Suggested Reading List:

**Responsible Drinking**
A Moderation Management approach for problem drinkers,
by Frederick Rotgers Psy.D., Marc F. Kern Ph.D., & Rudy Hoeltzel

**Harm Reduction Psychotherapy:**
A New Treatment for Drug and Alcohol Problems
by Andrew Tatarsky PhD

**Over the Influence**
The Harm Reduction Guide for Managing Drugs and Alcohol
Patt Denning Ph.D., Jeannie Little, Adina Glickman

**Sober for Good:**
New Solutions For Drinking Problems - Advice From Those Who Have Succeeded
by Anne M. Fletcher

**Recovery Options:**
The Complete Guide
by Joseph Volpicelli, Maia Szalavitz

**Changing for Good**
The Revolutionary Program That Explains the Six Stages of Change and Teaches You How to Free Yourself from Bad Habits
by Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente

**Alternatives to Abstinence:**
A New Look at Alcoholism and the Choices in Treatment
by Heather Ogilvie

**Saying When**
How to Quit Drinking or Cut Down
by Martha Sanchez-Craig, Ph.D.

**Controlling Your Drinking**
Tools to Make Moderation Work for You
by William R. Miller, Ph.D., and Ricardo F. Munoz, Ph.D.

**Diseasing of America**
How We Allowed Recovery Zealots and the Treatment Industry to Convince Us We Are Out of Control
by Stanton Peele

**Other Resources**
**Drinkers Check-up**
Interactive on-line application to evaluate drinking behaviors
www.drinkerscheckup.com
Reid Hester Ph.D.
An Introduction to Moderation Management

Moderation Management (MM) is a unique self-help support group for people concerned about their drinking. It is unique because only MM supports the goal of moderate drinking. Rather than offering the solution to a drinking problem, it is a forum where many solutions to drinking problems are shared and discussed. These solutions come from behavioral change techniques, current research, medical science, personal experience, and other established support groups. Problem drinking is considered a learned habit amenable to cognitive and behavioral change in a group setting. The first Moderation Management support groups for people concerned about their drinking were formed in the mid 1990s.

People first come to Moderation Management because some event, or series of events, has disrupted their lives. Alcohol was a component of these disruptive or harmful events. They came to explore the possibility that they might have a drinking problem. Sometimes a significant other, or group of others, suggested or insisted that a drinking problem was present. MM is a place where people can explore this possibility and reach their own conclusions.

Everyone who comes to MM is seeking information. They are trying to understand their own behavior, or the nature of problem drinking in general. Others want to know how to eliminate the harm caused by their drinking. Some are seeking support as they make positive lifestyle changes. Problem drinkers share similarities, but they each have a unique problem. They come to MM to find the tools to work on that problem.

Most MM members seem to pass through two phases. The first phase is harm reduction and the second is the restoration of balance.

The harm caused by problem drinking can manifest in many objective ways. It can be poor health, unhappy relationships, missed work, muddled finances, or legal entanglements. The problems can also be very subjective and include poor self-esteem, or the discomfort of realizing that a drink has become one's best friend and most comfortable companion. These problems, the acute ones, are what most people want to address immediately. Practicing a selection of behavior modification techniques is usually helpful while moving through the harm reduction phase.

The second phase is the restoration of balance. This phase can last many years and lead down many paths. Drinking problems seem to develop when an individual grows uncomfortable with one or more aspects of his or her life. Alcohol is very effective at palliating the discomfort caused by these imbalances. If alcohol allows the individual to ignore the core imbalance, the problem tends to get worse.

The Development of the MM Network:

The MM Network is developing an evidence-based self-help option for people seeking help with alcohol related problems. The program can be accessed through face-to-face support groups (see www.moderation.org for a current list) or through the very active Internet listserv (subscribe to it on the website).

The National Office of the MM Network maintains the MM website and listserv, supports the F2F groups, provides information to health care professionals (physicians, therapists, Human Resource directors, pastors, and attorneys) answers media requests, coordinates psychological and harm reduction conference presentations, and supports members of the MM Network with email, telephone calls and site visits.

How to Help the MM Network

If you believe that a moderate option must be made available for people with drinking problems, we could use your help with our work. Staffing this office and effectively delivering this level of service is costly.

We ask any organization or individual interested in supporting the MM Network financially to contact us at:

MM Network Inc.
c/o HRC,
22 West 27th Street
New York, NY 10001
(212) 871-0974,
mm@moderation.org
www.moderation.org
Why is a Moderation Management needed?

Dysfunctional alcohol use damages individuals and disrupts society. Twenty percent of men and 10% of women drink more than is recommended. An estimated 7% of all adults meet the DSM IV criteria for alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence or both. However, only about 10% of these problem drinkers seek help.

Satisfying the criteria for DSM diagnosis no longer suffices to point to a “one size fits all treatment.” Problem drinking is now understood to occur along a continuum; so should its treatment. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and many other independent researchers, there are four times as many problem drinkers as alcoholics in this country. Yet there are very few programs that specifically address the needs of beginning stage problem drinkers, while there are literally thousands of programs for the smaller population who are seriously alcohol dependent.

By the time people reach serious stages of alcohol dependency, changing the behavior becomes more difficult, and treatment becomes costly. This is a public health concern that merits early intervention and a harm reduction approach. Moderation programs are less costly, shorter in duration, less intensive, and have higher success rates than traditional abstinence-only approaches.

Nine out of ten problem drinkers today actively and purposefully avoid traditional treatment approaches. The stigma of the label “alcoholic” and the extreme remedy of never drinking again may explain why so few problem drinkers avoid seeking help early. Traditional approaches that are based on the disease model of alcohol dependence and its reliance on the concept of powerlessness can be particularly counterproductive for women and minorities, for whom relative powerlessness may already be an issue.

Outcome studies indicate that professional programs that offer both moderation and abstinence have higher success rates than those that offer abstinence only. Clients tend to self-select the behavior change options that will work best for them. A survey of all MM members conducted in 2004 showed that on average the number of drinks per week was reduced by 50%.

Identifying these imbalances, and addressing them in a healthy manner, restores balance. Younger people seem to correct their imbalances more quickly than older people. The specific issues fall into major categories that include self esteem, sexuality, relationships, and career. There are others. The specifics of each individual’s problem are often complex, hidden, and unique. Sometimes professional help is needed to sort out the details.

The fellowship and trust that is the ideal of an MM community can facilitate this discovery and correction. However, the primary and ultimate responsibility for health and balance remains in the hands of the individual.

Both harm reduction and the restoration of balance can be achieved very quickly or may take a great deal of time. MM considers any reduction in harm or movement toward balance to be a good thing.

A much more detailed description of these processes can be explored in:

More about Moderation Management.

The Moderation Management Network consists of live meetings and online forums that help and support people concerned about their drinking by offering cognitive and behavior change techniques and clinically valid information. It also supports and encourages other positive lifestyle changes. MM empowers individuals to accept personal responsibility for choosing and maintaining their own path, be it moderation or abstinence. MM promotes early self-recognition of risky drinking behavior, when moderate drinking is a more easily achievable goal.

What does MM offer?

A supportive mutual-help environment that encourages people who are concerned about their drinking to take action to cut back or quit drinking before drinking problems become severe

A professionally reviewed program, which provides information about alcohol, moderate drinking guidelines and limits, drink monitoring exercises, goal setting techniques, and self-management strategies

As a major part of the program, members find balance and moderation in many other areas of their lives, one small step at a time

What does MM cost?

MM meetings and online support are free of charge. However, there are significant costs associated with providing these services to the thousands of problem drinkers who contact the MM Network. At the live MM meetings, small donations made by individual members are used to support the local meeting. If excess funds are available it is often sent to support the national network.

What are the basic premises of MM?

Behaviors can be changed. MM agrees with many professionals and researchers in the field that alcohol abuse and dependence are learned behaviors. This approach recognizes that people who drink too much can suffer from varying degrees of alcohol-related problems, ranging from mild to moderate to severe. A reasonable early option for problem drinkers is moderation. Seriously dependent drinkers will probably find a return to moderate drinking a great challenge, but the choice to accept that challenge remains theirs.

Moderation is a reasonable, practical, and attainable recovery goal for many problem drinkers.
Is MM for every person with a drinking problem?

No. Research suggests that no one solution is best for all people with drinking problems. MM is a good place to begin to address a drinking problem. If moderation proves to be ineffective, abstinence may be a better solution. A goal for many is to be able to make that decision.

Is moderation a reasonable option for you?

This is your decision. To be successful at moderation or abstinence requires effort and a commitment to change. You should take into account the severity of your drinking problem, your personal preference, and any medical, psychological, or other conditions that would be made worse by drinking, even in moderation. If you are unsure, seek professional advice. MM does not provide professional assessment or treatment.

After completing 30 days of abstinence and your experiment with moderate drinking begins, you may discover that moderation is not for you at this point in your life. It may be wise to consider a self-management goal of abstinence. Some members of MM who choose abstinence continue to seek support and help at MM meetings; others opt to attend an abstinence-only support group.
The Short Alcohol Dependence Data Questionnaire:

Instructions: The following questions cover a wide range of topics having to do with drinking. Please read each question carefully, but do not think too much about its exact meaning. Think about your most recent drinking habits and answer each question by using the criteria listed below. Use a sheet of paper and write numbers from 1 through 15 and write your answer next to the number of the question.

1. Do you find difficulty in getting the thought of drinking out of your mind?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

2. Is getting drunk more important than your next meal?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

3. Do you plan your day around when and where you can drink?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

4. Do you drink in the morning, afternoon, and evening?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

5. Do you drink for the effect of alcohol without caring what the drink is?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

6. Do you drink as much as you want irrespective of what you are doing the next day?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

7. Given that many problems might be caused by alcohol, do you still drink too much?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

8. Do you know that you won't be able to stop drinking once you start?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

9. Do you try to control your drinking by giving it up completely for days or weeks at a time?
   Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

10. The morning after a heavy drinking session do you need your first drink to get yourself going?
    Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

11. The morning after a heavy drinking session do you wake up with a definite shakiness of your hands?
    Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

12. After a heavy drinking session do you wake up and retch or vomit?
    Never       Sometimes       Often           Nearly Always

Count Your Drinks

To improve any behavior, it is good to know the current behavior and place an objective value on it. This creates a starting point. Recording each drink and the events surrounding those drinks provides the data needed to establish this starting point. Useful values to collect while establishing this baseline include drinks per day, and the duration of the drinking event. This basic information allows one to calculate blood alcohol level at critical times, and total drinks per week. It also provides a baseline for measuring any reduction in harmful outcomes and improvements in behavior.

Awareness is a powerful tool employed by members of MM. Daily drink charting brings an unconscious habit back to consciousness. Awareness illuminates choices. With choice comes control. Many people find that the simple habit of counting drinks results in an immediate improvement in their drinking behavior.

The following chart was developed to help people count weekly alcohol consumption and collect information about related emotional or social situations connected to problem drinking episodes. There is no need to complete all the information on the chart. Use only what you find useful. The information on this chart need not be shown to another living being. It is personal. Be honest.

Room is provided on the chart for recording positive lifestyle changes and small steps toward balance.
Emotional techniques
- Identify your motivation to change
- Write down insights and emotional issues
- Identify negative self-talk
- Identify drinking triggers
- Find new coping mechanisms for emotional triggers

Consult a psychotherapist for related emotional problems

Consult a medical doctor for related physical problems

Take anti-depressants if recommended

Use Antabuse to support periods of abstinence (rx needed)

Use Naltrexone to help control cravings (rx needed)

13. The morning after a heavy drinking session do you go out of your way to avoid people?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Nearly Always

14. After a heavy drinking session do you see frightening things that later you realize were imaginary?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Nearly Always

15. Do you go drinking and the next day and find that you have forgotten what happened the night before?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Nearly Always

Scoring:
1. To compute your score, give yourself zero points for each "never" answer; one point for "sometimes," two points for "often," and three points for "nearly always."
2. Out of a possible total of 45, the guidelines for interpretation are as follows: 1-9 is considered low dependence; 10-19, medium dependence; and 20 (or greater) high dependence.

There are Many Types of Problem Drinkers

There are several problem drinking patterns:
- Chronic drinking: Daily drinking over healthy limits
- Heavy drinking: More than 5 drinks on any one occasion
- Binge drinking: Long periods of heavy drinking
- Situational problem drinking: Drinking in inappropriate situations (e.g., a business meeting while caring for children while driving, etc.)
THE ANATOMY OF AN MM MEETING

Those of you who have never attended an MM Meeting are probably interested in what happens.

No two meetings are the same. They take place in different environments, with different people. Meetings take place in dance studios, diners, therapists’ offices, coffee shops and parish halls. Each group has its own character. However, the following structure has been established to help maintain continuity.

MM Meetings should create a safe place where people with a common problem can share and explore solutions to that problem. It is not treatment or psychotherapy. It is always confidential.

Outline of Instructions for Facilitating an MM Meeting:

1. Begin by welcoming everyone to a group meeting of Moderation Management.

2. Read the Opening Statement, The Steps, and The Ground Rules at the beginning of the meeting. This is important when new people are present.

3. Ask if anyone is attending their first meeting. Newcomers are asked to introduce themselves, if they wish to, by their first names only. Regular members should also briefly introduce themselves to all newcomers. If there are any visitors who are present to provide support to a family member or friend, or to observe only, they should also introduce themselves and briefly mention why they are attending a meeting. Most MM meetings are “open,” meaning that non-members are welcome to attend, as long as they respect confidentiality and are not disruptive.

4. Make any announcements regarding MM Network news or other group matters that should be brought to the attention of members. The group leader or MM Internet liaison can update members about important news from our on-line mailing lists or Web site. Some groups make announcements towards the end of the meeting.

5. Ask if anyone has completed or is working a “30-day Abs” (thirty days of not drinking). This is a big step and a big accomplishment that will be acknowledged by the group.

6. Begin the first half of the meeting with a “round-robin” where members get a chance to tell how they have been doing since their last meeting. Offer anyone attending their first meeting the opportunity to share why they came to the MM Meeting and what their concern is at this time. Assure them that they can wait until

Techniques from the “MM Toolbox

Participation in MM Face to Face group

Participation in MM online group

30-day abstinence period

Keep records of daily and weekly drinks
Weekly Drinking Behavior and Small Steps Form
Abstar on-line drink charting
http://www.moderation.org/abstar/

Specify, in writing, the pros and cons of moderate drinking

Specify, in writing, the pros and cons of abstinence

Connect with other members by email, phone, or in person

Read about ways to change drinking (see reading list on page 20)

Behavioral techniques
Measure drink volume
Dilute drinks
Eat before drinking
Delay first drink
Alternate alcoholic with non-alcoholic beverages
Satisfy thirst with non-alcoholic beverage
Sip drinks slowly instead of drinking fast
Plan rewards when goals are reached
Find other activities instead of drinking
No longer keep alcohol at home
MM Meeting Ground Rules

1. An MM meeting is a safe, protected and confidential space. If you are concerned about your drinking, you are welcome here.
2. We are here to help each other. The appropriate attitude is one of mutual respect and tolerance.
3. People should not come to MM meetings intoxicated and we suggest abstaining from drinking altogether on meeting days.
4. We discourage our members from socializing together in drinking situations, and alcohol is never allowed at meetings or official MM-related activities.
5. We share our experiences and our knowledge; we do not stand in judgment of others and we try to avoid giving personal advice.
6. We understand that individuals may choose paths other than ours; they are welcome if they are concerned about their drinking.

Nine Steps Toward Moderation and Positive Lifestyle Changes

1. Attend meetings or on-line groups and learn about the program of Moderation Management.
2. * Abstain from alcoholic beverages for 30 days and complete steps three through six during this time.
3. Examine how drinking has affected your life.
4. Write down your life priorities.
5. Take a look at how much, how often, and under what circumstances you had been drinking.
6. Learn the MM guidelines and limits for moderate drinking.
7. Set moderate drinking limits and start weekly "small steps" toward balance and moderation in other areas of your life.
8. Review your progress and update your goals.
9. Continue to make positive lifestyle changes and attend meetings whenever you need ongoing support or would like to help newcomers.

* Many people find this step overwhelming at first. We have discovered that people are able to greatly reduce the harm caused by their drinking even if they postpone this step until some future date. Shorter periods of abstinence, are a better than none. For chronic drinkers who drink everyday, committing to at least one abstinent day per week has been very helpful.

Closing Statement:

Thank you for attending this meeting of Moderation Management. In order to protect the privacy of our members, we ask that "what you hear here, and who you see here, stays here." Remember that moderation is the avoidance of extremes and that management is the art of self-control. These two powerful skills can help you achieve balance in your life and face the challenges of everyday living.
SUGGESTED READINGS AT MM MEETINGS

Opening Statement
My name is ____and I'm the discussion leader tonight.

Welcome to this meeting of Moderation Management. We are a group concerned about our drinking. The only requirement for participation is sharing this concern.

The purpose of Moderation Management is to provide a supportive environment for healthy decision-making about drinking and lifestyle. MM meetings are safe, confidential, and non-judgmental. MM support groups are not treatment or therapy. We're here to assist each other with the elimination of any harm related to alcohol use.

The research-based guidelines for moderate drinking emphasize good health and safety. MM recommends No Drinking and Driving. We share our strategies for moderation and balance, which include techniques for behavior change and managing negative emotions.

The strength of this program lies in the members of MM. We are here to share our experiences and to help each other change. Individuals' goals and progress vary, therefore we offer support but do not dictate behavior. We do ask members to refrain from drinking prior to meetings and to maintain confidentiality.

We usually begin by inviting each person in turn to say a few words about his/her current situation. If you are new to the group, tell us what's been going on in your life and what brings you here. If you are already following a plan of moderation, tell us a bit about it and how it is working for you. If you are still feeling your way toward an approach that will work for you, let us know your latest thoughts and impressions.

The Values that guide MM:
1. Members take personal responsibility for correcting their own drinking problem.
2. People helping people is the strength of the organization.
3. People who help others also help themselves.
4. Self-esteem and self-management are essential.
5. Members treat each other with respect and dignity.

Assumptions of MM:
1. Problem drinkers should be offered a choice of behavior change goals.
2. Harmful drinking habits are best addressed at a very early stage, before problems become severe.
3. Problem drinkers can make informed choices about moderation or abstinence goals based upon educational information and the experiences shared at self-help groups.
4. Harm reduction is a worthwhile goal, especially when the total elimination of harm or risk is not a realistic option.

5. People should not be forced to change in ways they do not choose willingly.
6. Moderation is a natural part of the process from harmful drinking, whether moderation or abstinence becomes the final goal. Most individuals who are able to maintain total abstinence first attempted to reduce their drinking, unsuccessfully. Moderation programs shorten the process of "discovering" if moderation is a workable solution by providing concrete guidelines about the limits of moderate alcohol consumption.

The Characteristics of a Moderate Drinker:
When you have made the healthy decision to drink less, and you stay within moderate limits, you should not experience any health, personal, family, social, job-related, financial, or legal problems due to alcohol. The characteristics below allow for a degree of individual interpretation, because moderation is a flexible principle and is not the same for everyone.

A moderate drinker...
* Considers an occasional drink to be a small, though enjoyable, part of life.
* Has hobbies, interests, and other ways to relax and enjoy life that do not involve alcohol.
* Usually has friends who are moderate drinkers or nondrinkers.
* Generally has something to eat before, during, or soon after drinking.
* Usually does not drink for longer than an hour or two on any particular occasion.
* Usually does not drink faster than one drink per half-hour.
* Usually does not exceed the .055% BAC moderate drinking limit.
* Feels comfortable with his or her use of alcohol
* Never drinks secretly
* Is not preoccupied with the when and where of the next drink.

The Suggested MM Limits:
1. Strictly obey local laws regarding drinking and driving. The only perfectly safe BAC* while driving is 0.00%
2. Do not drink in situations that would endanger yourself or others.
3. Do not drink every day. MM suggests that you abstain from drinking alcohol at least 3 or 4 days per week.
4. Women who drink more than 3 drinks on any day, and more than 9 drinks per week, may be drinking at harmful levels.
5. Men who drink more than 4 drinks on any day, and more than 14 drinks per week, may be drinking at harmful levels.

Notes:
One standard drink equals one 12 oz beer (5% alcohol), one 5-oz glass wine (12% alcohol), or 1.5 oz of 80-proof liquor (40% alcohol). The suggested number of daily and weekly drinks are LIMITS and not TARGETS.

*BAC stands for Blood Alcohol Concentration. BAC charts are more accurate than drink limits because they take into account weight, sex, and rate of drinking. BAC charts are available on the MM website..