



# ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE DURING COVID-19<sup>1</sup>

## THE SETTING

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, anguish and worry during and after a crisis like COVID-19.

The separation from loved ones, the loss of freedom, and the uncertainty about the state of the disease are all cause for concern. Studies show that most people in social isolation report negative psychological effects, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress, confusion, and anger. The biggest stressors include fears of becoming infected, loss of job, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial losses, and stigma.

But how we manage that stress is important since there are healthy and unhealthy ways of doing so. **Excessive use of alcohol is not a healthy way of managing stress.**

## THE FACTS

According to Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC) sales of spirits jumped by around 50% for the week ending March 21, 2020.<sup>2</sup> Distilled spirits sales soared 24.9%, bourbon sales were up 34.1% and gin sales jumped 30.1%.<sup>3</sup> Nationally, the overall increase for the week, according to Nielsen data, was a 55% spike in sales.<sup>2</sup>

A survey released on April 20, 2020, by Fishbowl Insight, found 42 percent of nearly 13,000 workers were drinking on the clock at home.<sup>4</sup>

## THE SCIENCE

In 2018, about 139.8 million Americans aged 12 or older were past month alcohol users, 67.1 million were binge drinkers in the past month, and 16.6 million were heavy drinkers.<sup>5</sup> Among Hispanics over the age of 18 in this category, 77% reported that they struggled with alcohol.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, an estimated 21.2 million people aged 12 or older needed substance use treatment. That is about 1 in 13 people who needed treatment (7.8 percent)<sup>5</sup>.

## THE SOLUTION

Here are practical tools to implement in your daily life to address symptoms of anxiety and worry in a healthy manner:

1. Establish a routine with space for leisure and exercise.
2. Keep yourself informed through official channels such as the CDC and SAMHSA and not overexpose yourself to the news about the coronavirus.
3. Keep in touch with family and friends.
4. Eat healthy.
5. Exercise.
6. Meditate, breath, practice relaxation.

If you or someone you care for is managing their COVID-19 related emotions in an unhealthy way—such as using drugs or alcohol to cope, please speak to a health care provider or use the information to the right for support. If you are a person in recovery and are having thoughts about drinking or using drugs, please call the numbers to the right or your local recovery community organization or peer support line.

Also, you can visit the following websites for more COVID - 19 and support information.

### SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll Free: 1-800-985-5990 (español e inglés)

Text in Spanish: Envíe "Háblanos" al 66746

Text in English: "TalkWithUs" al 66746

(TTY): 1-800-846-8517

English:

<http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Spanish:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-distress-helpline/espanol>

### SAMHSA's National Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP

(24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and Español)

Website:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Toll Free: 1-888-628-9454

English: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

(TTY): 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

Spanish:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol/>

English:

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

Website: <https://findtreatment.gov>

For more information about the National Hispanic and Latino Addiction Technology Transfer Center and to request Training and Technical Assistance please visit us at: <https://attcnetwork.org/centers/national-hispanic-and-latino-attc/home>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joemicallef/2020/04/04/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-upending-the-alcoholic-beverage-industry/#5681a8f94b0b>

<sup>3</sup> <https://seekingalpha.com/news/3556857-americans-stock-up-on-alcohol>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fishbowlapp.com/insights/2020/04/20/coronavirus-survey-results-42-of-employees-drinking-while-working-from-home/>

<sup>5</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>