When You’re Feeling Pressured to Drink

[The following discussion materials were developed by Texas Women’s University. We thank TWU for creating and sharing their excellent resource]

In this society, we encounter a lot of social pressure to drink. At times you will find yourself in situations where people are drinking in front of you and you are feeling tempted to join them. In some situations, you want to fit in and get along with people and it seems like not drinking would make you the odd man out. At these times you must "Dare to be different." Here are some things you can do to help you through these situations:

A. **Get out of the situation:**
   1. Drive home, or call a taxi.
   2. Call someone to pick you up.
   3. Ask someone to take you home.

B. **Let people know you don’t drink, or ask for support:**
   1. "Thanks, but I never touch the stuff--I’m allergic to it."
   2. "No thanks, I don’t drink beer anymore--I don't like how it makes me feel."
   3. Tell a friend privately that you’re trying to keep from drinking; ask him to stick with you to help you resist the temptation, or just be aware that he is watching to see how well you handle it.

C. **Distract yourself from looking at or thinking about the alcoholic drinks:**
   1. Eat or drink something sweet.
   2. Keep a glass of something in your hand--coke, coffee, etc.
   3. Keep busy--get involved in the talk, move around, dance, play pool.
   4. Get interested in someone else; get your mind off yourself.
   5. If at a private party, offer to help the host or hostess-- but DON’T help with serving drinks!
   6. Go to the restroom or somewhere quiet and take a few minutes to go through the relaxation exercise until you feel relaxed and calm.

D. **Tell yourself things that will help you decide not to drink:**
   1. Count up all the good things you have because of your sobriety--your self--respect, the respect of family and
friends, your family itself, your job, etc., tell yourself, "I can have these, or I can drink."
2. Remember your last drunk or last sobering up.
3. Look at the alcohol, imagine a skull and crossbones, and tell yourself, "That's a deadly poison--to me, anyway."
4. Remember that drinking puts you at a disadvantage in dealing with others.
5. Remind yourself of other alcoholics who started drinking after being sober, what happened to them.
6. Remind yourself that it's easier to stay sober than to have to try to get sober again.
7. Decide not to drink just this one day--remind yourself that ANYONE can stay sober again.
8. Remind yourself that most people don't really care whether you have a drink or not.
9. Dare to be different--tell yourself, "I don't have to be like other people; in fact, there are all kinds of people. I am my own man, and I can choose to be the kind of person I want to be. I have a lot of good things going for me, and if someone doesn't like me the way I am, that's his loss."