



Difficulties with Alcohol and Substance Abuse



- Many people who have suffered trauma struggle with alcohol or substance related difficulties
- Be kind to yourself and understand difficulties without judgement.
- Struggling with alcohol or drugs doesn't mean you're bad or weak



Often difficulties develop as a coping/survival strategy

- To help reduce distress and/or avoid distressing memories
 - Help to sleep
- To help feel confident or fit in with others when relationships are a struggle

BUT ongoing alcohol and substance abuse can impact recovery



Alcohol and substance use can interfere with recovery from trauma in the following ways:

- Alcohol and drugs can stop or interfere with how the brain processes memories and emotions, so they continue to be a problem.
- It can impact on your sleep - alcohol and drugs can lead to less restful sleep and lead to low energy and mood the following day.
- Can impact mood – lead to mood swings and trigger anxiety and depression



Alcohol and substance use can interfere with recovery from trauma in the following ways:

- Can increase/add to feeling such as paranoia, feeling on edge or under threat. Substance misuse may also contribute to other problems like our ability to work and function day to day, contributing to financial difficulties. It can impact on our health and relationships.
- It might also keep unhelpful or negative beliefs about ourselves going; like, 'I can't cope' or 'I am rubbish or worthless'

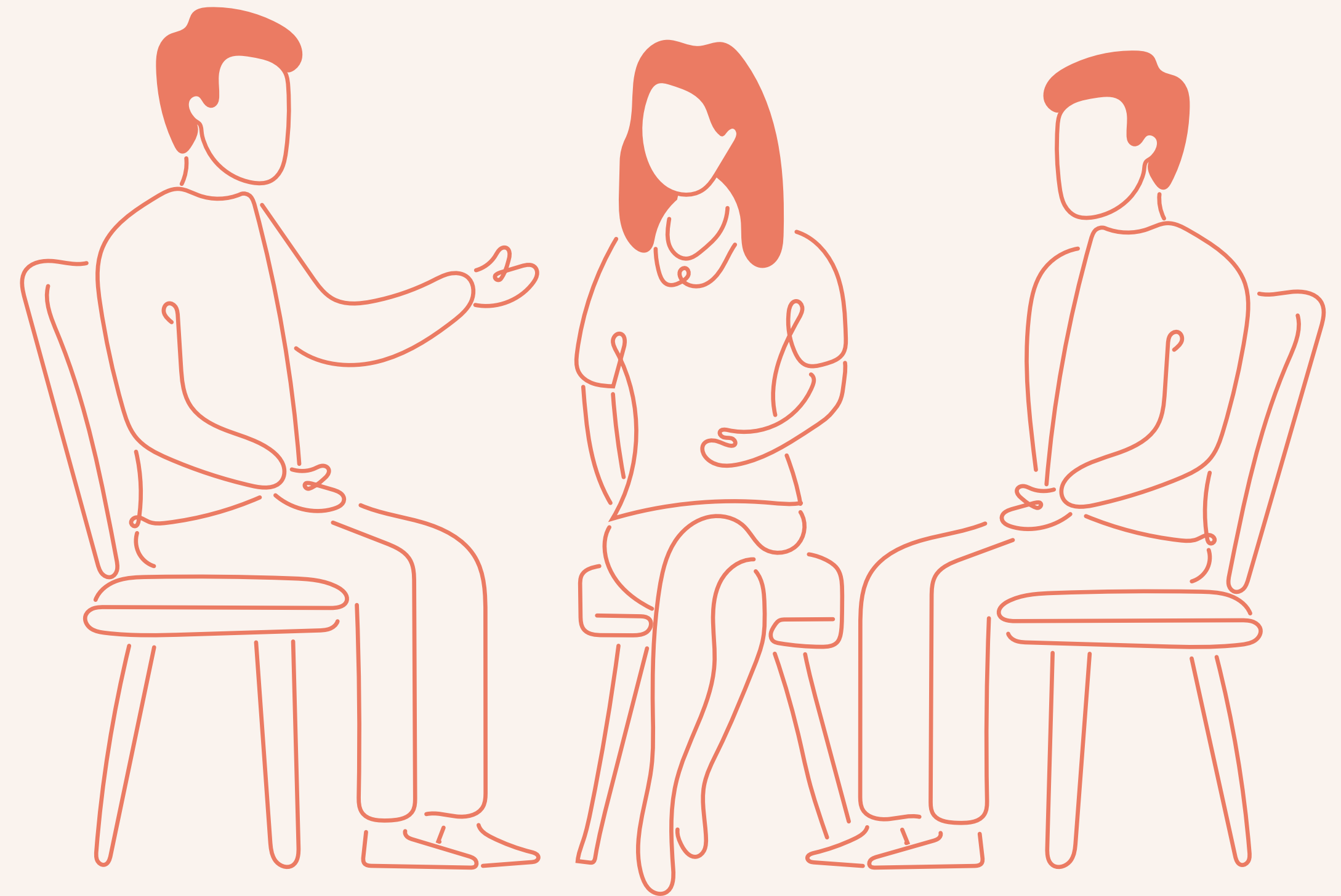


Getting help

- Work in small steps at your own pace
- Recovery is different for everyone – that's okay
 - Speak to friends or trusted people
- Seek support from your GP, mental health service and/or drug and alcohol services
 - Support groups such as AA

What help and support might involve

- Support groups
 - Detox
- Medication to help support with cravings and other symptoms.





What help and support might involve

- Talking therapy – if you are seeking therapy for trauma let your therapist know about any substance and alcohol difficulties. Using drugs or alcohol shouldn't stop you from accessing therapy – however it is important to think about how any ongoing use could impact on the effectiveness of therapy and consider a plan so you can get the most out of it.