



The Rise Of Alcohol Use During COVID-19: An Epidemic In Plain Sight

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MHIA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

TEMPEST

PRESENTS:

**The Rise of Alcohol Use in COVID:
an Epidemic in Plain Sight**

PROPRIETARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

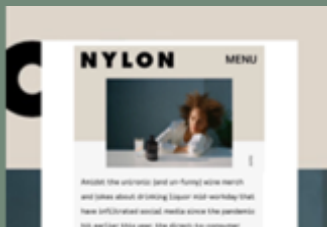
TEMPEST PROVIDES A NO-SHAME, LABELS-OPTIONAL APPROACH TO QUITTING DRINKING

InStyle **BUSINESS**

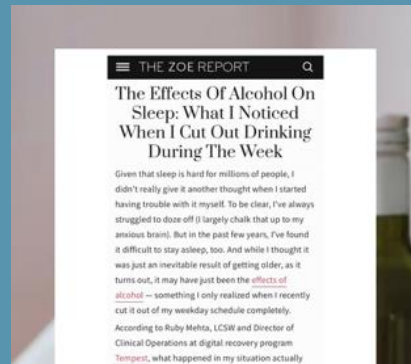
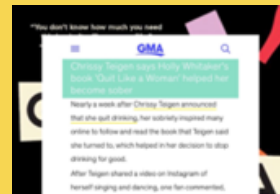
"Not only are folks without the more traditional in-person support that they were relying on in recovery, but the stress of COVID-19 and now the election is proving to be especially triggering," shares Whitney Corbin, Director of Coaching at Tempest. "With the rise of Zoom happy hours, and happy hours being deemed essential businesses, COVID-19 era drinking patterns have pivoted in a drastic way."

These changing circumstances have driven new users to Tempest at a rate they hadn't seen before the pandemic. "The challenge most often mentioned is how much folks miss an in-person community, because community is such an important piece of folks' early recovery process. People who are starting their recovery in quarantine are getting all of these societal messages through Zoom happy hours and social media posts about drinking that they should be coping with the pandemic through alcohol," says Corbin.

Chrissy Teigen says Holly Whitaker's book 'Quit Like a Woman' helped her become sober



FAST COMPANY
2021
Honoree



AGENDA

→ **What is excessive alcohol use?**

→ Root causes of excessive use

→ A holistic approach to recovery

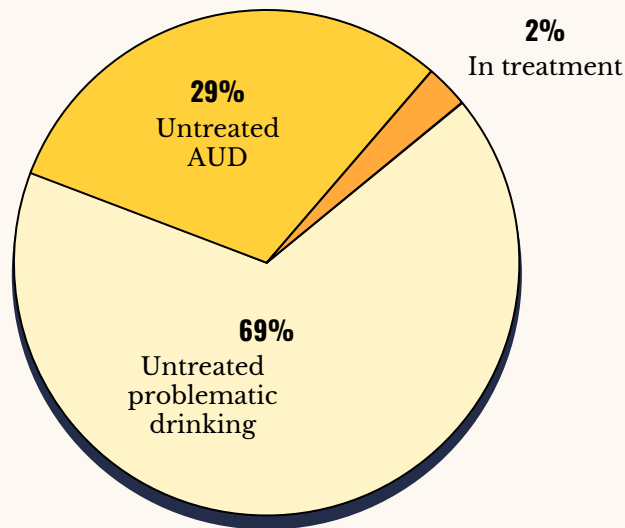
LET'S START WITH A STORY

“I woke up hungover again”
“I promised myself I wouldn’t do this again”
“I can’t remember what I said last night...”
“Did I embarrass myself?”
“How much did I spend?”
“I wonder if I have a problem with alcohol”
“If I had a problem, where could I go for help?”



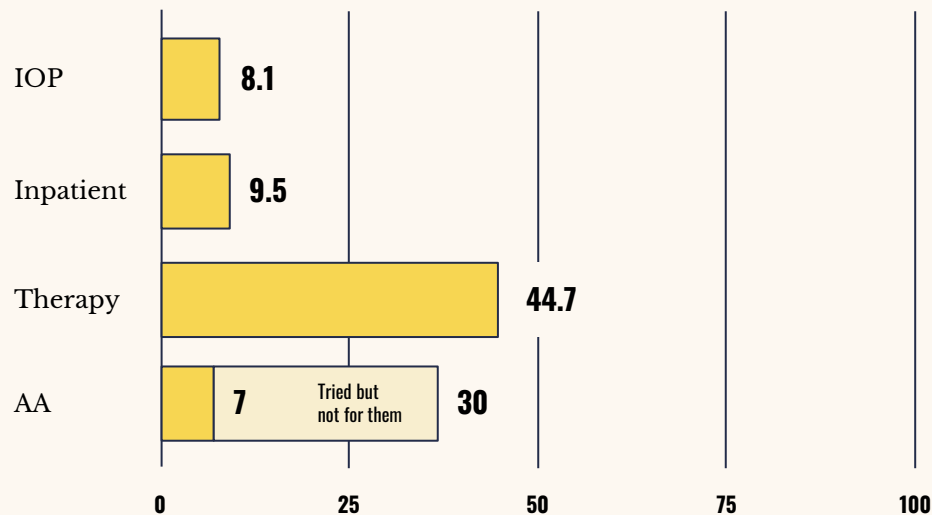
MANY PEOPLE STRUGGLE WITH EXCESSIVE DRINKING - AND DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

51M Americans meet the criteria for problematic alcohol use - and most do not get care



10 Years The average time it takes from onset of alcohol abuse to seeking any treatment, if at all

PERCENT OF TEMPEST MEMBERS WHO TRIED ADDITIONAL SERVICES



WHAT IS EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE?

Excessive alcohol use includes:

- Binge drinking (4-5 drinks on an occasion),
- Heavy drinking
- Alcohol use by pregnant women
- Alcohol use under 21.

CDC estimates that **1 in 6 US adults binge drink about once a week**, consuming an average of 7 drinks per binge.

Excessive alcohol use is responsible for about 95,000 deaths a year in the United States. Deaths due to excessive drinking account for **1 in 10 total deaths among working-age adults aged 20 to 64 years.**



EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS A CONTRIBUTOR TO CHRONIC CONDITIONS

ELEVATES THE RISK OF:

- Cardiovascular disease & high cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Breast cancer, head and neck cancer, esophageal cancer and other cancers
- Alzheimer's disease and other dementias
- Accidents, injury, & trauma
- Mortality

“Excessive alcohol consumption is the 3rd leading preventable cause of death in the United States.”

— NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM



COVID-19 HAS EXACERBATED EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE

MARCH 21, 2020

“54% Increase in national sales of alcohol compared with 1 year before”

NIELSON

SEPT 29, 2020

“Women show a 41% increase in heavy drinking over past year”

JAMA NETWORK



- People have been using alcohol as a way to cope with uncertainty, grief, isolation, disrupted routines, financial insecurity, homeschooling and all of the other stressors associated with COVID-19
- While alcohol may provide momentary relief from stress, negative feelings flood back after the initial effects of alcohol start wearing off
- People have continued to drink despite these consequences as COVID has made it more difficult to find alternative sources of relief

COVID-19 HAS EXACERBATED EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE



HOW TO TELL IF ALCOHOL MAY BE A PROBLEM?

ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

- Drinking more or longer than intended
- Tried stopping but couldn't
- Strong cravings
- Fail to meet obligations
- Cut back on other activities to drink
- Continued to drink despite consequences
- Drinking more to get the same effect
- Withdrawal symptoms

VS.

PROBLEM DRINKING

- Is alcohol interfering with the way I want to live?
- How do I feel after drinking - mentally and Physically?
- Does my drinking self align with my values?
- 9 in 10 adults who binge drink do not have a severe alcohol use disorder.

AGENDA

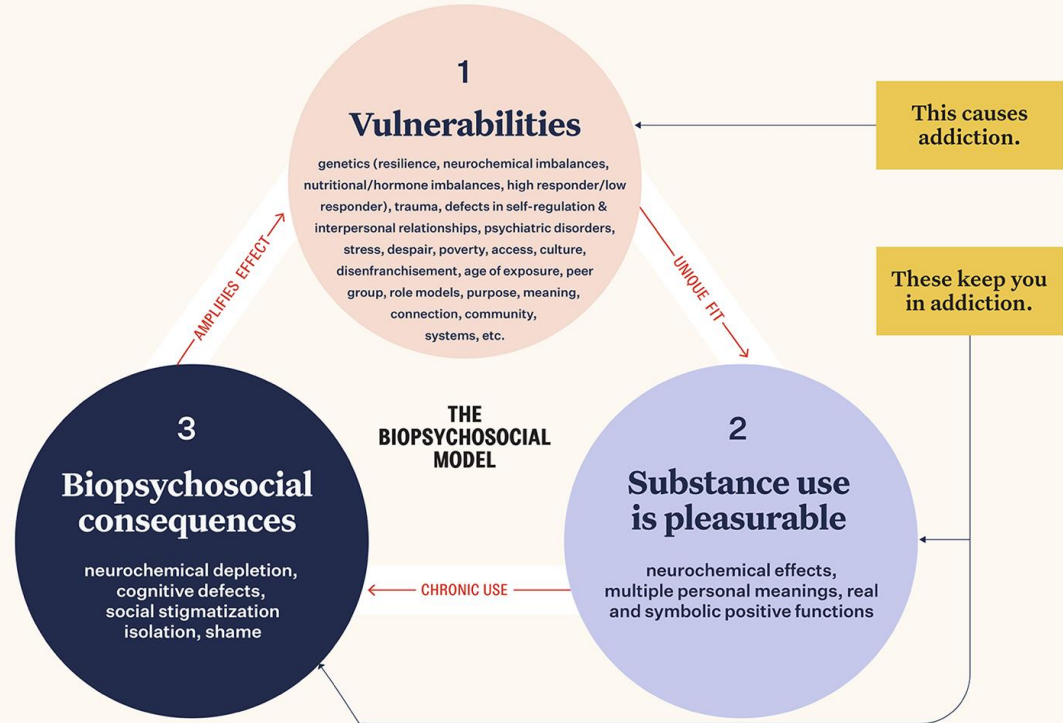
→ What is excessive alcohol use?

→ **Root causes of excessive use**

→ A holistic approach to recovery

THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION & EXCESSIVE DRINKING

- We each start with a unique set of vulnerabilities
- We reach outside ourselves to ease the pain and find a unique fit that helps us self-regulate by providing pain relief and escape in the short term
- Eventually, addictive patterning in the brain and body chemistry emerges
- The substance amplifies the original vulnerabilities and creates its own set of problems
- The substance or process becomes more important as our vulnerabilities grow and worsen



WHAT ARE VULNERABILITIES?



Vulnerabilities

Genetics (resilience, neurochemical imbalances, nutritional/hormonal imbalances, high or low responder to alcohol), trauma, deficits in self-regulation or interpersonal relationships, psychiatric disorders, stress, poverty, despair, access, culture, disenfranchisement, peer group, age of exposure, role models, connection, purpose, meaning, community, etc.

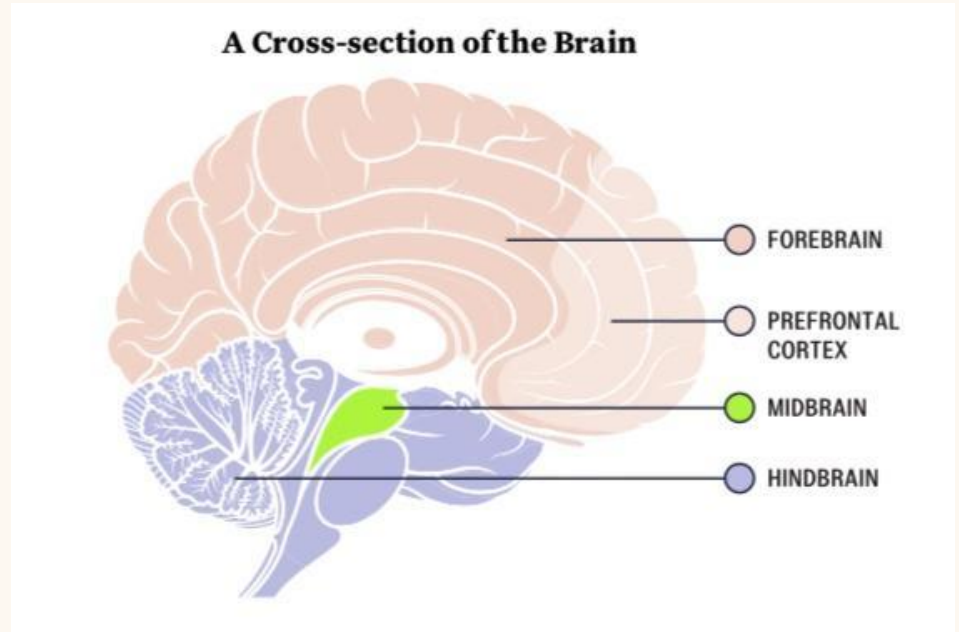
GUILT VS. SHAME

- [Shame](#) is an internalized response in which blame is placed on the self
- Guilt is not internalized and the blame is placed on the situation
- Shame has been associated with less self-regulation, while guilt has been associated with better self-regulation skills
- Those higher on shame-proneness used more alcohol and experienced more alcohol-related problems
- Part of treatment must be removing feelings of shame



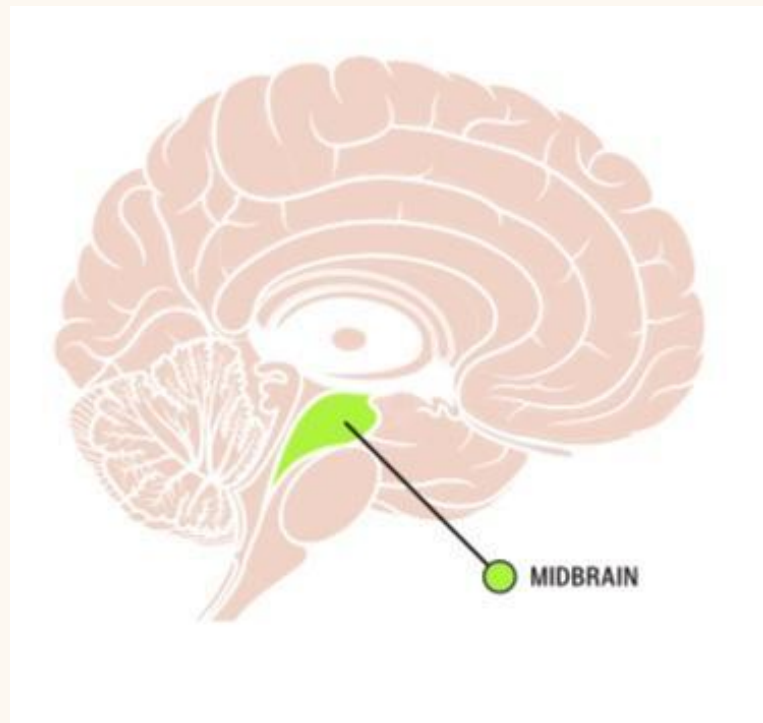
ADDICTION AND THE BRAIN

- Understanding how the brain works is key to understanding habit, motivation, will and willpower.
- Every part of the brain is affected by addiction but primarily affected are the **midbrain** and the **prefrontal cortex**



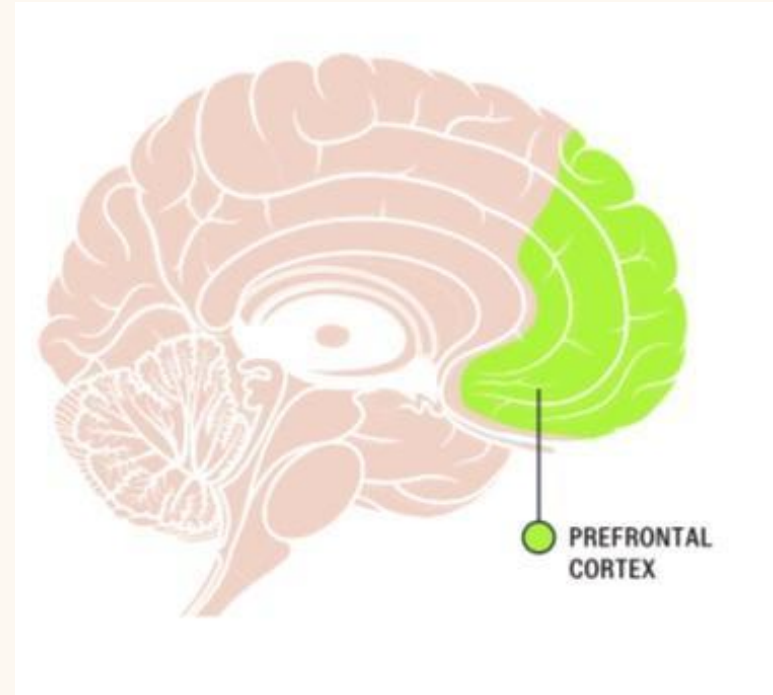
THE MIDBRAIN

- This is where addiction lives
- Responsible for our drive to survive (sex, eating, fighting)
- Home to the brain's dopamine producing “reward center”
- Normally kept in check by more evolved parts of our brain



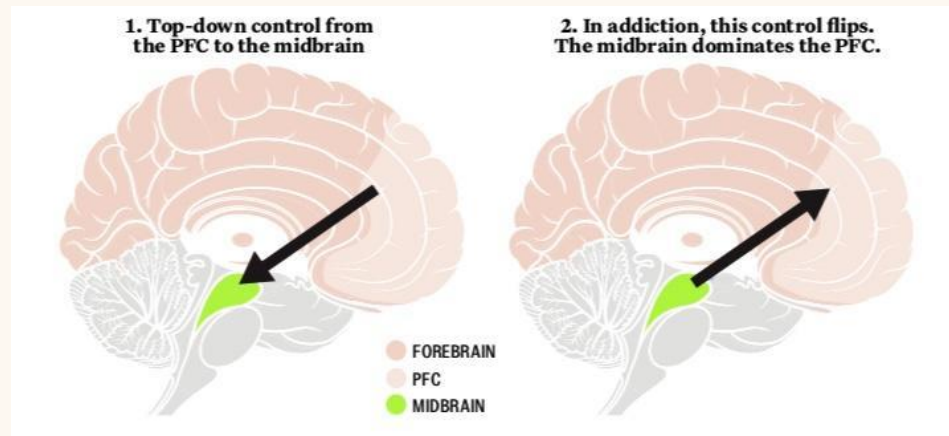
THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX

- Most evolved part of the brain
- Responsible for (among other things):
 - Evaluating the world
 - Conceiving of choice
 - Deciding positive from negative
 - Exerting **will**
 - Making judgements and **choices**



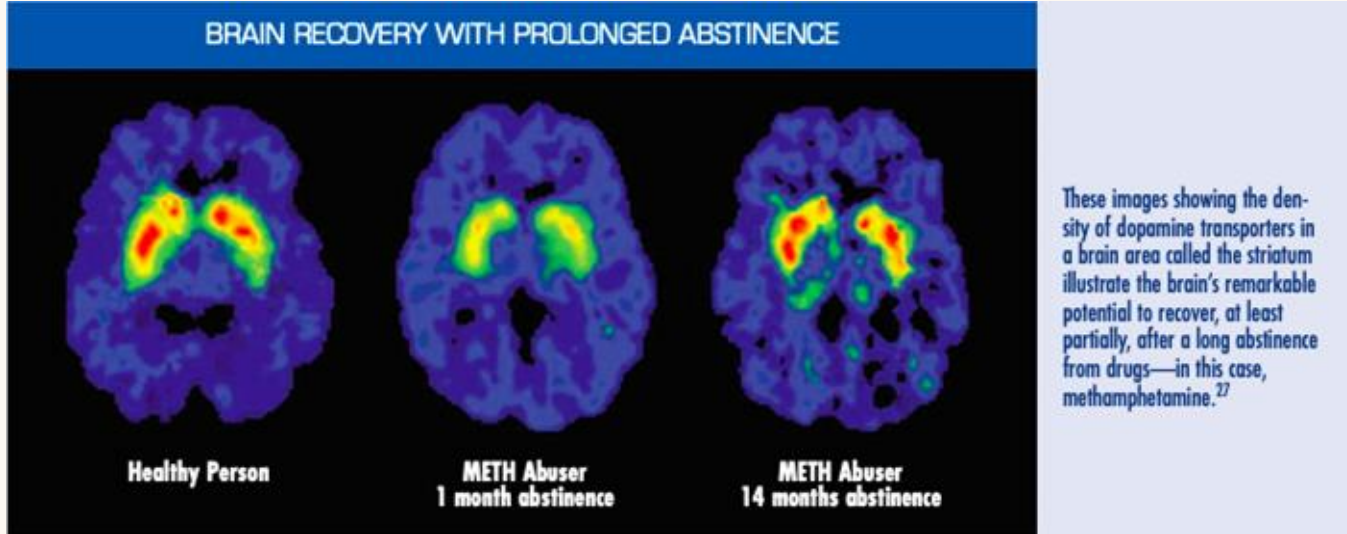
THE MIDBRAIN FLIP

- Ordinarily, the prefrontal cortex exerts top-down control over the unconscious impulses of the midbrain
- In addition:
 - The PFC is weakened and submits to the overpowering drive of the midbrain.
 - The need for the addictive substance becomes part of the survival instinct in the midbrain.



***This is why rebuilding the PFC is imperative in addiction treatment.*

NEUROPLASTICITY



The brain is able to rewire its circuitry after a period of abstinence

National Institute on Drug Abuse presentation on [Drugs, Brains, and Behavior](#), [The Science of Addiction](#)

AGENDA

→ What is excessive alcohol use?

→ Root causes of excessive use

→ **A holistic approach to recovery**

HOLISTIC RECOVERY USING THE RECOVERY MAP

Because addiction stems from all of these areas, recovery must address all of these areas

Emotional

- Inner health
- Emotions, spirituality, cognitive endeavors

Physical

- Bodily/physical health
- Nutrition, movement

Social

- Relationship health
- Setting boundaries, finding community

Environmental

- Home spaces, work spaces
- Finances, systems

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS AND THE MIND

Emotional

- Emotion regulation
- Trauma
- Anxiety
- Shame
- Negative thinking
- Lack of purpose

COVID Impact

- Increased grief and loss
- Loss of jobs, financial pressures
- Fear of illness
- 3x more anxiety and 4x more depression than in 2019

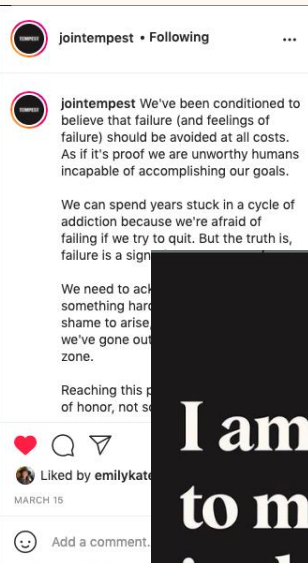


DEALING WITH EMOTIONS AND THE MIND

So, you drank again.
Now what?

- 1 Write down all of the reasons that you wanted to quit drinking in the first place.
- 2 If you drank when you didn't want to, make a list of what you've learned.
- 3 Thank yourself (out loud!) for showing up, for trying something new!

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I am kind
to myself
in this moment.

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FALSE:

If people knew how sad I am,
they will think I'm weak.

TRUE:

I am sad in this moment, and
it's okay.

OUR BODY & PHYSICAL HEALTH

Our body & physical health

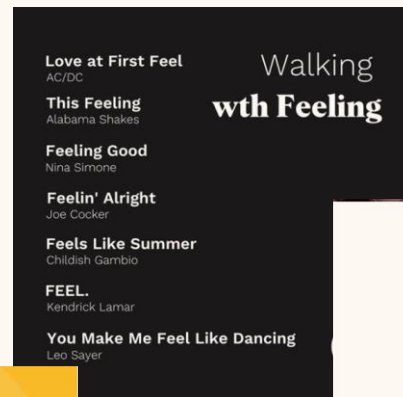
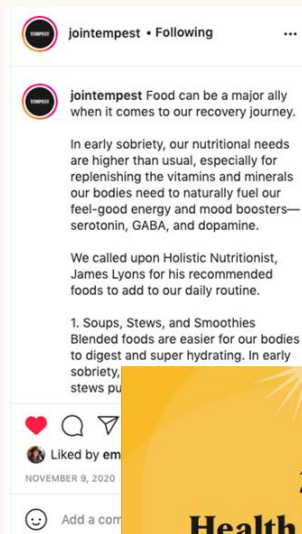
- Brain chemistry
- Nourishment
- Effects of stress
- Chronic pain

COVID Impact

- Higher stress
- Staying in the house creates less movement; gyms closed
- 55% of people exercising less during COVID
- Harder to shop for food



OUR BODY & PHYSICAL HEALTH



How to fall asleep without alcohol.

HOW IT STARTED (OLD EVENING RITUAL):
Drink a few glasses of wine before bed to come down from the day.

HOW IT'S GOING (NEW EVENING RITUAL):
Create a relaxing evening routine: take a bubble bath, drink warm tea, stretch, and light candles.

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RELATIONSHIPS

Social/Relationships

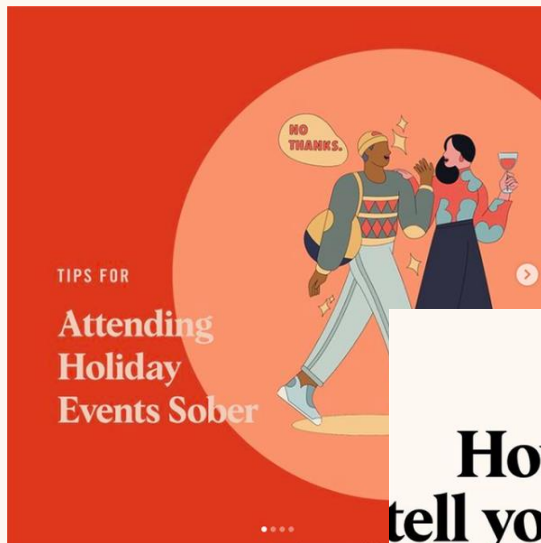
- Lack of community
- Family dysfunction
- Intimacy
- Friendships/peer group

COVID Impact

- Very limited in-person connections & recovery meetings
- Hard to meet new people
- Excess time spent with household members



RELATIONSHIPS



**How to
tell your
family & friends
you're
not drinking.**



Holidays & Setting Boundaries

BOUNDARY TIP #1

You don't owe anyone an explanation.

BOUNDARY TIP #2

You don't have to feel guilty for saying, "No."

BOUNDARY TIP #3:

It's ok if you need to leave early (or not go).

Wine-Free Ways to Practice Self-Care as a New Parent.

If you have...

5 Minutes	15 Minutes	30 Minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a cup of herbal tea• Do a 4-5-7 breathing exercise• Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do a quick stretching routine• Call a friend to check-in• Apply skincare products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to a podcast• Be creative• Read a book that makes you feel good

ENVIRONMENT

Environment

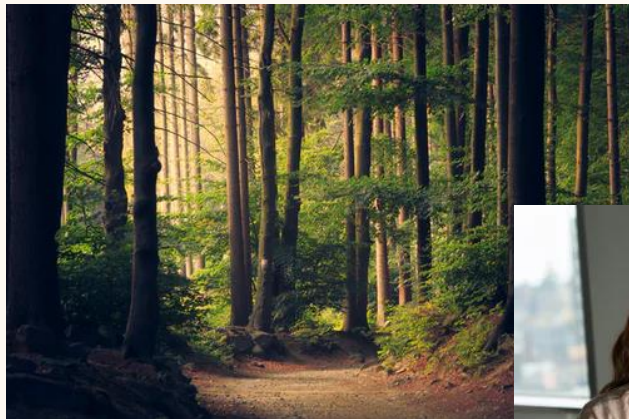
- Home environment
- Financial issues
- Systems, policies
- Work

COVID Impact

- Working from home can be distracting / easier to drink
- Home schooling stress
- Financial difficulties due to job loss, health, etc.
- Inequities surfaced by COVID, lack of healthcare



ENVIRONMENT

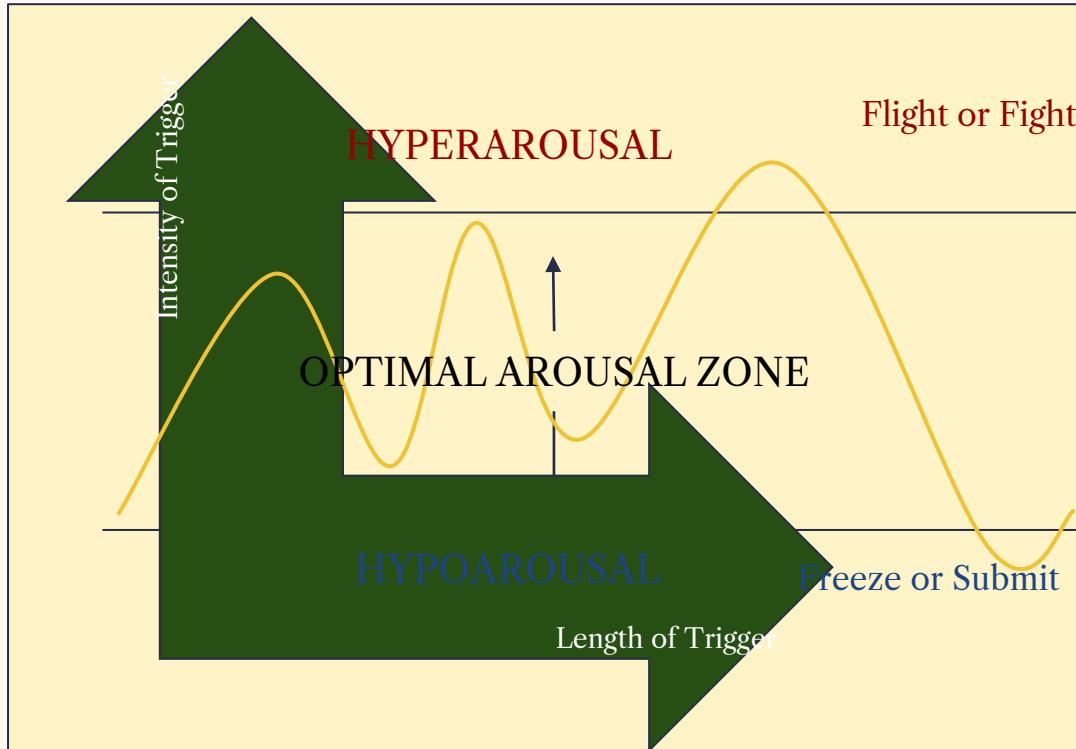


MANAGING OUR ENERGY

- Conscious mental activities (e.g. decisions, memorization, impulse control/willpower) use up metabolic resources.
- Brain capacity and willpower are finite resources and if we don't replenish these resources throughout the day, then the evenings become an incredibly difficult time to resist drinking.
- “Trying harder” is rarely the solution.



MANAGING OUR ENERGY



The limbic system takes over:
Anxiety, panic, anger,
agitation, inability to sit still,
being ungrounded

The social engagement system
is engaged: A feeling of safety
and the ability to “think
straight,” which leads to
learning and growth

Insula, amygdala & other
parts of the brain go offline:
Feeling numb, dissociating,
“giving up”

HEALTHY COPING TOOLS

- Tangible
 - Poems, readings
 - Pictures
 - Oils and scents
 - Teas or hot lemon water
 - Dark chocolate
 - Healthy snacks
 - NA drinks
 - Tarot cards
 - Books or podcasts
 - Journal
 - Written affirmations
 - Fizzy water
- Intangible
 - Playlists/music
 - Meditations/mindful moments
 - Specific breathwork practices
 - Specific yoga practices
 - Challenging negative thoughts
 - Movement
 - Memorized affirmations
 - Remembering your “why”
 - Playing the drink forward
 - Taking it slow
 - Boundaries

THE END

Thank you for joining us!

If you are interested in joining Tempest, use this coupon code to get a discount on your membership: **MHA50**

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MODERN RECOVERY

For more information, please contact Director of Clinical Strategy
Ruby Mehta, LCSW at Ruby@jointempest.com



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