

Stage One is "learning the mood swing." All persons who have experimented with alcohol quickly learn what happens to them psychologically and physically when they drink. For example, one person may become physically sick when he or she drinks and never drinks again. Another person may feel relaxed and inhibition-free.

Stage Two is "seeking the mood swing." At Stage Two, a person is not necessarily classified an alcoholic, but he or she is approaching problem drinking. In this stage the person has learned the effect of alcohol and deliberately seeks it out. He or she has learned that by altering the dose he or she can (to some degree) control his or her mood swing.

Stage Three is "harmful dependence." Johnson says that between the second and third stage, the drinker has crossed a fine line because alcohol no longer produces only good effects. There are some negative results (e.g., blackouts, absence from work or school) mixed in with the good feelings. Nevertheless, the drinker has made the decision to take the bad with the good, for fear of giving up the good completely. The drinker begins to shift values and priorities to accommodate his or her drinking; he or she now needs alcohol just to be comfortable.

Stage Four is "drinking to feel normal." The drinker is now dependent on alcohol to feel average; the alcohol-dependent person needs alcohol to function regularly: to do things required in the day like go to school or work, and participate in social activities. In this stage the person is uncomfortable in settings where he or she cannot drink.

Another way to define alcohol dependence is by symptoms or behaviors. The American Psychiatric Association lists nine common symptoms of alcohol dependence as part of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition*, the standard checklist for diagnoses of alcohol abuse and dependence. The nine symptoms are listed on page 26 of the Participant Book. A diagnosis of alcohol dependence is made when three of the symptoms are present for a period of at least one month. (Read and explain the nine symptoms as listed in the Participant Book.)

To summarize the "wide spectrum" of alcohol dependence, note that (write on the board)
Alcoholics are people who:

- are both psychologically and physically dependent on alcohol.
- cannot keep from drinking.
- cannot stop drinking once they have started.