



Sample Case Study

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Fenella is in her mid-sixties, divorced, 2 grown up kids, living with her ‘controlling’ elderly mother. She buys wine every night, has one glass with mum and then finishes the bottle. She can’t afford to move home, ill health meant she wasn’t working, but she is physically better now. Her goal is to ‘drink normally’. She cooks proper meals and walks, and likes to read. She is taking low dose anti-depressants and feels anxious sometimes, she would love to see her children more often, but they have busy lives.



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Suki is late thirties, she is married and wants a baby, but has had 3 miscarriages. She is on IVF and drinks to numb out the pain each time it doesn't work. (She stops drinking while she is doing IVF) Her partner doesn't know how much she drinks as she has become secretive. She works long hours from home and likes doing craft stuff but never feels she has the time. She eats lots of takeaways and snacks and used to go to the gym weekly. She has a small group of friends who meet monthly but three of the four have children and she feels isolated and guilty for feeling envious and resentful



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Martina is in her forties, separated and wondering about dating again. She wants to lose weight and thinks alcohol (G & T’s nightly) is stopping from doing that. She changed from wine to Gin as she hoped it would be less calorific. She works part time and visits her mother regularly who usually asks about her weight, as a child she was a plump. Martina has been in Slimming World for 15 years and stopped drinking for 9 months a while back. She counts calories and uses her ‘treat allowance’ for alcohol. She walks her dog daily and occasionally plays tennis with a friend. She has no children and sometimes wonders about her purpose in life as she gets older.



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Johnny is a restaurant manager who lives with his partner Ray. He wants to maintain his fitness goals and is worried about his beer belly. He can’t imagine not drinking with his staff after the restaurant closes and his partner expects them to drink together on evenings off. As a ‘foodie’ his life revolves around menus and wine lists and he can’t imagine how he would look to his staff and clientele if they knew he was considering sobriety, but one part of him feels excited by the possibility. He was the child of alcoholic parents so that has an impact.



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Lianna is in her early 50’s. She has been sober for around 6 weeks but still feels very anxious. Her menopausal symptoms are still bad, and she is on antidepressants. She is not keen on taking HRT. Her children have left home and she is an ‘empty nester’. She has joined The Sober Club, likes listening to podcasts, and doesn’t want to drink again, but the long evenings drag on and her husband constantly offers her a ‘nice glass of wine’. She wonders when she will feel the ‘joy’ others talk about.



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Sal is early 40’s and has suffered with anxiety and depression. She is single but has an off and on partner who drinks and can be quite persuasive for her to drink. Sal has come off her anti-depressants and did stop drinking for about 4 months in the past. She says she uses alcohol to numb out for a bit, and when she feels lonely in the evening, she also plans not to drink when she sees her partner, but always ends up drinking with him. She has tried some alcohol free drinks but forgets to buy them and only has wine in the house. She thinks she is weak and a ‘hopeless case’.



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Maisie is early 70’s and has drunk all her life. It’s a ‘social’ thing, she drinks with her partner, family, friends, at church, she can’t imagine life without it! When she had a breast cancer scare recently it made her reassess and she is now realising that she can’t carry on the same way. She literally doesn’t know where to start, she commits to quitting every morning but by 6pm she has opened a bottle. She hears about life being better without alcohol but she thinks perhaps that’s only for those who were at rock bottom, and clearly she is functioning well. She has a full life, eats well, has lots of hobbies and a big family. She has only got in touch because a friend warned her that her health could get worse if she continues to drink.



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Soraya is a nurse who lives alone and doesn’t get home till after 9pm most nights. She doesn’t have the energy to cook proper meals so has a snack and drinks wine. She is constantly tired and anxious, and feels that she is very overweight, around 6 stone. She knows that her self-esteem is low, she has a holiday booked but is thinking of cancelling because she is so embarrassed about wearing a bathing suit. She does like running and goes out some weekends with friends, occasionally she does yoga. Her big Irish family think it’s utterly ridiculous that she is contemplating stopping drinking, and when she was doing Dry January one of her sisters spiked her drink, thinking that was funny.



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Jacqui managed a full year of sobriety, then her father became very ill. She started drinking to numb the anxiety and fell back into the habit. She now visits her dad almost daily, and his one pleasure is to have a ‘little drink’ with her, she feels it would upset him massively if she didn’t drink. She knows it’s a silly reason but it feels important to her while he is alive to have that time with him. She has no ‘sober’ friends and lives alone now that she is divorced, she realises that she doesn’t have much time or even understanding of what ‘self-care’ is, she works, visits her dad and goes to bed, she can’t see a way out of that pattern.