

## **Working with Women on Alcohol Prevention**

In many societies worldwide it has been found that the percentage of women who habitually use alcohol tends to be lower than that of men. Yet, when considering the percentage of those who generally fall victim to the adverse effects of alcohol, it can be observed that the number of women affected is significantly higher than that of men. Women frequently become the victims of alcohol related violence and crimes and the perpetrators more often than not escape blame under the excuse of being intoxicated at the time of the crime or act of violence. Often, especially among low-income households, a sizable amount of the family income is spent on the use of alcohol. This is a significant drain on valuable resources that could otherwise be used to obtain essential family needs such as food, clothing, education and medicines as a result of which women are compelled to shoulder additional family responsibilities to meet the needs of their families. It has also been found that women have often been the target of several promotional campaigns carried out by the alcohol industry.

Many women however, continue to inadvertently contribute to the spread of alcohol use due to the lack of awareness. Therefore, by creating awareness on alcohol use and its consequences among women, it is possible to enable them to avoid supporting and actively contribute to preventing the use of alcohol in their families and communities. As discussed in this chapter, women, in their various roles, could greatly contribute to the prevention of alcohol use. At community level, women could conduct discussions with their friends and neighbors on the ways in which the attractiveness of alcohol as well as its use could be reduced and completely eradicated. The following sections describe how women could integrate alcohol and drug prevention activities into the activities of the women's clubs and other community based organizations. Additionally, women could act as a pressure group to lobby for effective policies with the local politicians and social groups, and advocate for effective national policies for reduction of the problems related to alcohol.

When conducting alcohol prevention activities with users, it should be borne in mind that though most alcohol users, even those who once consumed alcohol regularly, may not face any difficulty in abandoning alcohol use once they realize that they only lose rather than gain from their use of alcohol, heavy alcohol users may face severe withdrawal symptoms should they attempt to abandon their use of alcohol suddenly. The initial process of abandoning alcohol use should then take place gradually over a period of time, typically a period of about two weeks. During this process, women can provide continuous and much needed support.

## **Working with Women**

### **Identifying Women's Groups**

When initiating the community level alcohol prevention programme, a very effective strategy is to work through the various associations and organizations existing within the community. A close inspection at the very outset of the programme would reveal that there are places where women of the community typically gather as a group or that the women are already members of various associations and organizations, some of which are more active than others. For example, women often tend to gather in groups at places of worship, pre-schools, cookery, sewing and art classes, book clubs, and other charity and social welfare organizations. Women may form associations at their places of work and education and there may also be community based organizations that focus specifically on women. When initiating prevention work with women, it is necessary to begin by identifying the women's groups and organizations already existing within the community and working through them to introduce community level alcohol prevention activities. It would then be possible to gradually integrate alcohol prevention activities into the regular activities of the women's groups, associations, and organizations. Here, it is also useful to note the external actors working with women's groups, for example family and public health workers, and get their involvement in conducting prevention programmes through women's groups as well.

Before beginning work with the selected women's groups and organizations, it is first necessary to become oriented with their functions as well as their vision, mission, and objectives. This can be done by regularly participating at their meetings. Once this has been done, steps should be taken to make the women aware of alcohol use and the related problems and how their group/organization could benefit from participating in the alcohol prevention programme. Next, women's groups/organizations could be enlightened on how women inadvertently contribute towards the promotion of alcohol and drug use. It is expected that once made aware of the ways in which women contribute to and are able to take action against alcohol use and the benefits of preventing it, more women's groups and organizations will be motivated to participate in alcohol prevention activities.

### **Creating Awareness among Women**

Spreading awareness among women involves training them to question certain factors surrounding alcohol and alcohol use that are otherwise taken for granted as "normal". Once the women's groups (including associations and organizations) within the community have been identified, the next step is to select those groups through which prevention activities could be conducted. The selected groups should be made aware of the ways in which women unwittingly contribute to building its attractive image by contributing to accept its use as a normal, pleasurable, and dignified act. One way in which this happens is by accepting the claims of users that alcohol increases the level of happiness and enjoyment at special occasions such as parties, weddings, and excursions.

The selected women's groups, and through them, other women in the community, must be made aware that these occasions are equally exciting to users and non-users alike, that in fact, latter may enjoy such occasions more than the former as their happiness is not restricted due to the discomfort caused by alcohol. It is also necessary to make women aware that once they are trained to question alcohol, they would be able to identify facts such as this that would otherwise slip by unnoticed. During discussions with women, the question should be raised as to why it is usually men, not women, who generally claim that alcohol is a necessity at gatherings with friends and colleagues. This strategy is particularly applicable to those communities in which the majority of the non-users are women.

### **Understanding the Ways in Which Women Encourage Alcohol Use**

Before undertaking any alcohol prevention activities, it is necessary that the members of the selected women's groups understand the ways in which women inadvertently encourage the use of alcohol, especially within their homes.

1. Statements that justify alcohol use based on perceptions, especially pertaining to gender.

Women often encourage alcohol use by making statements implying that substances, especially alcohol, make men to be more sociable, hospitable and manly, for example:

- "If a man drinks a little does it matter?"
- "Is it OK to refrain from serving alcohol or cigarettes to a visitor?"
- "Is it proper not to serve liquor at our son's wedding?"

Women may also encourage substance use by arranging a separate area in their homes when organizing parties where the men could drink undisturbed and by preparing the savory snacks (bites) that help to cover up the unpleasantness of the alcohol. By doing these, women not only facilitate drinking but also endorse its social acceptance.

Developing a proper understanding of these subtle ways in which alcohol use is promoted, is effective in enabling women to identify the basic starting points from which they could begin alcohol prevention activities in their homes.

2. The pardoning and sanctioning of alcohol induced misbehavior

In most cases of violent and abusive behaviour following the use of alcohol, it may be observed that women tend to pardon or tolerate the behaviour rather than question it, thereby further

endorsing alcohol induced misbehavior. Most often this permissiveness is the result of women being under the false impression that the men who engage in such misbehaviour are not under the right mind and lack volitional control over their actions. Women who make statements such as those shown below inadvertently promote not only the use of alcohol and but also the misbehavior associated with it:

- “Men don’t know what they say and do when they are drunk.”
- “Take no notice as he has crossed his limits.”
- “Who take drunkards seriously?”
- “I will not fight you back because you are drunk.”
- “He is like a devil when he is drunk.”
- “I must explain things to him when he is sober.”

Despite statements such as these, it has been found that people who misbehave following the use of alcohol are in fact conscious and very much in control of their actions. It is due to this reason that a man who behaves abusively with his family or other “ordinary/weaker people” would become “sober” the moment he encounters somebody who is physically stronger, or more powerful than himself, for example a police officer.

Alcohol users take advantage of the erroneous social beliefs surrounding alcohol and become abusive, often resorting to the harassment of others, usually their wives and children. On the other hand, in an environment where such misbehaviours are not pardoned or sanctioned, it may be observed that the frequency and the intensity of alcohol induced misbehaviour are minimal. Therefore, women need to clarify such statements as those shown above, and rectify their consequences.

### 3. Unquestioningly accepting the common misconceptions of alcohol

A common misconceptions of alcohol is that it enables users to forget problems, relax and sleep, and ease bowel movement. Some even use alcohol as medication. By accepting these views not only do women facilitate the proliferation of alcohol use, they also tend to sympathize with the users. As a result women would sympathetically make statements such as, “Oh, that man has to drink to forget his problems” or “He takes a small drink because he is very tired from working so hard”. These sympathetic comments further entrench the misconceptions surrounding alcohol use in the minds of the people.

## **Training Women in Alcohol prevention**

Once the ways in which women contribute to alcohol use have been identified, it is possible proceed in creating awareness on how women could take action to discourage and prevent alcohol use. One of the major steps in this regard is to counteract alcohol related misconceptions. Starting with the selected

women's groups selected for the alcohol prevention programme, training should be given in questioning the basis of these misconceptions thoroughly. Members of the women's groups must probe into each misconception deeply and examine it in detail. This could be done for example by raising the question as to why alcohol users remember to take revenge for old disputes if alcohol enables them to forget problems. Another good starting point for questioning the misconceptions surrounding alcohol is by questioning the use of alcohol for the purpose of relaxation. Members of the women's group must be made aware that all individuals feel relieved when taking intervals during hard work whether or not they use alcohol. This feeling of relief is because the intermission enables workers to relax and distract themselves from the monotony of the work. Rather than provide relief, what alcohol actually does is to increase the fatigue experienced by the user as the body has to work harder to remove the toxic metabolic substances that alcohol produces once it is ingested. This process further reduces physical capacities of alcohol users. Once they are fully trained and are well aware of the actual nature of alcohol and its effects, the women's group can educate other members of the community, especially women, on the misconceptions of alcohol, repeating with them, the process of questioning and analyzing.

Apart from alcohol related misconceptions, another area that could be questioned is the general acceptance of the multifaceted consequences of alcohol use. Women could be trained to question how it is possible for the same substance (alcohol), to produce two completely opposite effects in the same person on different occasions. They could, for example, raise questions as to:

- a) How some people use alcohol to fall asleep while others use it to stay awake or even by the same person at different times for these two very different purposes;
- b) How it is possible for some to be involved active tasks such as dancing a few drinking alcohol while others feel relaxed and stay calm or become lethargic after drinking the same amount of alcohol, or how the same person may react to alcohol in both these ways at different times;
- c) Why some use alcohol to forget their problems while others use alcohol to revive their memories, even those of forgotten rivalries, or why the same person may use alcohol at different times either to remember or to forget.

In addition to those, women could also raise the question as to how non-users are able to face their problems, overcome fatigue, and fall asleep all without alcohol. By doing so, they could suggest the possibility that alcohol does not possess all the properties attributed to it, and that the effects of alcohol are merely imagined.

Apart from questioning alcohol use, the women's group could mobilize other women in the community to participate in community level alcohol prevention activities by organizing special campaigns and other programmes that aim at spreading awareness on alcohol and the subtle ways in which it is promoted, promoting non-permissiveness towards alcohol induced misbehaviour, and preventing alcohol use in homes and neighbourhoods. In order to contribute to prevention activities effectively, women must first understand the real harm caused by to alcohol use as well as the ways in which the considerable amount of money otherwise spent on alcohol could be used to meet the needs of the family. With training and

guidance, women could integrate prevention activities in to their day to day routines. They could for example, request their spouses or other male family members and friends to decline to accept alcohol as gifts and to avoid patronizing and promoting alcohol products by displaying the logos, signs, and slogans that represent particular brands of alcohol.

### **Educating Children on the Consequences of Alcohol Use**

Women, especially mothers, play a vital role in educating children on the actual effects of alcohol and teaching them that in reality, using alcohol is a bitter, harsh, and unpleasant experience. It is therefore important that women be educated on the ways in which this could be done. Women could for example, ask children to:

1. Observe the unpleasant characteristics associated with the users such as constant coughs, foul smells, and discolored lips and nails.
2. Compare the general appearance of the users with that of non-users, and observe how users appear to be older and more tired than non-users of approximately the same age.
3. Observe the discomfort experienced by users such as dizziness, a heavy head, difficulties in coordination, and nausea.

Additionally, women should make children aware;

- of the tactics employed by the users to hide their discomfort such as singing loudly and out of tune, non-rhythmic clapping or dancing, drinking large quantities of water, over eating and engaging in various other often unacceptable activities.
- that the discomfort experienced by alcohol users is so great that some are even forced to stay away from their normal day-to-day work and duties on the day following a night of drinking.
- that alcohol use is a lifelong trap that would eventually become an impediment to the enjoyment of life and lead to the loss of freedom.
- of the short term effects of alcohol, such as discoloured lips and bad odor, as well as its long term effects such as disease and death. This increases the likelihood that children would develop a long lasting negative feeling towards alcohol.

- of the reasons as to why those who produce and market alcohol products associate attractive sporting personalities and artists to cover up the realities of alcohol use. Children must be enabled to understand that alcohol use actually destroys the abilities of sporting personalities and artists.
- that alcohol users do not have any sex appeal and are more unattractive than attractive.

## **Women as Peer Educators**

As mentioned in previous sections the women's groups, once trained, play an important part in educating other women in their communities on alcohol prevention. Functioning as peer educators, the members of these groups must enlighten other women on the misconceptions surrounding alcohol, the dangers of permissiveness towards alcohol induced misbehaviour, and the tactics used by the promoters of alcohol to boost its image. The women's groups also have the responsibility to educate other women on how to avoid falling victim to the misconceptions and promotional tactics concerning alcohol and on how to avoid unconsciously pardoning and sanctioning alcohol use and alcohol induced misbehaviour. In order to do this, it is first necessary to identify those women who are more gullible or most likely to fall victim to alcohol use, its promotions, and its consequences. It is also important to understand the existing mindset of the women, especially those who are more gullible. This mindset should be changed gradually, especially by the women themselves. As peer educators, members of the women's group should guide other women to challenge the beliefs surrounding alcohol by questioning them on their own and by observing users in order to draw their own conclusions. For example, the belief that alcohol is characteristic of "masculinity", could be challenged by questioning the extent to which it is true based on observations that it is usually those men who are not confident in themselves and their "masculinity" that use and flaunt their use of alcohol.

Women, especially those with spouses or other family members that use alcohol regularly, should be made to understand the state of utter helplessness that alcohol dependence could lead to and that alcohol use is a dependence producing behaviour. For example, a person who becomes heavily dependent on alcohol in order to fall asleep may not be able to do so if alcohol is not available. Similarly, a person who was once able to enjoy him/herself and feel happy at parties and other celebrations would no longer be able to do so if he/she, at some stage, becomes dependent on alcohol to experience happiness. In this way, the user would eventually depend completely on alcohol to engage in processes or experience feelings that should otherwise occur naturally. Users who are heavily dependent on alcohol may also become extremely uneasy if alcohol is not available or if they are prevented from drinking. In These cases, women must be made to understand that the unease experienced when unable to engage in a particular habit is normal, and that such unease is experienced even by people who become accustomed to other habits such as performing physical exercises at a given time. This understanding is especially important to women directly involved in working with alcohol users.

## **Understanding Advertising Tactics Used in Promoting Alcohol**

Educating women on the tactics used to promote alcohol is especially important because these tactics primarily target children. Women need to be made aware that the alcohol industry promotes alcohol in an attractive manner using sporting personalities, artists and attractive young men and women to advertise their products in many subtle ways. “Alcohol could maximize your enjoyment and happiness” is a misconception that has led to the use of alcohol on several occasions such as sporting events, excursions, celebrations, and following the completion of examinations. As alcohol use is promoted to children as a glamorous and sophisticated act associated with adults, children would view it as something exciting to be secretly engaged in away from the watchful eyes of the parents or other adults. Children could in this way, learn to view drinking as a breaking of prohibitions, as rebelliousness, and as the disregarding of authority, all of which become appealing particularly during adolescence. It is therefore of vital importance that women, especially as mothers and teachers who play an important role in educating children, understand the tactics used to promote alcohol. It is therefore important that the women’s group educate other women on the necessity for parents to be able to openly discuss the real effects of alcohol with their children especially within the current context.

Another important area in which women can contribute is in developing media literacy among children. Women should be enlightened on how alcohol is promoted in the print and electronic media and on how these promotions lead to the spread of misconceptions regarding these substances. Media literacy among women must be improved in order to enable them to understand the subtle methods used to promote the alcohol use in the mass media. For example, when a character in a television show is shown to drink alcohol due to certain problems he faces, women should be able to openly comment that he would only increase his problems by drinking and that such behaviour is foolish.

While training women to take preventive action, it is essential to educate them on the false image and misconceptions attributed to alcohol which give it a powerful image or an aura that draws many non-users to become users, and the full gravity of the real harm of alcohol use. Women should jointly work with other groups involved in prevention activities towards changing these misconceptions. They also play a pivotal role in making children aware that those who use and become dependent on various substances are a weak and foolish segment in any population, while most persons who are non-users are the more powerful and active segment in society today.

## **Discouraging Alcohol Users**

An effective step in reducing the value attached to alcohol or deglamourizing it would be to openly express displeasure to the users, showing them that their use of alcohol is no longer impressive. The women should educate their peers and children on how to express their displeasure in the presence of alcohol users either verbally through statements such as “Alcohol makes you smell bad!” or “You look older than you really are!”



As mentioned in a preceding section, women need to be enlightened on the advertising and promotional gimmicks of the manufacturers and marketers of alcohol. They could then use their knowledge to develop creative counter messages to discourage alcohol users and neutralize the promotion of alcohol among others.

Within the home, women could display messages such as “Thank you for not drinking in our house” or “Our house is free from the odor of alcohol” in their homes, by way of hinting at guests to refrain from drinking or to discourage their spouses or other alcohol using family members to refrain from inviting friends to their homes for the purpose of drinking. In this way, women could initiate a process of mobilizing their friends and family members to weaken the image of alcohol and discourage users by making it increasingly difficult to consume alcohol freely.

### **Reducing the Occasional Consumption of Alcohol**

Most occasional alcohol users believe that the use of alcohol gives them pleasure, happiness, relaxation and freedom and that alcohol gives them an excuse for unacceptable/irrational behaviour as well as social acceptance (despite misbehaviour) and relief from responsibility. It also is this belief that contributes to their degree of enjoyment when drinking alcohol alone or in a group. As their beliefs are often strong, users may often find that they need to put in very little effort to be relieved of the adverse effects of alcohol. In such cases women, as spouses or friends, should take the time to frequently discuss the basis of alcohol use with the users, gradually leading them to understand the actual nature of alcohol. Discussions could focus on the following:

- The happiness and pleasure they (the users) experience while drinking is not derived from alcohol, but from the environment in which it is consumed and through expectations.
- In reality, alcohol is unpalatable and that its consequences are distasteful and harmful, only leading to discomfort.
- The same occasions/celebrations are enjoyed in the same way by both, the users as well as the non-users present.
- Alcohol does not impair one’s consciousness and the ability to think with conviction. Users are therefore aware and accountable for what they do.

Women may directly question the alcohol users on actual feelings of individuals when “drunk”, requesting them to honestly explain their actual experiences the unpleasantness following alcohol consumption. Further, the misbehaviour alcohol users should neither be accepted nor pardoned within the home or elsewhere. Women and other non-users should not be amused by any silly behaviour of those

under the influence of alcohol. They should not allow the users to be relieved of their responsibilities in the household and workplace, but should compel users to fulfill their duties even while intoxicated.

Especially as wives, women could take steps to prevent alcohol use within the home by making the days on which their spouses return home intoxicated less pleasant by, for example:

- Reminding their husbands of their responsibilities towards family and home, and not give any undue respect or care.
- Not preparing any special meals and express displeasure towards their spouse's drunken state making adverse remarks such "you smell foul".
- Expressing dissatisfaction with sexual relationships, and discuss the economic difficulties at home.
- Not providing savoury snacks stating that it is a "cover-up" for the unpleasant effects of alcohol.
- Not being amused by the silly jokes, yarns and foolish behavior of those under the influence of alcohol.
- Not making any special arrangements for drinking at home.
- Being sarcastic on rituals and practices associated with alcohol use and pay no special attention given to expressions of encouragement such as "cheers".
- Making the days when their spouses come home without using alcohol more enjoyable
- Treating them with more respect and care.
- Encourage their spouses by preparing delicious meals and paying compliments such as "you look smart today".
- Engage in interesting conversations and encourage the children to be closer to their father
- Discuss the negative experiences of alcohol in other families.

Preventing their spouses from being influenced by those in superior positions is another important way in which women could contribute to alcohol prevention as wives. Staff gatherings at which alcohol is served are not uncommon to workplaces. Just as in the workplace, at these informal gatherings, those in higher ranking positions could greatly influence the activities of those in subordinate positions. When alcohol is

offered at a party organized by a superior, declining it would be interpreted as disregarding the authority of the host and therefore the offer would have to be accepted. Those who desire the company of people of higher social strata and aspire to become a member of their groups would be obliged to use alcohol because of the fear that if they were to decline, they would be perceived as demeaning and inferior. However, if a person could prepare himself to face such situations and maintain his stand in abstaining from alcohol use, it would be less difficult to face the pressure of the situation. Women could play a key role in assisting their spouses to develop the confidence and encouraging them to refrain from using alcohol even when it is offered by a superior.

### **Working with Addicts: Assisting Users to Overcome Their Dependence on Alcohol**

When working with users, especially those heavily dependent on alcohol, there are several points to bear in mind.

- Most heavy alcohol users are able to give up their use of alcohol without medication; those with health complications resulting from the excessive consumption of alcohol would require urgent medical attention.
- It is preferable that users overcome their dependence on alcohol in the familiar environment of their own community.
- Those who are very dependent on the chemical effects of alcohol would find it more difficult to abandon alcohol use. They are very likely to feel the psychological and physical discomfort of abstaining from habitual alcohol use severely.

On such occasions, women could explain to the users that any person dependent on a habit would feel uneasy when unable to engage in it. For example, a baby sucking its thumb would react negatively when prevented from doing so. Similarly, a person in the habit of engaging in religious observances at a particular time would feel very uncomfortable if he/she is unable do so. A gambler would feel the same discomforts when restricted from his habit. Rationalizing the situation in this way would enable alcohol users to better understand and overcome their difficulties.

- With a habitual alcohol user in a family, it is normal that the rest of the family gradually becomes immune to the behaviours and practices of the former. This makes it a challenging task to initiate a process by which a firm decision could be made to change the lifestyle of a habitual user.

In such a situation, it is necessary to get all members of the family to cooperate in making a collective effort to change the lifestyle of the user. Attention also should be paid to

those outside the family with whom the users regularly associate that have the potential to influence them.

- Even those users who are strongly determined to overcome their dependence on alcohol will experience difficulty in leaving their habits because of their psychological bond with the substance.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that all possible forms of assistance and encouragement are given to those determined to overcome their addiction to alcohol. The support given should be consistent as there could be many unsuccessful attempts before the users would finally succeed. Though making a firm decision to quit alcohol use is the first step on the part of the users, they should be convinced that dependency is more due to psychological factors, the process of cognitive learning and behavior, than it is to physical factors.

- It is crucial that the users adapt to a new lifestyle through adjusting to new areas of interest and activities as ways of spending their leisure time.

While effective strategies (that take into account the users' new interests) need to be developed with the people with some skills in handling alcohol dependency, women, as wives, mothers, friends, and teachers play a vital role in ensuring that these strategies are effectively implemented by the users.

- Most people use alcohol strongly believing that it helps to ease fatigue, forget problems, have fun, and relax.

Recovery programmes should make a strong effort to emphasize that there is no connectivity between the alcohol use and pleasure, enjoyment, and relaxation. While challenging the users' misconceptions on alcohol, it is necessary to understand that the psychological status of users and care should be taken to build their confidence when working towards change. These efforts that take place in the treatment process should be reinforced by the women within the home and other settings. In the more severe cases of alcohol dependence however, a change of settings and environments could be helpful in facilitating the abandoning of the use.

### **Creating a New Environment to Facilitate an Alcohol Free Lifestyle**

As mentioned in previous sections, the use of alcohol could be gradually reduced by making the environment less enticing, permissive, and supportive. In order to do this, the acceptance of alcohol use should not be promoted and any misbehaviour after use should not be pardoned. No special attention should be paid to the use of alcohol and any misconceptions of alcohol use when expressed should be corrected.

It should be borne in mind that the biggest difficulty any user would face when giving up the alcohol using lifestyle which they have become accustomed to is coping with the void left by alcohol in his/her new alcohol-free lifestyle. The family members must collectively support the former user to bear the absence of alcohol or else the new lifestyle could become so threatening to the former user that it could lead to depression. The former users should be made to understand that the withdrawal symptoms that they experience during the initial stages of abandoning alcohol use are not due to the chemical effects of alcohol but due to the discomfort of abandoning a habit that they had become deeply attached to.

It would be of great benefit to the users they could stop the use of alcohol as soon as they begin the process of recovery. Where this is not possible, users should be advised and guided to gradually reduce the frequency of the times they use alcohol and the quantity of alcohol used in a day. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate any form of progress no matter how small and the advantages of reaching that point of recovery should be made known to the user. Further, the users' progress should be used to increase their confidence that they are capable of reducing the use of alcohol and eventually abandoning it completely.

It is important to bear in mind that those who have stopped using alcohol may relapse if their abandoning the use of alcohol and their relationship with others is not consistent. Other family members should therefore make an effort to prevent a relapse by maintaining a strong relationship with former users by preventing them from spending too much time in isolation and giving them appropriate responsibilities within the home so as to keep them fully occupied physically and mentally. Other family members could also develop a cordial relationship with the former users through leisure activities that would eventually pave way for social acceptance and inclusion. This would assist in the recovery process making it easier for the former users to become completely free of the need for alcohol.

## **Ensuring Consistency**

Women could use the following procedures to ensure consistency in the reduction in alcohol use in their homes, workplaces, and communities.

- Making the environment conducive to abstinence from alcohol use by removing items such as empty alcohol bottles put on display and exhibiting phrases that encourage abstinence.
- Reducing the attractive image of alcohol by gradually reducing the unfair privileges attached to alcohol use and assisting the users to gradually reduce and quit the consumption of alcohol.

A gradual reduction in the number of occasions and the quantity of alcohol consumed within the households could contribute to the reduction of the total consumption of alcohol within the community and at a broader level, within the country as a whole.

At the completion of the time period allocated for the prevention programme, the progress achieved should be measured according to the indicators shown below.

***Some Indicators for Women's Groups***

1. Non-permissiveness and intolerance towards the behaviour of users based on the knowledge that their behaviour is merely a pretense.
2. Non-permissiveness of the use of alcohol within any part the home.
3. The willingness to openly discuss the ways in which children are attracted to alcohol and tobacco, how these substances are promoted by the companies that market them, and how they serve to limit one's personal happiness.
4. Involvement in a proper prevention system to limit the use of alcohol and/or tobacco either by the spouse or by other individuals.
5. The willingness to discuss the concept of "the community action towards alcohol prevention" with other women.
6. Possessing the understanding that alcohol does not increase power or masculinity.
7. Possessing a thorough understanding of, and active involvement in, advocacy activities.

Shakya Nanayakkara

Secretary General, Healthy Lanka

+94 773786788

shakya@healthylanka.lk

