



April 11, 2021

## **April is Alcohol Awareness Month**

Excessive alcohol use is responsible for more than 95,000 deaths in the United States each year, or 261 deaths per day. These deaths shorten the lives of those who die by an average of almost 29 years, for a total of 2.8 million years of potential life lost. It is a leading cause of preventable death in the United States and cost the nation \$249 billion, Criminal Justice -\$25 billion, Collisions-\$13 billion, Healthcare-\$28 billion and Workplace productivity-\$179 billion, which is a drain on the American economy as reported in 2010. [Center of Disease and Prevention Cost of Excessive Alcohol Use on the Economy](#)

## **Understanding Alcoholism**

Alcoholism is a disease. Most people can go out, have an alcoholic beverage or two, and then stop. But for the alcoholic, they are unable to stop after one or two drinks. It is that inability to control that causes so much pain and suffering.

Drinking is a behavior that is woven into many societies and even into our professional careers. Flight attendants, for example, are used to getting to our destination, getting out of our uniform, and heading to the closest Bar. As flight attendants, having a drink or two is something we feel we deserve after tending to everyone else's needs while on the Aircraft. It really can be challenging to see when our drinking crosses the line from social or moderate drinking to problem drinking. If you consume alcohol to feel good or avoid feeling bad, your drinking could become problematic.

## **Alcoholism Factors**

Drinking problems are due to many interconnected factors. These factors include genetics, our childhood experiences, our social environment, and our emotional health. People who have a family history of alcoholism or associate with heavy drinkers are more likely to develop drinking problems. Those who suffer from a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder, are also particularly at risk because alcohol may be used to self-medicate.

Substance-abuse experts make a distinction between alcohol abuse and alcoholism (also called alcohol dependence). Unlike alcoholics, alcohol abusers have some ability to set limits on their drinking. However, their alcohol use is still self-destructive and dangerous to themselves or others.

## **Common Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse**

- **You are repeatedly neglecting your responsibilities at home or work because of your drinking.** For example: performing poorly at work, neglecting your kids, or skipping out on commitments because you were hungover.

- **You are using alcohol in situations where it's physically dangerous.** For example: drinking and driving, operating machinery while intoxicated, or mixing alcohol with prescription medication against doctor's orders.
- **You have experienced repeated legal problems on account of your drinking.** For example: getting arrested for driving under the influence or for drunk and disorderly conduct.
- **Continuing to drink even though your alcohol use is causing problems in your relationships.** For example: you consistently drink with your friends even though you know it will upset your partner. Or you repeatedly fight with your family because they dislike how you act when you drink.

## **Wings of Sobriety**

Meetings are open to all Flight Attendants who are exploring their need for or seeking recovery from substance use disorders. Meeting times are scheduled on Wednesday at 3:00 pm EST and Sunday at 5:00 pm EST. Each meeting will last between forty-five (45) minutes to one (1) hour. The conference call in number is 1-855-544-2320. Please [click here](#) to learn more.

Save the date! There will be a Flight Attendant Drug and Alcohol Conference that will be held on August 17-19, 2021 in Baltimore, MD.

Your EAP representatives are here for you should you need any assistance. Please visit our AFA website, [hawaiianafa.org/eap](http://hawaiianafa.org/eap), to find a list of all of our certified EAP representatives. This committee assists all Flight Attendants, their partners and families experiencing emotional, psychological, marital, family, alcohol, drug, legal or financial problems which are affecting their health and well-being on and off the job.

Stronger Together, Better Together,  
Kawehi, Kahea and the entire EAP committee