



 Project supported by the PHA


Understanding Alcohol






Housekeeping

- Breaks
- Microphones
- Internet connections
- Confidentiality
- Questions/comments







Course Objectives

By the end of today, you will be able to:

- Understand the prevalence of alcohol use in Northern Ireland
- Understand the legal framework for alcohol
- Understand alcohol units
- Identify levels of harm associated with alcohol misuse (for the user)







Course Objectives

By the end of today, you will be able to:

- Understand evidence and guidance regarding alcohol use
- Understand methods used in assisting with alcohol-related behaviour change
- Identify relevant local services





1 Introduction

What is the prevalence of alcohol misuse in Northern Ireland, and how does it affect various groups?






Alcohol in Northern Ireland

- 79%** of adults (18+) in NI drink alcohol
- 87% vs 74%** Proportion of people in least deprived vs most deprived areas using alcohol
- 29%** of young people (11-16) in NI have drunk alcohol at least once
- Adults with children** were more likely to report alcohol use than adults without children
- 1/5** of adults thought they should cut down on their drinking
- £900 million** Cost to Northern Ireland due to the effects of alcohol misuse

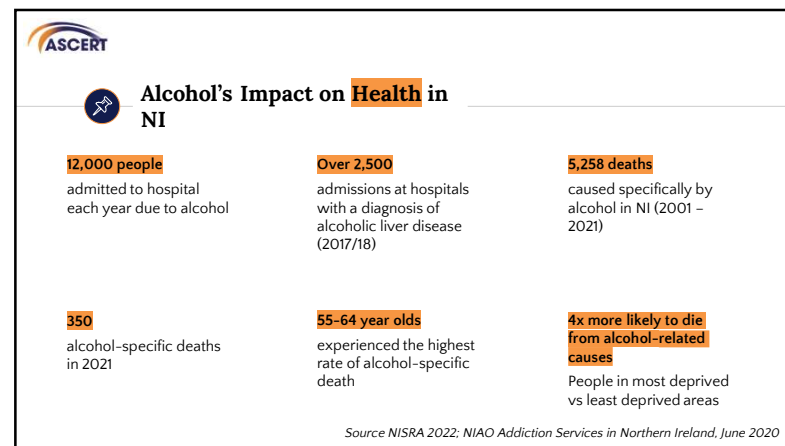
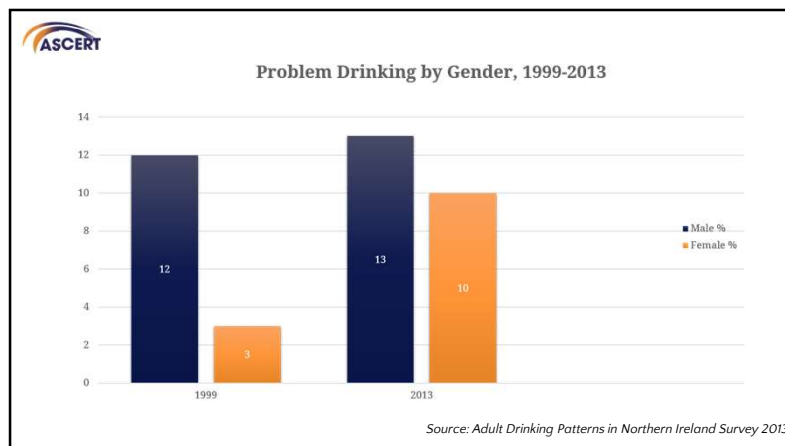
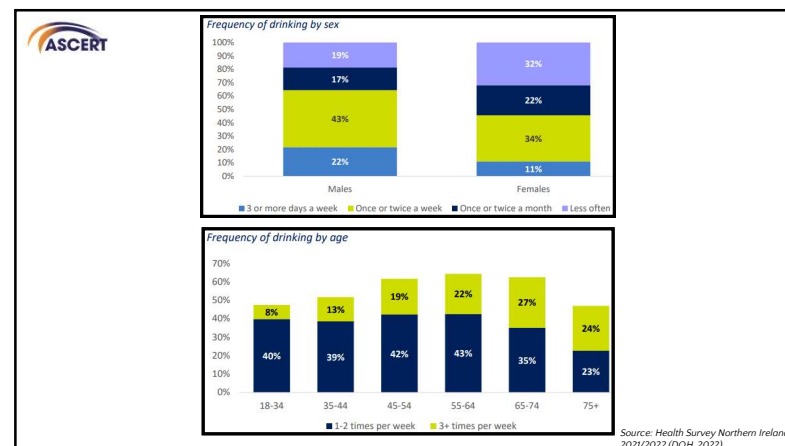
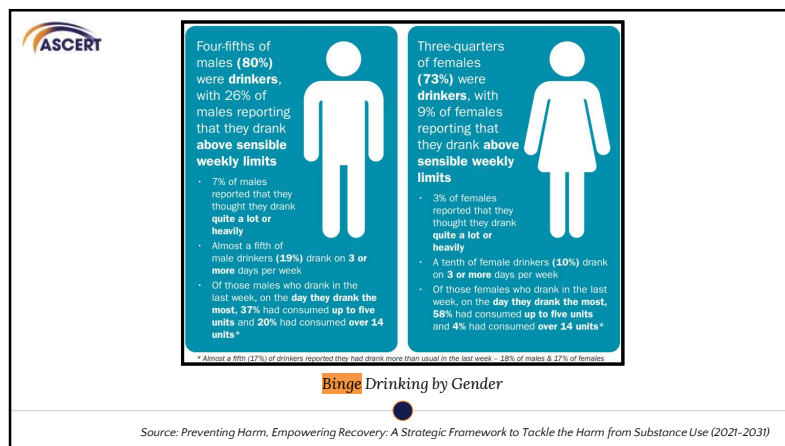
Sources: Health Survey Northern Ireland 2021/2022 (DOH, 2022); Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery: A Strategic Framework to Tackle the Harm from Substance Use (2021-2031); All Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey 2014/15



Frequency of Drinking by Health and Social Care Trust

	Belfast (%)	Northern (%)	South Eastern (%)	Southern (%)	Western (%)	Total (%)
Everyday	2	2	4	2	2	2
Almost every day	4	4	6	4	3	4
At least once a week	53	46	48	41	44	46
At least once a month	24	26	22	24	26	24
Two or three times a year	13	18	18	24	20	19
Once a year	4	4	3	5	5	4
Total	262	396	279	287	219	1443

Source: Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland Survey 2013



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Alcohol's Impact on Substance Misuse Services

- 68%** of clients on the Substance Misuse Database during 2021/22 sought help for alcohol use (alone or with drugs)
- 26-39 year olds** were the most common age group for drug and alcohol misuse clients
- 40+ year olds** were the most common age group for alcohol-only clients
- 42%** of clients seeking help for alcohol only were female; drugs only and drugs/alcohol skew more heavily male (72% and 73% respectively)
- 72% male/28% female** Gender breakdown of all clients indicating problem alcohol use
- 43%** of clients indicated they drank daily

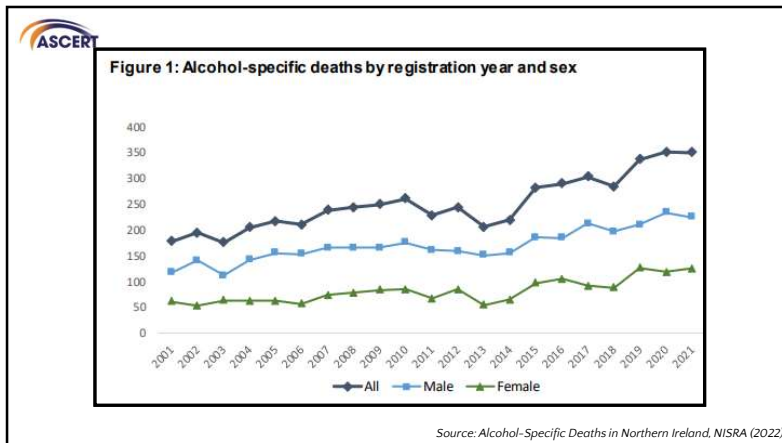
Source: Substance Misuse Database (2021/22)

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Alcohol and NI Youth

- 31%** have used alcohol – 11% of Year 8 and 64% of Year 12
- 13 years old** is the median age reported to having first tried an alcoholic drink
- 46%** of YP who had used alcohol had been drunk at least once
- 80%** of respondents said they lived in a household where at least one adult drank
- 25%** said they did something they regretted while drinking
- 9%** said that, as a result of drinking alcohol, they have ended up in a situation where they felt threatened or unsafe at least once

Source: Young Person's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2022



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Alcohol and the NI LGBT Community

- 91%** drink alcohol (general population = 77%)
- 93% of women vs 89% of men** drink (general population = 73% vs 80%)
- Twice as likely** to drink daily or most days compared to general population
- 14% of women and 12% of men** drink daily/most days (gen pop men 8%, women 5%)
- 57%** of LGBT people in England drink to a hazardous level (24% - gen pop)
- 30%** of LGBT people who contemplated suicide said substances contributed

Source: PHA's All Partied Out Report 2012

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Alcohol and the Law

What legislation surrounds alcohol use?

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Licensing: Types of Premises Selling Alcohol

- Pubs
- Off-licenses
- Hotels
- Guest houses
- Seamen's canteens
- Non-seagoing vessels
- Restaurants
- Conference centres
- Higher education institutions
- Indoor arenas
- Places of public entertainment (e.g. theatres, racetracks)
- Refreshment rooms in public transport premises (e.g. airports)



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Buying or Consuming Alcohol: Young People

- Licensing (NI) Order 1996, Registration of Clubs (NI) Order 1996, and Children and Young Persons Act (NI) 1968
- U14s can only consume alcohol in a private house and only for medical purposes
- Under 18s can't buy/consume alcohol in a place other than a private house
- It's an offence for someone to:
 - Buy alcohol for consumption by a U18
 - Send a U18 to buy alcohol from a licensed premises

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Buying or Consuming Alcohol: Young People

- It's an offence for a license holder to:
 - Sell alcohol to a U18 or someone else for consumption by a U18
 - Permit a U18 to go into a bar area or consume alcohol on premises
- U18s CAN
 - Be in a bar (not the bar area) until 9/9:30 pm* in places with a "children's certificate"; a sporting club until 10 pm, refreshment rooms, and off-licenses (if accompanied by an adult)



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The Law and Alcohol: Crime



- Alcohol-defined offences
 - Public drunkenness
 - Drink driving
- Offences where alcohol use played a role (i.e. crimes committed while under the influence)
 - Domestic violence
 - Criminal damage

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1 in 5 crimes
involve an "alcohol motivation"

16,603
instances of violence against the person

1,645
thefts, robberies, and burglaries

2,761
instances of criminal damage

Source: PSNI Recorded Crime Statistics (2021/22)

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3 Guidance Around Alcohol
How should alcohol be used?

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Alcohol: **Guidance** for Adult Men and Women

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Alcohol units = Drink volume in mL x ABV

1000

568 mL x 4.2% ABV = 2.4 units

35 mL x 40% ABV = 1.4 units

175 mL x 13.5% ABV = 2.4 units

450 mL x 13.5% ABV = 6.1 units

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Binge drinking usually refers to drinking lots of alcohol in a short space of time or drinking to get drunk. In the UK, binge drinking is drinking more than **8** units in a single session for **men** or **6** units in a single session for **women**.

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Guidance: Adult Men and Women


- Why does alcohol affect women more than men?
 - Less dehydrogenase → higher BAC
 - Hormones
 - Women experience higher BACs (drinking their regular amount of alcohol) right before menstruation
 - Women tend to have a higher percentage of body fat/lower percentage of water

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Guidance: Pregnant Women

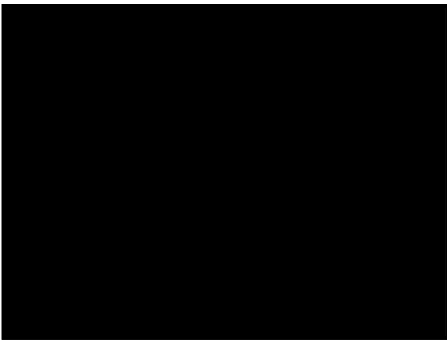
- Pregnant women shouldn't drink
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is the most clinically recognisable Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder because it has the following abnormalities
 - CNS dysfunction
 - Facial dysmorphism
 - Pre- and post-natal growth deficiency

A child with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (O'Rahilly 1996)


 **Guidance: Pregnant Women**

- Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)
 - Intellectual disabilities, issues with behaviour, poor impulse control
- Alcohol-Related Birth Defects (ARBD)
 - Problems with heart, bones, and/or hearing
- Neurobehavioural Disorder Associated with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (ND-PAE)
 - Issues with thinking and memory, behaviour, and ADLs
 - Mother had to have drunk 13+ alcoholic drinks/month in pregnancy







Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

 **Guidance: U18s**

- It's always better to abstain until 18
 - Under-15s should **not** drink
- Drinking can be hazardous to health at any age and it isn't the healthiest option for young people
- If U18s do drink, it should be
 - With the guidance of a parent/carer in a supervised environment*
 - Infrequent/no more than once a week
 - Under the recommended adult levels (14 units/week)



4 Alcohol and the Brain


How does alcohol act on the brain?

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WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR BRAINS

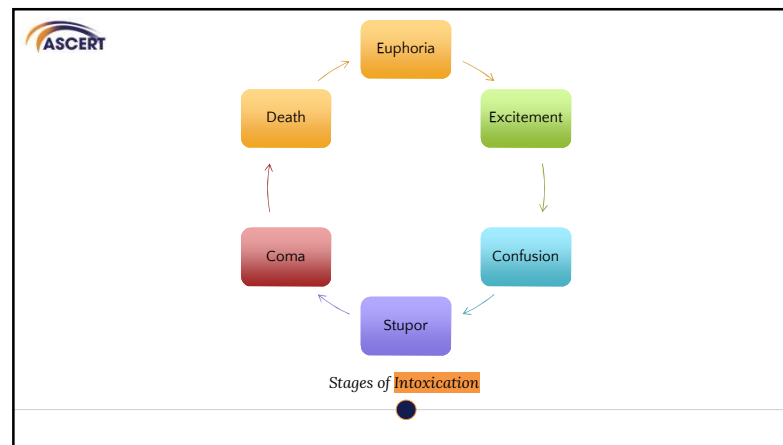
WHEN WE DRINK ALCOHOL?

Dr Martin Stebbing
Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience
School of Health and Biomedical Sciences

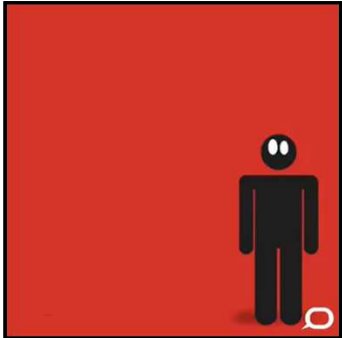


Alcohol and the **Brain**

RMIT University Australia; https://youtu.be/Ah5_f2LurE



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Blood Alcohol **Concentration**

The Conversation; <https://youtu.be/zSKsSXXj7E>

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Alcohol-Related Risk

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What are the risks associated with alcohol use?

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Examples of Alcohol-Related Risks and Undesirable Effects

<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased risk of various cancers (e.g. liver, breast) ○ Increased risk of liver cirrhosis ○ Dehydration → skin appearance ○ Difficulty sleeping 	<p>Mental/ Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased risk of suicide* ○ Exacerbation of pre-existing mental health issues ○ Mood swings 	<p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fighting with others ○ Anti-social/ criminal behaviour ○ Job-related difficulties
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Mixing Alcohol With Other Drugs: Depressants

- Substances which make you feel relaxed but can slow down your heart rate and breathing, which can be fatal (e.g. benzodiazepines, co-codamol)
- Overdose is more likely since they have the same effects as alcohol



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Mixing Alcohol With Other Drugs: Stimulants

- Substances which make you feel more energetic
- Alcohol is a depressant that relaxes you (opposite effect) → may need to take more to feel an effect
- Stimulants and alcohol put strain on the heart → increased risk of heart failure



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Mixing Alcohol With Other Drugs: Cocaine

- Alcohol + cocaine = cocaethylene
 - Poisonous and can affect the heart: stays in your system longer than cocaine alone
- Alcohol can mask effects of cocaine → taking more to get the same high → increased risk of overdose



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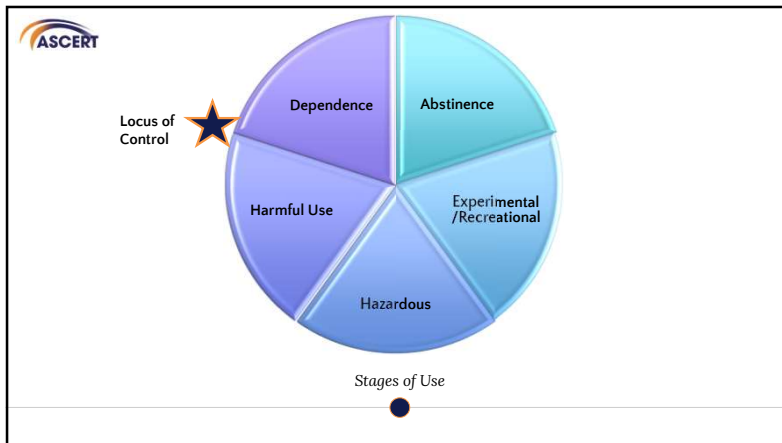


Young People and **Risk-Taking** Behaviour

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6 Assisting Alcohol-Related Behaviour Change

How can we help with behaviour change and what is the Stepped Care Model?



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Safer Drinking

In groups, consider the case scenario assigned to you. What "safer drinking"/harm reduction advice would you give to this person?

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Harm Reduction for Alcohol Use: Staying Safe While Drinking

- Know your limit
- Stay with people you know/trust, especially in unfamiliar environments
- Avoid unnecessary risks (e.g. swimming, driving)
- Keep an eye on your drink
- Avoid mixing with energy drinks
- Be aware of the signs of alcohol poisoning
 - Passing out; nausea/vomiting; confusion; loss of bowel and bladder control; impaired breathing/swallowing

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Harm Reduction for Alcohol Use: Cutting Down

- Measure your pours
- Try to have at least 2-3 drink-free days ("mocktails")
- Go for low- or no-alcohol alternatives ("mocktails")
- Use smaller glasses
- Identify and act on drinking triggers
- Seek support if necessary



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Motivating Change



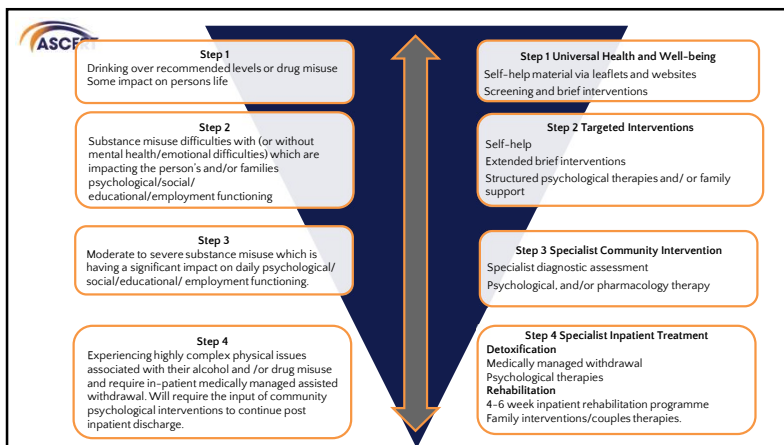
- For people who misuse alcohol, it's recommended that a motivational intervention is carried out as part of the initial assessment
 - Helping people recognise problems/potential problems related to their drinking
 - Helping to resolve ambivalence and encourage positive change and belief in the ability to change
 - Adopting a persuasive and supportive (rather than argumentative/confrontational) position

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Hi Jennifer.

Brief Advice - Alcohol



7 Signposting
Who's available to help?

NIDACTS

Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Coordination Teams

drugsandalcoholni.info

if you or a loved one needs support...

Awareness-Raising Initiatives

Family Support NI

familysupportni.gov.uk



A directory of various support services (e.g. mental health, finances) and registered childcare services in NI

Family Support NI

Family Support Services

Family Support & Advice

Self-Help & Guide Support



Thanks!

Any questions?

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