

# Alcohol & Substance Misuse

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# Alcohol - what is it

- Amount of pure alcohol – **10ml**
- **Units - The Maths Way** (Millilitres  $\times$  percent volume)  $\div$  1000
- Weekly Allowance **14 units**

**Standard Bottle of Wine 750ml, 14% strength**

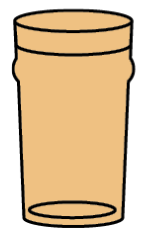
$$(750 \times 14) \div 1000 = \mathbf{10.5 \text{ units}}$$

# Units - The Easy Way

## ALCOHOL UNITS GUIDE



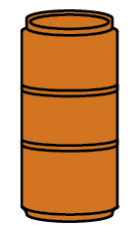
Pint of beer (4%)  
= 2.3 units



Pint of cider (4.5%)  
= 2.6 units



Alcopop (4%/275ml)  
= 1.1 units



Can of beer (5%/330ml)  
= 1.6 units



Spirits e.g. vodka/  
whiskey (40%/35ml)  
= 1.4 units



Bottle of spirits  
(40%/1 litre)  
= 40 units



Small 'pub' bottle of  
wine (13%/187ml)  
= 2.4 units



Bottle of wine  
(13%/750ml)  
= 9.8 units

# Alcohol - what does it do?

## Biological effect

- Dehydration - Cause of the hangover
- Increased blood flow through capillaries
- Decrease in body temperature
- Depression of many organs and functions of the body including the central nervous system
- Stomach irritation
- Aesthesia
- Alcohol primarily interferes with the ability to form new long-term memories
- Heavy drinking is often associated with malnutrition since there are no vitamins in alcohol
- Drinking too much can weaken your immune system, making your body a much easier target for disease

# Alcohol - what does it do?

## Neuro chemistry

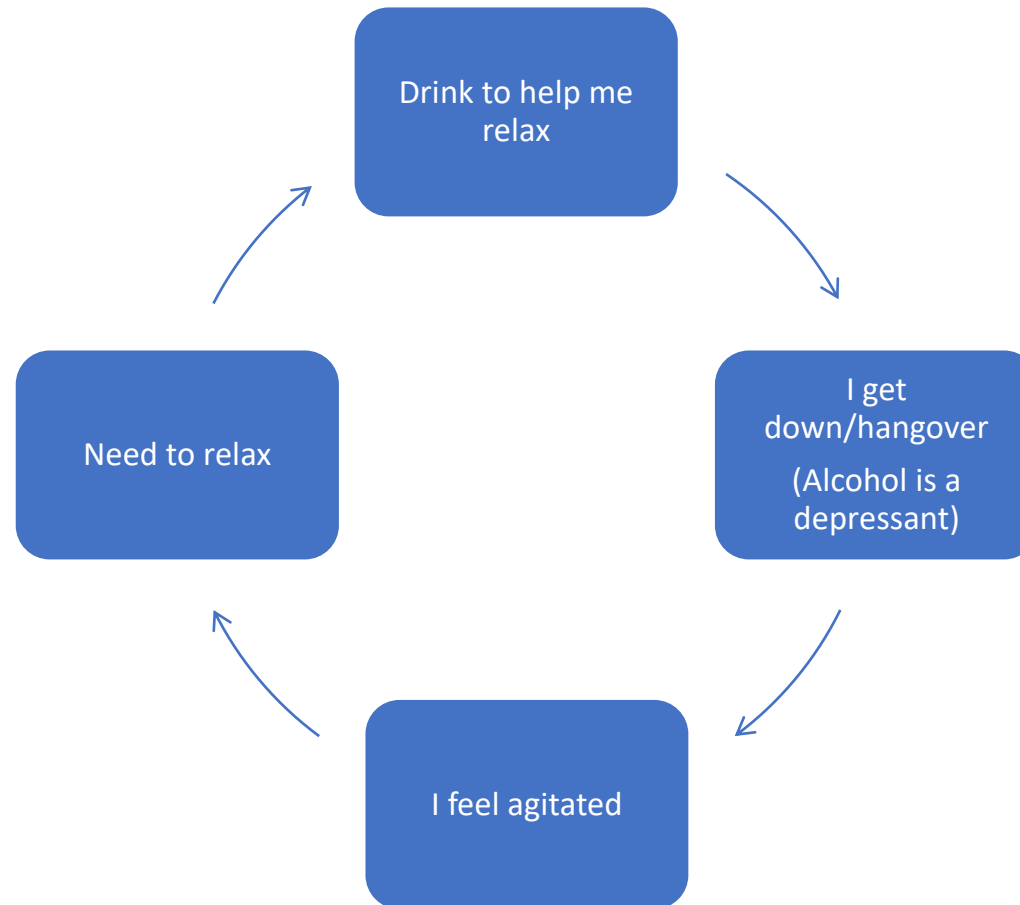
- alcohol directly leads to the release of endorphins, your body's natural opioids, and dopamine, the neurotransmitter responsible for the reward pathway in our brain
- Alcohol acts on receptors in our brains known as GABA receptors which help induce sleep

# Alcohol Misconceptions

- Relieve stress
- Relieve anxiety
- Coffee/exercise/fresh air/food sobers you up
- Eating a meal before drinking stops you getting drunk
- I'm ok to drive in the morning – I've been asleep and sobered up
- Makes you more attractive

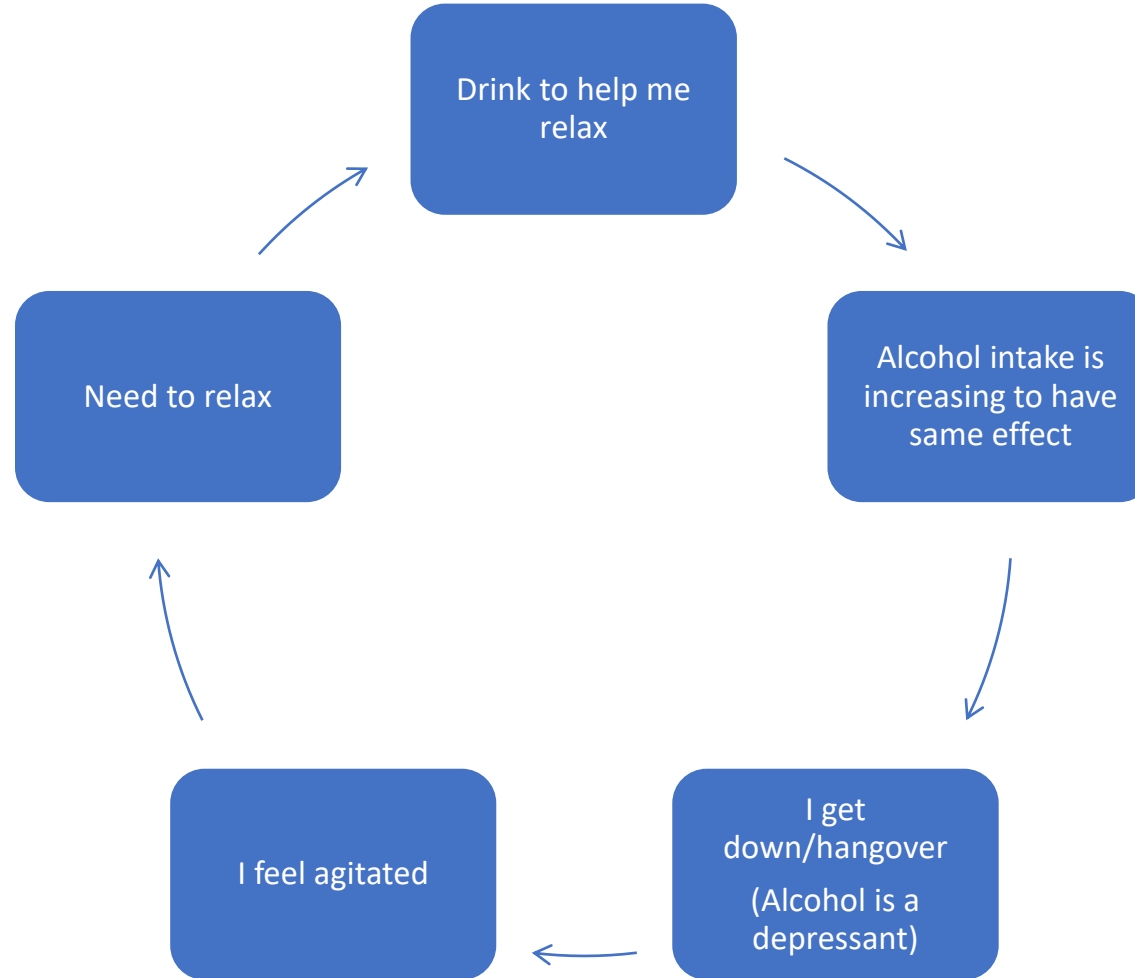
# Alcohol - what it does not do

Take away stress



# Alcohol - what it does not do

## Take away stress






# Alcohol and COVID - 19

## Reasons for alcohol use:


- Stress
- Frustration
- Loneliness
- Grief
- Boredom
- Isolation

# Alcohol Intake & COVID – 19 – Fact Checking


## Consuming alcohol can destroy the virus

 Consuming alcohol does not destroy SARS-CoV-2

## Alcohol on the breath kills the virus in the air

 Alcohol does not disinfect the mouth or provide protection

## Alcohol intake is on the rise

 No travelling  
No checking on amounts  
Just one more won't hurt  
Services harder to reach  
New Normal

# How do I know there's an issue?

Beware of issues that **SEEP!** – be truthful if alcohol affects you:

- **S**ocially
- **E**conomically
- **E**motionally
- **P**hysically

You may want to look at your usage

# Cutting Down & Stopping

You should **not** try to stop drinking without medical help if you

- regularly drink **over 15 units of alcohol every day**
- drink alcohol soon after you wake up to relieve **shakes or sweats**
- have had **withdrawal symptoms** in the past when you've cut back or stopped drinking alcohol
- have **epilepsy**
- have had **seizures**
- have **seen and heard things that you can't account for** when you have cut down or stopped drinking previously

# Cutting Down & Stopping

## Other tips on what we can do

- Encourage **open dialogue**
- Alcohol **agencies**
- **Review** your use
- Go **small**
- Drink **free** days
- Think in **units** not drinks
- Replace one **habit** with better one
- Never drink for **solace**
- There is **hope**

# Over The Counter (OTC) & Prescription Medications

- More people consuming **"addictive"** prescription medicines such as antidepressants, sleeping pills and opioid painkillers
- The rate of antidepressant prescriptions increased from **15.8%** in 2015-16 to **16.6%** in 2017-18
- **1 in 4 adults** have been prescribed these medicines
- Prescriptions for **antidepressants is rising**, particularly among women and older adults
- the highest prescribing rates are in areas with **greatest social deprivation**
- NICE guidelines recommend those with moderate to severe depression should be offered a combination of an **antidepressant and a talking therapy**

# Over The Counter (OTC) & Prescription Medications

- Just because you buy it in a shop **doesn't** make it immune from danger
- OTC can be **addictive**
- Five most abused OTC medicines
  5. Laxatives
  4. Decongestants
  3. Sedative Antihistamines
  2. Cough Mixtures
  1. Codine Based medication– Co-codamol, Nytol

# Alcohol & Substance Misuse

- Questions