



**Changing Your Drinking**

*This process is called Decisional Balancing. We do it all the time: weighing the pros and cons of change. For example, people weigh the pros and cons of making changes in their jobs or relationships. Making decisions about whether to use or not use alcohol, and how much, is the same as making decisions about other areas of your life.*

**THINKING ABOUT YOUR DRINKING**

*In thinking about your drinking ask yourself: What do I stand to lose (and gain) by continuing my current drinking pattern? What role does alcohol play in my life? At some point, you may have received real benefits from your problem drinking — relaxation, fun, stress reduction. However, since you are now reading this, you are reconsidering these benefits and focusing on the costs of your behavior.*

**DECISION TO CHANGE EXERCISE**

*One of the things that can help you clarify your thoughts about your drinking use is to list all the benefits and costs of changing or continuing your current pattern of drinking use. Look at the example below, and it will help you complete your own Decision to Change Exercise.*

**REMEMBER:**

*It's your decision to change! You are the one who must decide what it will take for you to tip the scale in favor of change.*

**Example of a DECISION TO CHANGE EXERCISE**

	Changing	Not Changing
<b>Benefits of:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased control over my life</li> <li>• Support from family and friends</li> <li>• Decreased job problems</li> <li>• Improved health &amp; finances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More relaxed</li> <li>• More fun at parties</li> <li>• Don't have to think about my problems</li> </ul>
<b>Costs of:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stress/anxiety</li> <li>• Feel more depressed</li> <li>• Increased boredom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disapproval from friends/family</li> <li>• Money problems</li> <li>• Damage close relationships</li> <li>• Increased health risks</li> </ul>

Changing

Not Changing

Benefits of:

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Costs of:

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*Now that you have filled in the costs and benefits of your current drinking take a few minutes to compare the benefits to the costs.*

**Are the costs worth it?**

*In thinking about what is involved in your decision to change your drinking, you can use the last page of this pamphlet to list the most important reasons why you want to change your drinking.*

