Everyone wants to be liked, have lots of friends and be fun to be with. Coming to university can be daunting and many students use alcohol to help them socialise and feel relaxed. It seems to impact on pent up feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, reducing your inhibitions so you feel better.

Alcohol appears to be at the centre of student social life, and if taken in moderation it can help to relax and unwind with friends. But too much alcohol can have serious consequences eg accidents, unplanned sex, unwanted pregnancy.

This leaflet will give you more advice about alcohol and its effects.
What is 1 unit of alcohol?
1/2 pint beer, lager or cider
1 single spirit
1 (125 ml) glass wine

Recommended maximum:
Women - no more than 2-3 units per day
(maximum 14 units per week)
Men - no more than 3-4 units per day
(maximum 21 units per week)

Size and experience may have some bearing on the amount you are able to drink and remain coherent and conscious.

What happens when you drink
You gradually feel more carefree and social inhibitions become relaxed. Common reactions are talkativeness, cheerfulness, contentment, sociability. But as with any drug, the actual effects of alcohol depend very much on environment and mood. Alcohol can also release normally controlled emotions, impair your judgement and alter your perceptions.

Physical changes
Alcohol depresses your central nervous system and causes minor changes in blood circulation - increased heart rate and dilation of blood vessels in the skin. It causes sweating, can depress the temperature regulating mechanism in your brain and cause inflammation of the stomach lining.

How to tell if you have a drinking problem
• Inability to control drinking - whatever you decide beforehand, you often end up drunk.
• Using alcohol to escape problems.
• Change in personality.
• High tolerance level - drinking everyone else ‘under the table’.
• Blackouts - not remembering what happened.
• Problems at college or work as a result of drinking.
• Concern shown by family and friends about drinking.

What to do about a hangover
• This is the body’s reaction to breaking down the alcohol.
• Symptoms include headache (caused by dehydration), tiredness and upset stomach.
• Preventing dehydration will help recovery.
• Drink plenty or water or isotonic drinks.
• Replenish the body’s salt and sugar levels.
• Avoid tea and coffee - they will increase dehydration.
• Try to plan your drinking times so they will not disrupt other activities.

Remember
If you have, or suspect you have, a drinking problem there are many others like you and there is help available.

Other Useful Contacts
Counselling Service
Tel. 01484 471001
Email. counselling@hud.ac.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Kirklees Alcohol Advisory Service
Tel. 07966 306334
Email. kaas43@yahoo.co.uk