Many students rely on alcohol or other drugs to help them have fun in social situations. However, researchers (Lewis, B. & O’Neill, H.) have found that “[p]roblem drinkers reported experiencing social anxiety, shyness, and lower self-esteem to a greater extent than non-problem drinkers.”


In fact, drinking to have a good time only makes social discomfort problems worse.

**HERE ARE FOUR WAYS TO FOCUS ON BEING YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE OUT FOR A GOOD TIME, WITHOUT **DEPENDING** ON THE USE OF ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS:**

1. **Set Goals**
   - What do you want to get out of the social situation?
   - Is it an opportunity to:
     - Relax by listening to music, dancing or engaging in conversation?
     - Hang out with friends you know well?
     - Make new friends or strengthen relationships that are just starting to develop?
     - Find someone with whom to start a dating, romantic, or sexual relationship?
     - Enjoy the company of other people?
     - Have one or two drinks but not get drunk?
   - How will you reach your goals?
   - Establish concrete, measurable objectives:
     - *I will make eye contact with everyone with whom I speak.*
     - *Start a conversation with three people I don’t know well.*
     - *Remember the names of everyone I meet.*
     - *Get to know one personal fact about everyone with whom I speak.*

2. **Be Assertive**
   - Determine your limits beforehand so you can be sure of yourself in the moment.
   - Practice refusal skills for situations that are beyond what you want at the time.

3. **Address Disappointment**
   - Everyone experiences rejection and disappointment once in a while.
   - Before you go out, decide how you will react to a disappointment:
     - Smile and keep going
     - Take a deep breath and continue the conversation
     - Count to ten and/or walk away
     - Give yourself a moment to think about it and then move on
     - Leave the situation completely

4. **Enjoy!**
   - Create memories, not regrets.

Check these out for more info:
- [http://www.emory.edu/UHS/H_Edhome.htm](http://www.emory.edu/UHS/H_Edhome.htm)
- [http://www.emory.edu/UHS/MentalHealthandWellnessResources.htm](http://www.emory.edu/UHS/MentalHealthandWellnessResources.htm)