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BY WMTS
DATE 14/2/18

Think about when you drink, why

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DO YOU come home from work and always have a drink of alcohol? Do you think about why you are having a drink, or do you just do it? Is it habit, or how you deal with what the day has brought?

What about social events and dinners – do you invite people around for dinner so it is a “legitimate” excuse to have a drink of alcohol? Would it scare you to not have a “legitimate” excuse to drink so you are constantly thinking of ways you can do so? Maybe you are not consciously doing so and are not completely aware.

The Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce is aware people drink for a range of reasons. Even though it may appear harmless, for some, alcohol can be a means of

self medicating for underlying depression, anxiety or other problems. Many may not be aware they have issues because they are using alcohol or other strategies to cope with it.

The consumption of alcohol seems to be well accepted, but is really no different to the reasons people take drugs. Many people who suffer depression or anxiety may reach for alcohol to calm their nerves or relieve them of emotional pain.

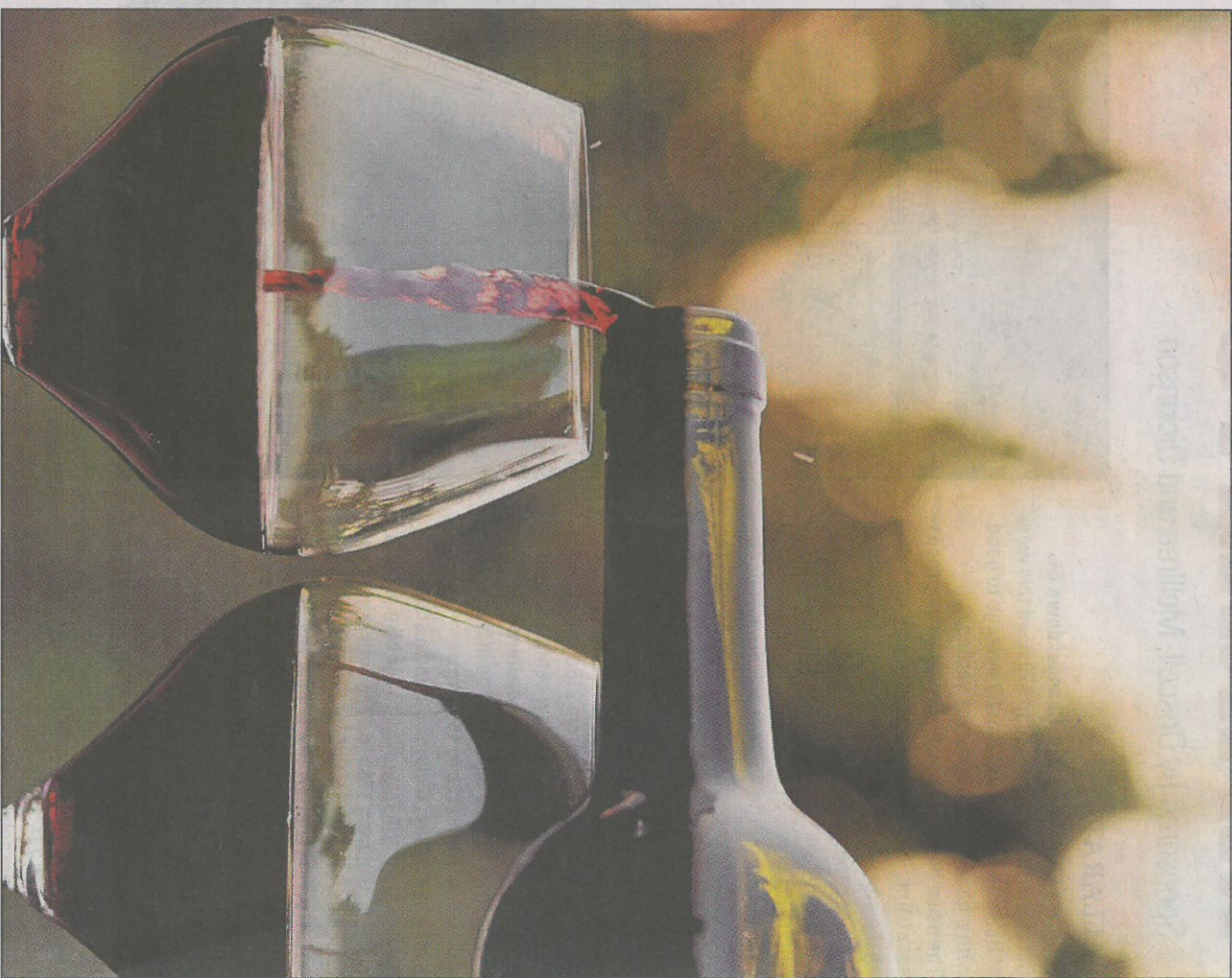
Some seek their own solution to help manage their problems rather than seeking help. This may start with having a couple of drinks to calm down in the evenings to get rid of temporary pain.

This can work fairly well for a while, but eventually complicate the issues and lead to more pain.

In self medicating, more alcohol is often consumed when pain levels are higher, therefore masking the real problem. Having a few drinks can also be a way to get more courage before facing a social event. For some, the use of alcohol such as this is fairly controlled and not too much of a problem. For a larger group, the solution slips into dependency. The more you use alcohol to cope, the less you learn to cope on your own.

Of course, not everyone who drinks has a problem. But if you find you can't go without, you may need to question the relationship you have with alcohol.

If you would like to talk to someone about alcohol or other drugs, phone Grampians Community Health on 5358 7400 or Wimmera Uniting Care on 5362 4000.



CONCERN: Alcohol is often used to self medicate for underlying problems. But the more someone does this, the greater the chance they slip into dependency.