

## **Tip Sheet: Limit Your Alcohol and Drug Consumption**

One of the most frequently tried self-care approaches in dealing with the painful feelings of PTSD is to increase use of alcohol and illicit drugs, or the use of prescription drugs in a way that is not prescribed for that individual. It is understandable that a person experiencing symptoms of PTSD would try these approaches in order to feel better temporarily, as a way of self-medicating. And while these approaches seem to help in the very short term, over the long term, they actually cause problems of their own. PTSD can lead to substance abuse problems in people who never struggled with drugs or alcohol, or it can worsen problems that already existed. It is estimated that 30 to 60 percent of people seeking treatment for substance abuse problems also have PTSD.

If you have used alcohol or drugs more frequently since your trauma, try cutting back. If cutting back increases your symptoms of PTSD, see your doctor for more effective medications to help with your symptoms or for referral to a mental health professional for counseling.