

DO YOU NEED...

## A drink or a shrink?

Sometimes, when life feels out of whack, a cocktail with a good girlfriend can be enough to get you through. But other dilemmas require the big guns: a therapist or a life coach. Figure out who to call before your next meltdown.

By Amanda Woerner



Sure, she loves you, but your BFF may not be the best person to help solve the big, hairy issues.

### Your guy's getting on your nerves.

Why has he been acting like such a jerk?

**Grab a drink.** It can be a cocktail or coffee—the point is, have it with a pal you can confide in. “Sharing a problem with a close friend helps you clarify what you’re really upset about,” says Gabriela Cora, M.D., a psychiatrist in Miami. You may realize that you tend to sweep frustrations under the rug and that it’s time to talk things out. Just admitting there’s a problem can help you feel better.

Plus, commiserating lends perspective—every relationship has bumps. Cost: your bar tab!  
**BUT SEE A SHRINK...** If you *always* end up unhappy with a guy. A therapist can help you analyze past dating patterns and explore your motivations so you can make better choices.  
**OR TRY A NEW WAY TO THINK...** If you bomb on dates and are hopeless at flirting. A life coach can up your confidence and interpersonal skills.

### You're crying, like, all the time.

It's been days, and you still can't seem to shake the blues.

**See a shrink.** “You may be suffering from anxiety or depression,” says Tina Tessina, Ph.D., a psychotherapist in Long Beach, California. “A therapist will help you recognize negative thoughts and treat yourself with more compassion.” She may suggest talk therapy, lifestyle changes (like exercise) or, if your symptoms persist, a course of meds. Cost: \$125 to \$250 a session.

Check your insurance for coverage options.  
**BUT GRAB A DRINK...** With a chum if you're crying because of specific circumstances—a bad day at work or a fight with your sister.  
**OR TRY A NEW WAY TO THINK...** If you're feeling overwhelmed by a new life phase. Let's say you recently moved; a life coach will help you devise a plan to feel more at home, like learning easy, practical ways to be more social.

### Work sucks.

You know you deserve that corner office but are totally stuck in the cubicle.

**Try a new way to think.** A life coach can help you ID your passions and devise a strategy, whether that's finding more satisfaction in your current spot or snagging a better gig, says Laura Berman Fortgang, a master certified coach in Montclair, New Jersey. Expect weekly hour-long phone chats, plus homework (talking to people with gigs you'd love). You can also hone practical skills, like

asking for a raise. Cost: \$100 to \$300-plus a session. Find one at CoachFederation.org.  
**BUT SEE A SHRINK...** If you've switched jobs a ton yet still feel frustrated. Chronic dissatisfaction may signal a deeper problem; a therapist can help.  
**OR GRAB A DRINK...** If your boss has been driving you nuts lately. Vent with a pal for five, then focus on fun: movie night!