

What's to Drink?

Summer is finally here! The trees are green again and we can put on those shorts! The sights and sounds bring back fond memories of younger years and endless days spent in the sun...Ahhh life is good! Since we've been cooped up in the house all winter, this is the best time to connect with friends and family while enjoying some toasted marshmallows around a fire pit.

But what if there is Alcohol? (likely) and possibly even drugs? This is a scenario that happens daily to a lot of recovering addicts (myself included) and can make your summertime socializing very challenging. My first suggestion would be to always bring water with you. If you arrive with a beverage, a simple "No thanks, I'm fine" will do when someone offers you a drink. If you didn't bring any with you, ask the hostess for a bottle/glass of water as soon as you get there. Another suggestion would be to find a "safe" friend or person at the social event that you can be with/sit beside. This can be a friend's Mother, Grandmother, or a younger person that you have made a connection with. The idea is to speak with someone new and get to know them, ask questions about their life, and make a new friend!

You may see old friends from your past who will reminisce about the "good old days", when you drank together, and you may get swept up in that nostalgic feeling. It's ok to remember the good times, but hey! Look at where you are now! You're clean, sober, and you're on track with your life. There is no going back to the past, and why would you want to? Staying healthy and active is the name of the game now. You can go swimming, hiking, walking, and eat the fresh fruit and produce that summertime brings. Don't forget about ice-cream, it goes hand in hand with the hot weather and I don't feel guilty at all when I buy myself a cone! Treat yourself! Reward yourself for your hard work during your Recovery. You've come so far and just look at you go.

Going to regular Peer Support meetings for Mental Health / Addiction issues is one of the best ways to take care of yourself. You will be in the company of people who understand your challenges and will lift your spirits up when you are feeling down.

One of the best ways to end the day is to take a walk near a pond or river and watch nature flourishing. The baby geese are everywhere! Cherish the beauty of the outdoors that you are part of!

This article was written by Catherine Fraser, Peer Specialist at Homewood Health Centre. The "Open Mind" column is sponsored by community partners who are committed to raising awareness about mental health, reducing stigma and providing information about resources that can help. Contact ahleeley@cmhawwd.ca . For local mental health resources / information, visit www.communitytorchlight.com or call 1-844-HERE247.