you probably won't be able to fit into your clothing. Gradually increase the amount of alcohol you drink and you may or may not notice any bodily changes but make no mistake, it, too has an effect.

Unless you're morally objected to alcohol, not everything about it is "bad", right? We celebrate milestones with Champagne, cheer on racehorses with Mint Juleps and enjoy sitting around a campfire with friends sipping hot toddies. Moderate, responsible social drinking can be enjoyable and if the experts are right about the tannins found in red wine, even health beneficial.

But alcohol is one of those substances that are easy to "slip" into. A glass of wine with dinner can easily become two or three, especially when you find yourself under stress and looking for a quick way to relax. And the more alcohol you drink, the more it takes for you to get a "buzz", sometimes called the "creep up effect."

What's the down side of increased alcohol intake? Pragmatically speaking, there are several factors to consider, including:

- Drinking is expensive (you could use that money toward a relaxing vacation!)
- Decreased motivation

On the physical side:

- Empty alcohol calories = weight gain OR decreased appetite which can lead to insufficient nutrient intake
- Foggy thinking
- Sleep interruptions
- Less energy

And on the emotional side:

- Shame
- Guilt
- Feelings of powerlessness

And as far as relationships are concerned, since many people typically drink in the evening, they may also fall asleep on the couch and are consequently



uninvolved in the partnership or family, not to mention that under the influence of alcohol, it's much easier to say things you don't necessarily mean. If you've noticed more frequent tiffs of late with your partner, you might also consider if they happen more often when you've been drinking. Is it worth it? If your drinking has increased, there are several things you can do to get back on track:

- Take a few nights off each week from alcohol. Instead of a cocktail when you get home from work, substitute a soft drink or mineral water with lemon.
- Think portion control for alcoholic drinks just as you would for food intake. Decide in advance how many ounces you'll allow yourself and stick to it.
- If having alcohol in the house is too tempting for you, remove it and save your social drinking for actual social occasions.

Most importantly, if you believe that your alcohol intake is beyond control, it's time to take back your life. Make an appointment with a qualified addiction therapist, who will ensure you get the help that you need.



Reconnect: Schedule Time for Your Partner

Jobs, kids, commitments -we always manage to find the time we didn't think we had to do the things we have to do. But what about our partners? Are we finding time for them or are we treating them more like the television shows we've recorded on our DVR's? We know they're there, we assume they're waiting for us and we'll get to them "when we get to them." Give your partner the time he deserves. Even five minutes at the end of the day, looking into each other's eyes and really listening to what each has to say (technology off) can be a wonderful way to unwind and reconnect. Put it on your calendar.



Bibliotherapy: *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins

Rachel is a depressed mass transit commuter who takes the same meaningless journey from the suburbs to London every day. The only thing that holds her interest during the ride (aside from her canned gin and tonics that she can't seem to put down) is her obsession with a young couple she passes regularly, good-looking people who seem to have everything she wants -and everything she has lost. The story that ensues is one that's also difficult to put down, speaking to the closet voyeur in all of us. An instant #1 *New York Times* bestseller and one that's sure to be taken to film.

Time-Out: Backtalk

We often hear parents say that they aren't necessarily surprised by their kids' backtalk -they're just surprised that it started at such an early age. But it's actually quite normal. Think about it: children are independent beings who are trying to find their way in the world and we grown-ups control just about everything they do. No wonder they get frustrated and feel the need to lash out! When it comes to backtalk, there are a few simple strategies that can help the situation before it gets out of hand:



- Don't take it personally. Understand your child's need to speak up for himself and try not to engage in a "Oh yeah? I'll show you who's boss!" match with him.
- Set clear rules about what is and isn't okay to say in your family. If "I hate you" is something you won't tolerate even in the heat of the moment, communicate that and let your child know the consequences of breaking the rule.
- Cooling off periods (time outs for little ones, ten minute quiet breaks for older children) are essential when tempers flare.
- Stick to your rules. It's easier to remind children of what has already been established than it is to play traffic cop all day long.

For more insight on how these suggestions can relate specifically to your family, please contact **Laura Elpers** to schedule a parent coaching session.

Self Care Strategies: Enjoy the Bluebonnets



Spring has sprung and the great outdoors are calling our names. Getting outside daily is essential for good health and peace of mind. What better way to enjoy this beautiful weather than by seeking out the season's bounty of Bluebonnets? Thanks to higher amounts of rainfall this winter, they're predicted to be spectacular. Take a drive toward hill country and open your eyes. You'll see blue for miles. But don't wait -like most gifts from nature, this one won't last forever.

Take Two: *Deli Man*

A delightful film that centers on Ziggy Gruber, a third-generation deli owner who has built one of the finest New York-style Jewish delis in Houston. Alongside stories of other famous delis including Kat's, 2nd Avenue Deli, Nate'n Al, Carnegie, and the Stage, we get a glimpse into the role of the deli not only as a tribute to Jewish tradition and culture but also an essential part of Americana. Playing now at the Angelika Dallas.

Insights Happenings:

Addiction Recovery Aftercare Group Insights has a mixed-gender group for recovering individuals. The group provides support and skills to help with relapse prevention, thus enhancing the odds of long-term recovery. For more information, call 214.706.0508 or email thinktank@insightstherapy.com

Nourish -Insights will be starting a new mixed-gender on going group on Monday, May 11th for individuals 18 and up that struggle with eating and body image. The group will help separate food and feelings with the support of a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Registered Dietitian. The group will meet on Mondays from 6-7:30pm. For more information, call (214) 706-0508 or email



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Inner Evolution Group Coaching Inner Evolution Group Coaching is an ongoing women's group designed to enhance a women's fulfillment, harmony, and inner peace. Our mission is to empower women in their emotional and spiritual evolution through education, guidance, and support. The group will be facilitated by Amy Egan and Robin Knuuttila. To read more about this supportive and healing women's group please visit the Insights website. If you are looking for a deeper connection with yourself and other women call 214.356.7646 or email amy@innerevolutioncoaching.com to reserve your spot.

Our Time is Up: Stay tuned for our May issue...