



Wishing You **Healthy Moderation** this Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time for gathering with friends, family and coworkers. Often holiday celebrations involve the use of alcohol and sometimes drugs. Different cultures celebrate with different substances. Toasting with a glass of alcohol at a holiday gathering has been a long-standing tradition in America. But what happens when normal recreational substance use turns into substance abuse? The answer is different for everyone but there are some common characteristics that separate normal use from abuse.

Responsible use of a substance means that one is aware of the possible negative consequences of being under the influence and manages intake appropriately. A pattern of misuse can occur when despite the negative consequences that have occurred, one will continue to use the substance. One should ask:

- **Do I have to bring my own supply to the gathering to make sure there is enough?**
- **Has it affected my job performance or responsibilities the next day on several occasions?**
- **Do my friends and family ask me to slow down?**
- **Am I pre-partying so when I get to the gathering, I will already be under the influence?**
- **Have I been arrested or detained due to alcohol or drug use by the authorities?**
- **Has alcohol or drug use affected my close relationships?**
- **Have I argued belligerently, yelled, fought or said things under the influence I've later regretted?**
- **Have I been using more frequently to deal with emotional issues?**

If you answer "yes" to several of these questions or begin to recognize these scenarios happening more frequently, it could be an indication of substance abuse. Continuing to use recklessly, despite the consequences, could mean trouble. Alcohol and drug use are a common occurrence in many societies; whether or not they are used responsibly is the main difference between use and abuse.

If you think you may have a problem with substance use, your EAP is here for support.