



# Steps to Cope Lesson Plans for Post-Primary Educators

Living With Alcohol, Alcohol  
Awareness, and Coping Strategies

STEPS  COPE





# Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol

## Lesson Plan

### Aim

To increase awareness of the hidden harms of alcohol and its misuse in order to encourage a more open and compassionate view of the issues.

### Learning Intentions

- Improve understanding of alcohol misuse and its impact on others
- Develop capacity to join in discussion of sensitive topics

### Success Criteria

- Level 1** Recognise the hidden harms of alcohol and its misuse based on the information provided.
- Level 2** Voice opinions with others about alcohol and its misuse in a respectful and sensible way.
- Level 3** Demonstrate awareness of the hidden harms of alcohol and its misuse through reflection on individual experiences.
- Level 4** Organise understanding of the consequences of alcohol misuse by distinguishing its direct, indirect and hidden harms.
- Level 5** Make use of effective communication skills when discussing the hidden harms of alcohol misuse.
- Level 6** Make judgements about the levels of harm caused by alcohol misuse in specific cases.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol

### Activity 1: What Does Alcohol Mean to Me?

Explain that the activity is about alcohol and the effects that it has in our communities. Emphasise the importance of this discussion happening in a mature way that is sensitive to the wide variety of experiences and opinions on the topic.

- \* Provide pupils with a set of alcohol descriptors (Resource 1a or 1b) so that they can work in pairs or triads. These could be set on tables before the start of the lesson. Explain that each set contains words that can be combined in groups of four to create a definition of alcohol. The descriptors are colour-coded and it is up to you to decide whether you want to draw attention to the scheme at this stage or wait to see whether the pupils pick up on this for themselves.
- \* Allow the pairs/triads time to discuss and reflect on their selections, prompting where necessary. You may want to get some groups to create more than one definition in order to reflect different views of alcohol.
- \* Conduct a plenary to hear some of the definitions devised by the pairs/triads. Encourage them to explain their choice of descriptors and the connections they made. Write some of the submissions on the board to draw attention to effective definitions and the range of possible responses. Stress the fact that all definitions are legitimate as all of the descriptors reflect aspects of alcohol and its effects.

Resource 1a: Alcohol Descriptors

**Addiction**

**Disease**

**Hangover**

**Risk**

**Violence**

**Boring**

**Fun**

**Normal**

**Scary**

**Tasty**

**Home**

**Party**

**Pub**

**Restaurant**

**Street**

**Chemical**

**Depressant**

**Drink**

**Drug**

**Poison**

Resource 1b: Alcohol Descriptors

**Chemical**

**Club**

**Depressant**

**Home**

**Drink**

**Park**

**Drug**

**Party**

**Poison**

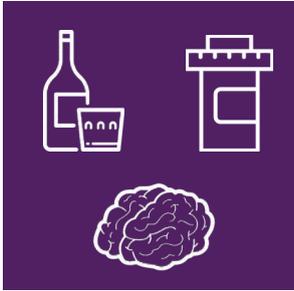
**Pub**

**Problem**

**Restaurant**

**Remedy**

**Street**



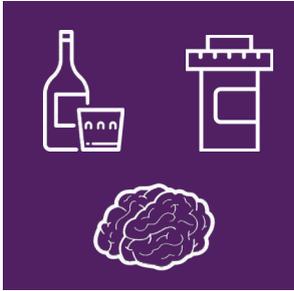
## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol

### Activity 2: What Is Hidden Harm?

#### Activity 2.1: Impact of Alcohol

The purpose of these handouts (Resources 2a and 2b) is to introduce the concept of hidden harm through some simple analogies drawn from the existing literature on the problem.

- \* The first analogy takes the familiar phrase of a problem being like the elephant in the room, something which would seem to be impossible to ignore but which is routinely avoided out of fear or nervousness about how to address the issue. The analogy is familiar to professionals working in the field, but is sufficiently novel to appeal to young people as it communicates both the scale of the problem and the contradictions in our responses to it.
- \* From there the handout moves on to the visual metaphor of an iceberg. This is particularly helpful because it highlights the unseen aspect of the problem and encourages pupils to focus their attention on the consequences of behaviour and the emotional responses attached to them. As such, you should aim to provide more detail in your explanation at this stage, mentioning some of the experiences of hidden harms like anger towards the parent or their addiction, fearfulness about the future, neglect caused by the parent's drinking or the stress of dealing with the situation.



## **Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol**

### **Activity 2: What Is Hidden Harm?**

#### **Activity 2.1: Impact of Alcohol**

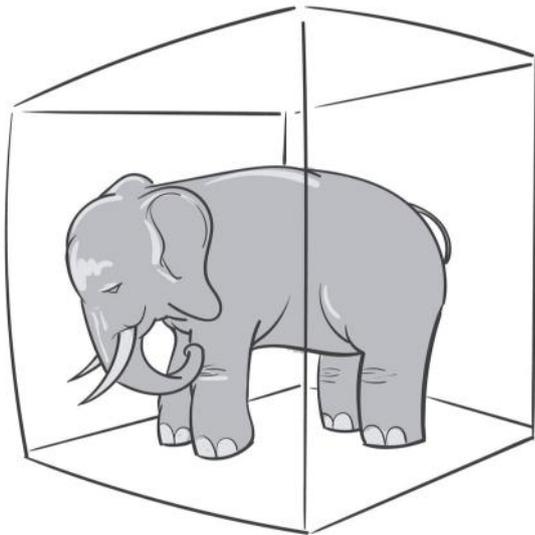
- \* These analogies can then be summarised with the second handout giving specific examples of views expressed by young people who have engaged with the service in the past. You may want to encourage reactions from pupils about how this would feel for the young person and the effect it might have on their daily life.

#### **Activity 2.2: Hidden Harms Quiz**

- \* Give pupils copies of 'Hidden Harms - What Have You Learned?' (Resource 2c). This helps them to consolidate the learning from the two handouts through a series of simple true/false questions. It is worthwhile reflecting on the implications for the understanding of hidden harms that arise from these questions.

## Resource 2a: Impact of Alcohol

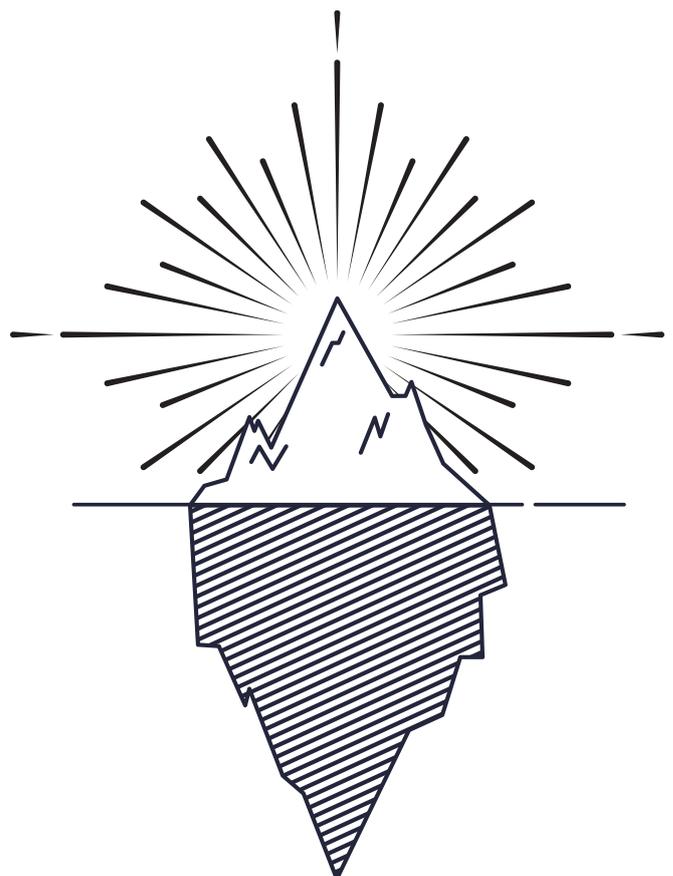
# Impact of Alcohol: Understanding Hidden Harm



In order to understand hidden harm, we can use a couple of different analogies. Have you ever heard the phrase "the elephant in the room"? It refers to an obvious issue that no one is comfortable talking about, so it often goes unaddressed. A parent or carer's drinking could be called "the elephant in the room" as it is something that causes tension, will eventually lead to damage, and is something too big to miss. However, most people would prefer to ignore it.

Hidden harm can also be compared to an iceberg; with an iceberg, there's a part above the surface that we can see, but much more beneath the surface that we can't see. With hidden harm, most of the problem is out of sight and out of mind:

- \* Issues often occur behind closed doors
- \* The focus is placed on the person with the substance misuse or mental health issue, while problems with the young person may be missed
- \* Uncertainty and fear creates anxiety
- \* The affected young person often has more responsibility and, in turn, more stress
- \* The young person's feelings may go unaddressed and get pushed down deeper



## Impact of Alcohol: Experiences of Hidden Harm

*She won't listen to me...*

*Mum doesn't seem to care about me...*

*She goes missing sometimes...*

*She can be so moody...*

*I'm so worried about her...*

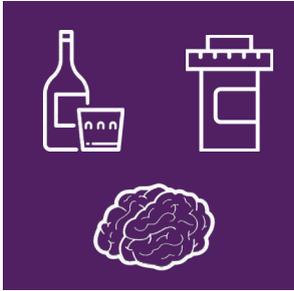
*She's melting my head...*



## Resource 2c: Hidden Harms Quiz

# Hidden Harms: What Have You Learned?

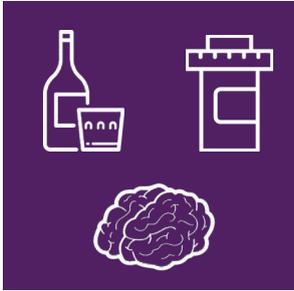
- |  |             |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Alcohol misuse is like the elephant in the living room.                       | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 2. There is no real damage this particular elephant can do.                      | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 3. People are always comfortable talking about alcohol misuse in their families. | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 4. Like an iceberg, most of the harm caused by alcohol is out of sight.          | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 5. It is important to keep hidden harm pushed deep down under the surface.       | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 6. Hidden harm is about the impact of someone's drinking on other people.        | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 7. Someone whose parent is drinking has no responsibilities.                     | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 8. Anxiety, fear and stress are some of the feelings hidden harm can cause.      | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 9. The child of a drinker always knows how their parent will react.              | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 10. Someone suffering from hidden harm will always want support.                 | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |



## **Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol**

### **Activity 3: What Is It Like Living With Someone's Alcohol Misuse?**

- \* Put the activity's key question on the whiteboard or projector screen.
- \* Review the understanding of hidden harm from Activity 2, drawing out pupils' views on the sorts of warning signs we might look out for and the emotions that hidden harm could elicit.
- \* Organise the pupils into small groups of 4-5 and explain that they are going to engage with the hidden harms of alcohol misuse by empathising with real experiences. Outline the procedure for group work and get each group to decide on their individual roles.
- \* Provide each group with one of the accounts from 'Experiences of Hidden Harm' (Resource 3). Have each group's "voice" read aloud the account given by a young person living with hidden harm to the rest of their group. They could repeat the reading 2 or 3 times to make sure everyone is clear, but no questions or interjections should be allowed at this stage. Everyone should take 2-3 minutes to reflect on the account in relation to the activity's title question.



## **Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol**

### **Activity 3: What Is It Like Living With Someone's Alcohol Misuse?**

- \* Give each group's scribe a large piece of paper (minimum A3) and a felt tip pen and have them write the starter phrase, "I am worried about X because..." (replacing X with the name of their young person) either in the centre or at the top of the page. Groups should then thought shower ways to complete the sentence in relation to the account they have been given, and the scribe should note these down on the page. Everyone, apart from the scribe, should be encouraged to give at least one unique response. Place a time limit on this phase of the task.
- \* Groups must then select what they believe are the three most significant concerns in relation to their young person. Each group's "voice" reads aloud the account of hidden harm given by their young person, then the three performers (including the scribe if necessary) read one each of the group's most significant concerns. Encourage the performers to take on the role of the concerned friend or family member when giving their feedback.

### Resource 3: Experiences of Hidden Harm

#### Danny, 14

"I just had enough one day, got really mad, went to school and then walked out halfway through and went into town. I nicked a few things and then got done by the police for chucking things over these railings at people underneath. Part of me did it just to see if Mum and Dad'd be bothered. They weren't though, just shouted and then carried on as normal."

#### Ellie, 18

"I didn't really like to talk to my friends about it. They didn't understand and anyway it was embarrassing, who wants to admit their families are alkie? I used to make things up to make it sound alright. One of my friends knew, I'd go round to her house if things got bad but you could tell her mum, 'just let me stay,' because she felt sorry for me."

#### Laura, 17

"It was hard because on one hand I really hated her, on the other I still loved her ... God knows why, she didn't care. I used to shout and scream at her and then go and cry because it made no difference. In the end I had to leave, I didn't want to be around it anymore. I still worry though, and get angry."

#### Fiona, 17

"I had to look after my brother, make sure he got up and went to school, had his tea, if I didn't he wouldn't have. I couldn't go out after school 'cause he finished before me and I knew he'd be waiting, wanting to get in at home and my mum, she wasn't always there or if she was, she'd be in bed."

#### Jenna, 11

"I can never count on my mum. Some days, she is fine. She cleans the house and fixes dinner and tells us funny stories. On other days she starts drinking in the morning and drinks all day long. By the time I get home from school, she is asleep on the sofa. We can't even wake her up for dinner. She forgets all about us."

#### Conor, 13

"My dad stopped drinking three months ago. We go to see a counsellor together and Dad goes to AA meetings, but I still feel really angry with him. It feels like I'm carrying round all these feelings. No matter how hard I try, I can't forget some of the hurts he did to me and my mom when he was drinking."

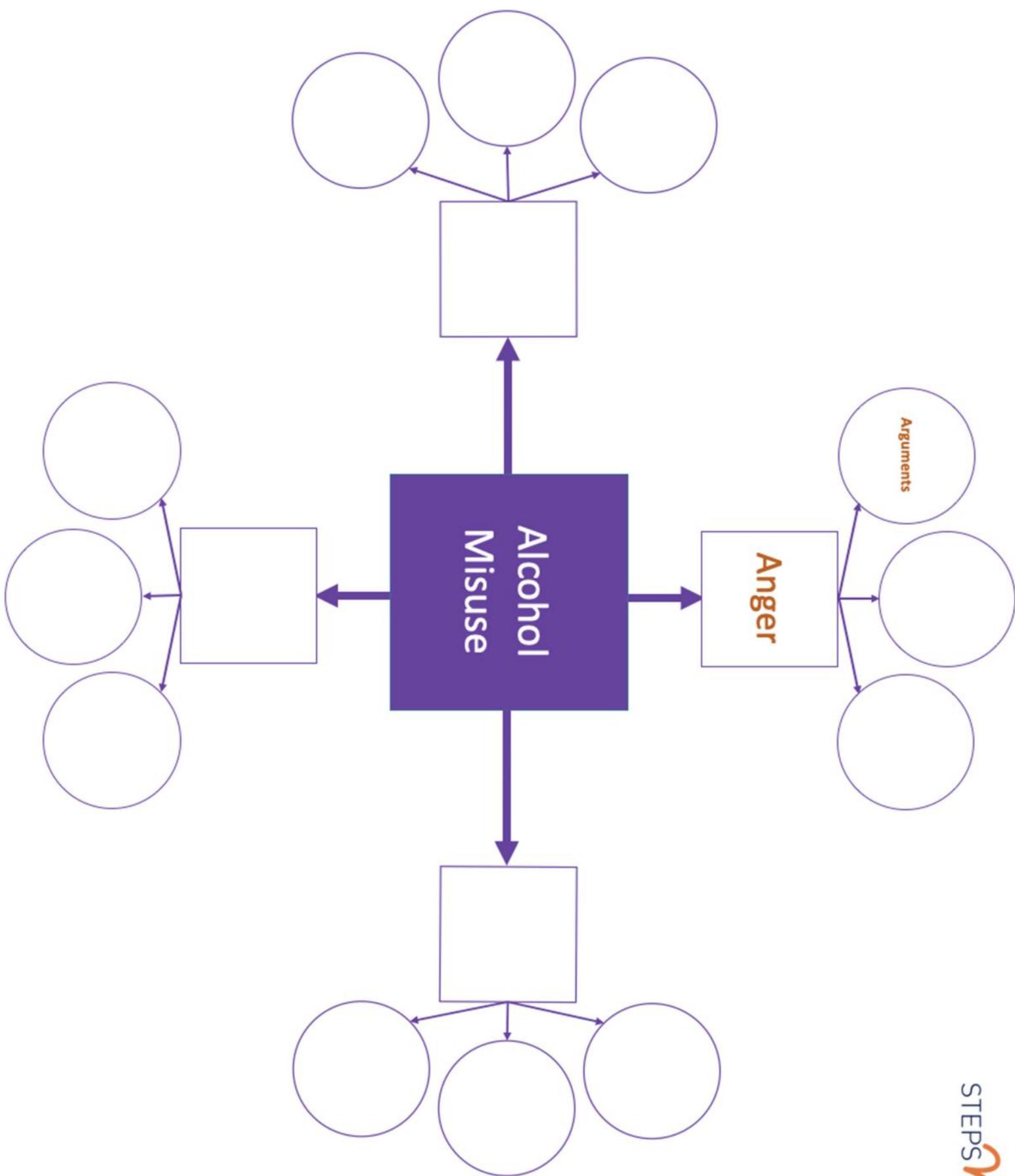


## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol

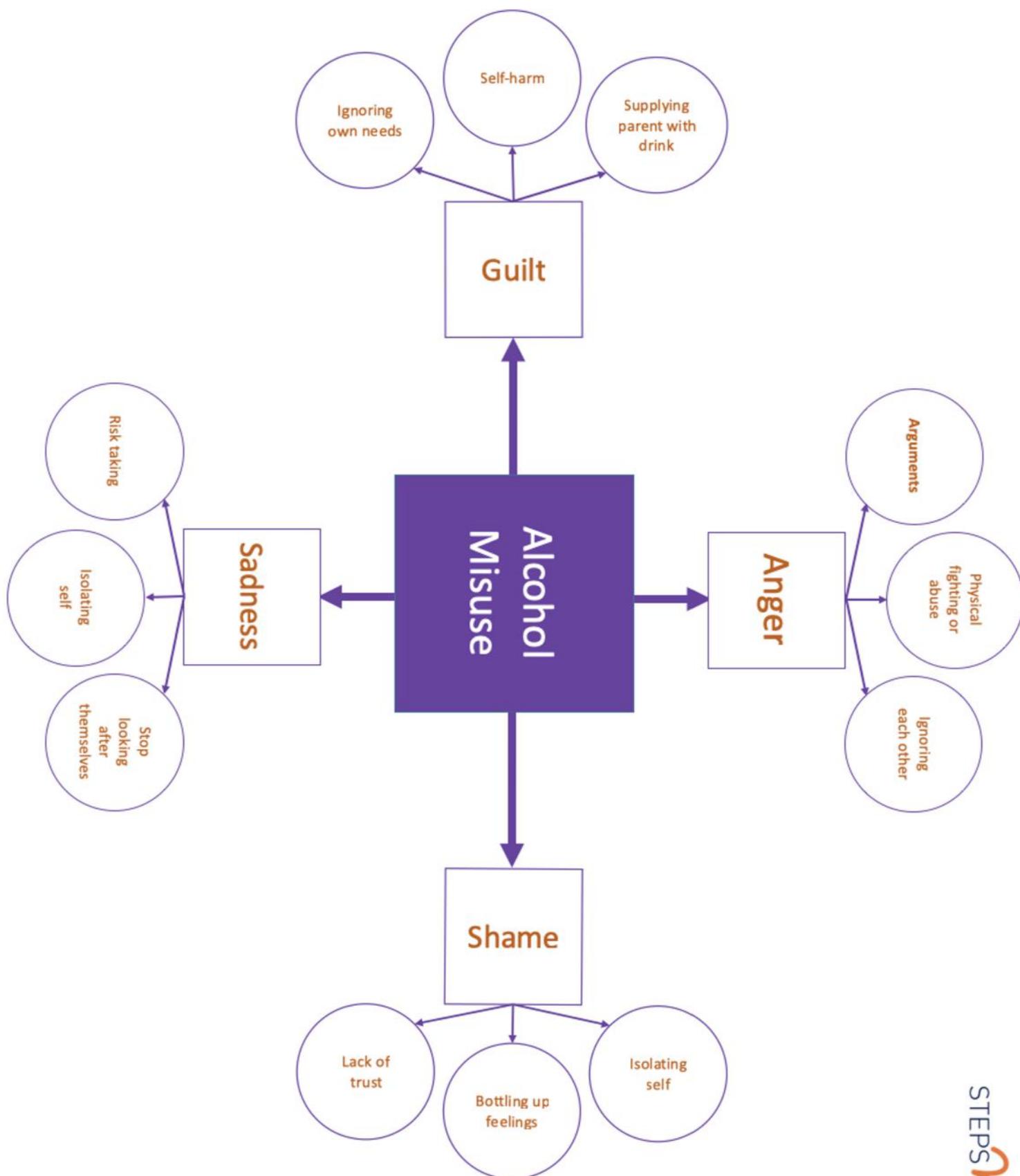
### Activity 4: What Are the Consequences of Alcohol Misuse?

- \* Conduct a brief discussion with the pupils on the topic of alcohol misuse, trying to gauge their level of understanding and retention from previous activities. You may want to reflect on the terminology here – for example, the phrase ‘misuse’ suggests a judgement about alcohol which could affect our attitudes. You are aiming to draw out their learning from Activity 3, which should have given them an insight into the specific experience of hidden harm.
- \* Distribute copies of the consequence wheel worksheet (Resource 4a) to pupils and explain that the task is designed to get pupils thinking about the effects of alcohol misuse in an organised way that should help them to identify where hidden harms come from. Use the completed example (Resource 4b) to guide pupils through the process of completing the worksheet. You may want to complete the example together as a class.
- \* An alternative approach could be to work as a class to produce a set of first-order effects and then have pupils work individually or in pairs to think about the second-order consequences.
- \* To assist pupils who find it difficult to think of answers, you could develop a set of terms and provide these to pupils jumbled up, leaving them the task of sorting out the first and second-order impacts. This could provide scope for some interesting discussion of the connections pupils make.

# Resource 4a: Consequence Wheel



# Resource 4b: Consequence Wheel - Completed Example for Educator Use



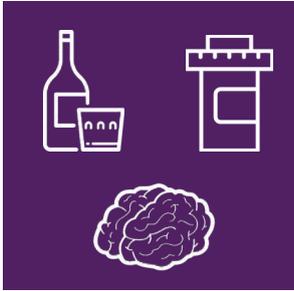


## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol

### Activity 5: How Can We Address the Hidden Harms of Alcohol Misuse?

This activity makes use of the CAF (Consider All Factors) model from the CCEA publication *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3* (pp. 9-10), which can be found at [nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stage\\_3/ALTM-KS3.pdf](http://nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stage_3/ALTM-KS3.pdf)

- \* Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. It may be helpful to have done this in advance of the activity and to prepare the classroom layout to facilitate group work. Each group should be provided with one of the 'Hidden Harm Experiences' stories (resource 5a) and a few copies of the 'CAF Template' (resource 5b). Make sure that you have a suitable number of spare CAF templates to provide to groups should they need them.
- \* Explain that the purpose of the task is for pupils to evaluate the risks caused by parental alcohol misuse and think about what might be appropriate advice to give to a young person dealing with hidden harm. For this to be effective, we need to break the issue down and address the different elements of the problem. Tell the groups to read the story they have been provided and to use the CAF template to record their concerns.
- \* Allow the groups to consider the story they have on the table in front of them and summarise their concerns. Allow them roughly 10 minutes to complete this part of the task.



## **Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Living With Alcohol**

### **Activity 5: How Can We Address the Hidden Harms of Alcohol Misuse?**

- \* After the groups have completed their evaluation, get them to rotate to a different table and provide them with the relevant matching summary from the 'Hidden Harm Advice' worksheet (resource 5c) and copies of the 'CAF Advice Template' (resource 5d). They should now assess how well the advice provided by the other group fits with the advice summary.
- \* Have the groups return to their original table and review the comments made by the other group. Conduct a plenary on the evaluation process.

## Resource 5a: Hidden Harm Scenarios

### John

John's dad is an alcoholic. He doesn't live with John and his mom anymore. Since John's dad left, John's mom always seems too busy or too tired to pay much attention to John. She is always worrying about the bills and the housework. She is sad or crabby most of the time. John feels abandoned by his dad. He feels like a burden to his mother. He refuses to tidy his room or do any other chores. He won't do his homework anymore. He and his mom yell at each other. John feels hurt and angry and lonely. He feels as though his parents don't love him anymore.

### Julia

Julia's family had so many problems that they seemed to forget about her. She felt lonely and worried about what would happen. She watched her dad when he was drinking and he seemed to be happy and would act silly, which made her laugh. She wanted to feel good, too, so thought about taking some of the drink herself. There were kids at school she knew who talked about drinking, so she decided to go out to some of the places they were hanging out and give that a try instead of sitting in the house feeling lonely all the time.

### Aoife

Aoife's parents are divorced and she lives with her dad. Her mum drinks a lot and it was decided that it wasn't safe for Aoife to stay with her. Even when she gets to see her mum it's only with her granny or granddad there to supervise. Aoife's dad is still very angry with Aoife's mum. He sometimes says hurtful things about her, even though Aoife still loves her. Aoife feels like she needs to defend her mum, so she and her dad end up arguing. He doesn't understand that her mum is just sick and needs help.

### Ollie

Ollie's parents are always fighting, night after night, especially after a bottle or two. Ollie has to lie in bed and listen to the sounds coming up the stairs or through the walls. Listening to his parents, he tries to figure out who is right and who is wrong. It doesn't help that Ollie's mum and dad sometimes argue about Ollie, as well. When Ollie listens to the arguments, he feels upset and his stomach hurts. It makes him angry too, so that sometimes he lashes out at people in school, even the teachers.

## Resource 5a: Hidden Harm Scenarios

### Sophie

Sophie forgot to put her new bike away in the shed one night. Her dad came home from the pub, saw the bike in the garden and got very angry with Sophie. He started yelling at Sophie for being lazy and selfish and hit her on the arms and back while she was crying on her bed. Sophie felt really bad for not putting the bike away and very upset that her dad had been so angry with her. Afterwards, her dad came up to talk to her and said that he hadn't meant to hurt her but he was annoyed because the bike could have been stolen.

### Daniel

Daniel lives alone with his dad. Daniel often goes round to his friend Joe's house after school, where Joe's mum and dad always offer to let him stay for dinner. Daniel couldn't return the favour because he knew that it could be one of the days when his dad would get drunk and hadn't bothered going shopping, never mind thought about cooking a meal. On top of that, the house would be a mess. Joe's mum and dad might not be so nice to him if they heard about what things were like at home.

### Mark

Mark's mum arrives to pick him up from school to drive him to his football training. However, Mark can tell when she arrives that she has been drinking – she smells of booze and she looks sleepy. He's afraid to get in the car in case something happens on the way, but he doesn't want to make a scene outside the school gates – one of the other kids might see and make fun of him, or worse, a teacher might see and report it.

## Resource 5b: CAF Template

Young person (YP) being discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

## Resource 5b: CAF Template

Young person (YP) being discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>What emotions does this bring up?</b>
	<b>What risks are there to the YP?</b>
	<b>What advice would help?</b>

## Resource 5c: Hidden Harm Advice

### John

It might help for John and his mum to talk about their feelings together. John's mum probably doesn't want to forget about him and probably doesn't know how hurt and angry he feels. She is busy coping with her own problems, so might need reminded about what John is going through. John could ask for what he needs. Also, John could show respect for his mum's feelings by doing his chores. That might help his mum out and give her less to worry about.

### Julia

Plenty of kids try to use alcohol or other drugs as a way of coping, but it doesn't tend to work very well. Julia might end up with her own drinking problem, or other problems caused by drinking. She needs to find something else that makes her happy, and talk about the things that are making her unhappy rather than trying to mask them with drinking.

### Aoife

Aoife's dad's behaviour is a sign that he isn't coping with his feelings, even though Aoife herself understands that her mum's an alcoholic. It's normal that Aoife feels torn between them, but she doesn't have to listen to her dad saying hurtful things about Aoife's mum. She could tell her dad what it feels like to hear the hurtful things, or she could ask to talk about something else instead.

### Ollie

Kids can't solve their parents' problems and trying to figure them out is a waste of time because, like Ollie, they just end up feeling bad. If parents are fighting, it might be best not to listen at all – Ollie could go somewhere else, like a friend or relative's house, or do something to distract himself, like watching videos or listening to music.

## Resource 5c: Hidden Harm Advice

### Mark

It helps to have a plan worked out ahead of time for these situations - for example, some other responsible adult to call. In Mark's case that might be his dad or a grandparent. Mark should let that person know that this is something he is worried about. Ultimately, Mark may have to prepare himself for talking to someone outside of the family about this because he has a right to feel safe and refusing to get in the car in that situation is pretty sensible.

### Sophie

People do things when they're drunk that they wouldn't normally do because the alcohol stops them thinking things through. However, there's no excuse for someone hurting a child. Sophie's dad lost control in this situation, so it would be sensible for Sophie to remove herself from the situation altogether - even going to a neighbour's house or calling the police if there was no one else around to help her.

### Daniel

Daniel needs someone he can rely on to be there to cook, or at least help him to do it - perhaps a grandparent or another relative. If not, then he might need to come up with another plan, like going out for pizza. There's the fear of embarrassment, as well, which can be a big issue for kids like Daniel. He might need to prepare himself by talking to Joe or Joe's parents about the situation, so that it isn't so awkward if something does go wrong.

## Resource 5d: CAF Advice Template

Young person (YP) being discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Was this identified by the other group?</b> Yes    --- No     ---
	<b>Why was this a concern?</b>
	<b>What advice is given in the summary?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Was this identified by the other group?</b> Yes    --- No     ---
	<b>Why was this a concern?</b>
	<b>What advice is given in the summary?</b>

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Was this identified by the other group?</b> Yes    --- No     ---
	<b>Why was this a concern?</b>
	<b>What advice is given in the summary?</b>

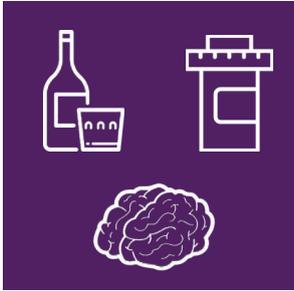
## Resource 5d: CAF Advice Template

Young person (YP) being discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

Concern	Was this identified by the other group? Yes    --- No     ---
	Why was this a concern?
	What advice is given in the summary?

Concern	Was this identified by the other group? Yes    --- No     ---
	Why was this a concern?
	What advice is given in the summary?

Concern	Was this identified by the other group? Yes    --- No     ---
	Why was this a concern?
	What advice is given in the summary?



# Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

## Lesson Plan

### Aim

To improve understanding of alcohol misuse and addiction as a way of fostering more balanced responses towards the harms they cause.

### Learning Intentions

- Increase knowledge concerning the effects of alcohol, particularly in relation to addiction.
- Encourage effective use of factual information in discussion and debate.

### Success Criteria

**Level 1** Find out about the different effects that alcohol can have on the human body.

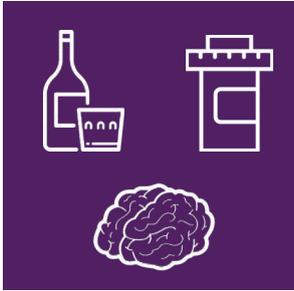
**Level 2** Decide what sort of behaviour might suggest a person is addicted to alcohol.

**Level 3** Spot myths about alcohol based on your existing knowledge.

**Level 4** Show how addiction to alcohol can develop over time by organising examples of addictive behaviour.

**Level 5** Work together to design a campaign around alcohol awareness that aims to encourage healthy behaviour.

**Level 6** Weigh up the effectiveness of different sorts of treatment programmes for alcohol addiction.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 1: What Does Alcohol Do To Us?

- \* Introduce the topic by trying to draw out the pupils' existing understanding of alcohol and drugs more broadly. Explain that alcohol is a drug like any other, albeit far more common, and that its use has consequences for the user's physical and mental health that this activity is designed to make clear. Emphasise that it is only by learning the facts about alcohol that we can properly understand the risks associated with its use.
- \* Provide pupils with copies of the information sheet 'Alcohol & The Body' (Resource 1a or 1b) and ask them to read it. It is important to check the pupils' understanding of this resource as some words and concepts may be unfamiliar. The best approach here will inevitably depend on your judgement of the class.
- \* As an alternative, you could show pupils a video of alcohol's effects on the body. There are several available on sharing sites like YouTube. Drinkaware have produced a number of animation-based videos that may be useful, and despite its age the informational clip from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation in Australia is detailed and concise on how alcohol is processed. Always check videos before showing them in class, and only use videos produced by organisations you know you can trust to present the facts.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 1: What Does Alcohol Do To Us?

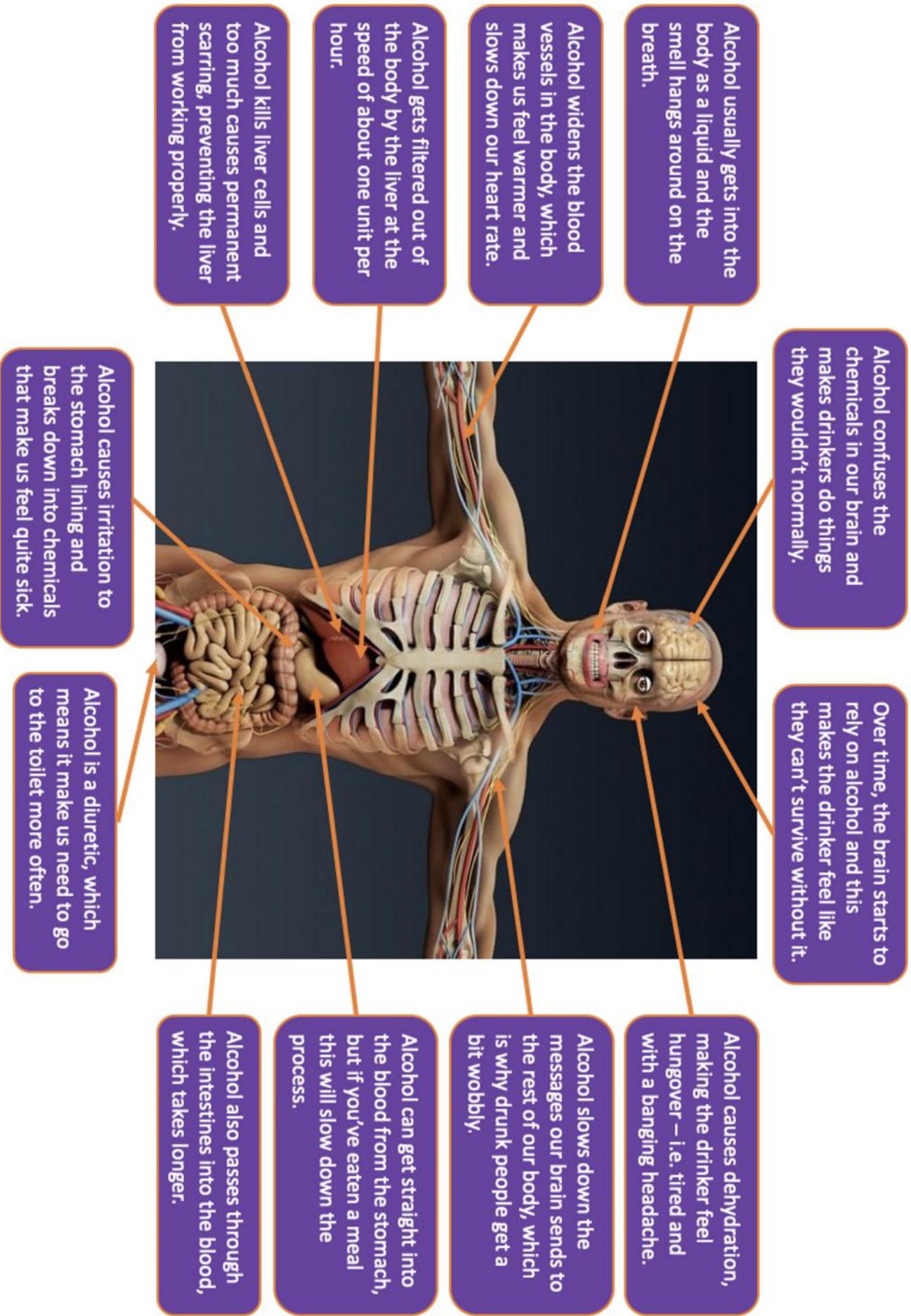
\* When you are satisfied that the pupils have engaged with the information you have presented, hand out copies of the worksheet (Resource 1c). The pupils' task is to identify both short and long-term effects of drinking alcohol in four key areas. For the purposes of this task, short-term effects are those felt while drinking alcohol and long-term effects are those that build up over repeated use. For example, in the short-term alcohol might make you feel more relaxed whereas in the long-term it could make you feel depressed.

\* Useful Links:

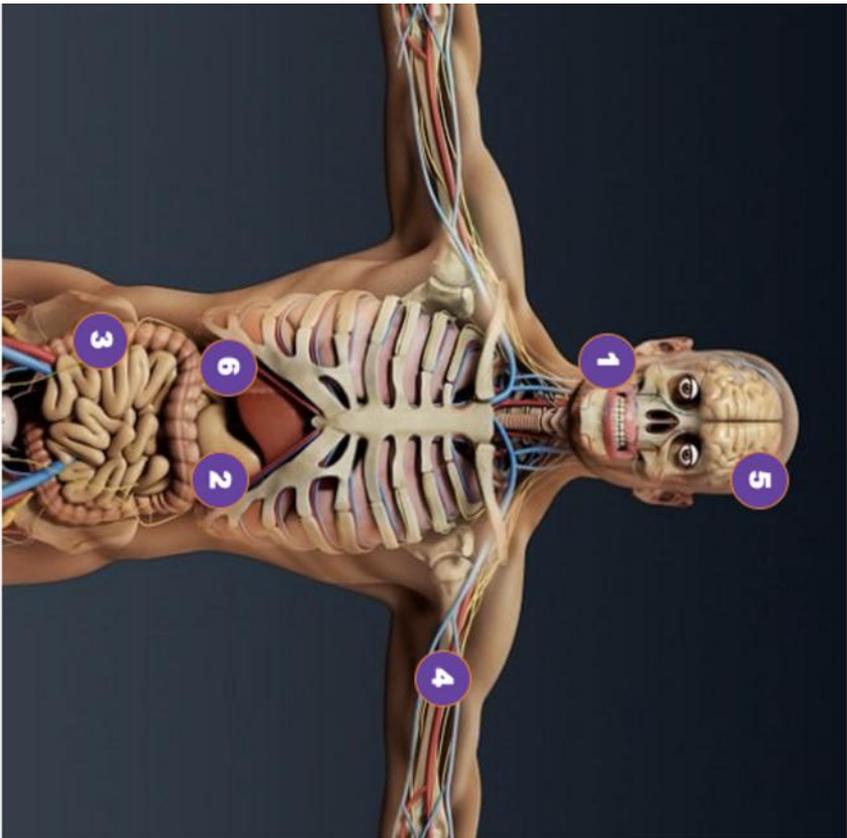
Alcohol and the Body - Australian Alcohol and Drug Foundation  
[youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_OoW\\_w-uM8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_OoW_w-uM8)

Drinkaware YouTube page  
[youtube.com/user/drinkawaretrust](https://www.youtube.com/user/drinkawaretrust)

# Resource 1a: Alcohol & The Body



# Resource 1b: Alcohol & The Body



## 1 Mouth

As a drug, alcohol is almost always consumed as a liquid. Tiny amounts will get into the system here and it is usually easy to tell if someone has been drinking as you will be able to smell it on their breath.

## 2 Stomach

Some of the alcohol we drink gets absorbed into the bloodstream through the lining of the stomach. How much will depend on what else is being digested, so a large meal will slow down the speed that alcohol gets into your system. Alcohol encourages the creation of digestive juices and large amounts of alcohol can cause irritation in the stomach lining.

## 3 Intestines

Most of the alcohol you drink (about 80%) gets into the blood here as part of the digestion process.

## 4 Circulatory system

Alcohol gets carried around the body through the bloodstream. It causes the blood vessels to widen and this makes us feel warm and relaxed as our blood pressure drops and our heart rate slows. This could explain why people feel less stressed when they drink, although too much alcohol can stop the heart beating altogether.

## 5 Brain

Within a minute from getting into the blood, alcohol is carried to the brain, where it works to slow down the work of chemicals that send messages around the body. This is why alcohol is known as a depressant drug, because it slows down (and even switches off) our reactions. The more often we drink, the bigger impact this will have on our communication pathways and the harder it will be to stop drinking.

## 6 Liver

Alcohol is processed in the liver, but this only happens at a rate of about one unit per hour. This is why it takes time to sober up. Large amounts of alcohol damage the liver and make it difficult for the body to process other substances, like fats. Regular, heavy alcohol use will often lead to serious liver damage.

### Effects at specific Blood Alcohol Concentrations (BAC)

**BAC 0.03**  
Limited, but mood (good or bad) may be intensified.

**BAC 0.06**  
More emotional and judgement and decision-making weakened.

**BAC 0.1**  
Vision, balance and speech affected. Some loss of control.

**BAC 0.15**  
Poor motor control. Medical assessment advised.

**BAC 0.2**  
Unable to walk/stand unaided. Medical attention necessary.

**BAC 0.3+**  
Possible loss of consciousness. Hospitalisation required.

# Resource 1c: Effects of Alcohol Worksheet

	<b>Short-Term Effects</b> (e.g. chemicals released)	<b>Long-Term Effects</b> (e.g. changes caused)
<b>Mouth</b> 		Contributes to tooth decay. Increased risk of mouth and throat cancers. Especially risky when mixed with tobacco.
<b>Stomach</b> 	Increased flow of digestive juices. Appetite reduces. Some alcohol reaches bloodstream. Food will slow down alcohol absorption.	
<b>Brain</b> 		
<b>Heart</b> 		
<b>Liver</b> 		



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 2: Can We Tell That Someone Is Addicted?

- \* Divide your whiteboard with a line down the centre. On the left hand side write the phrase "alcohol abuse" or "alcohol misuse" and on the right "alcohol addiction" or "alcoholism". Lead a class discussion on the differences between the two phrases, writing key words from the pupils on the relevant half of the whiteboard.
- \* Organise the class into pairs or small groups and distribute one set of sorting cards (Resource 2a) to each group. Instruct them to sort the cards into two sets - those that give examples of alcohol abuse/misuse and those that give examples of alcohol addiction/alcoholism.
- \* Conduct a plenary. This could be carried out in a number of ways, most obviously through simple discussion of the pupils' responses. A more structured approach would be to ask the pupils, perhaps as a homework task, to write two reflective summaries of alcohol abuse/misuse and alcohol addiction/alcoholism based on the examples they selected. An example worksheet is provided (Resource 2b).

**Resource 2a: Alcohol Abuse or Alcohol  
Addiction?**

She always has a hangover on Sunday because she has been out drinking the night before.

He often gets so drunk that he can't remember what happened the night before.

He ended up with a criminal record after getting into a fight while out drinking.

The first thing that he thinks about in the morning is a drink to take the edge off.

She enjoys having a glass of wine every night with her dinner.

**Resource 2a: Alcohol Abuse or Alcohol  
Addiction?**

She sometimes forgets to do things, like fetching the kids, because of her drinking.

He has secret places around the house where he hides drink from his family.

She was fired from her job because she had been drinking at work.

She has done some embarrassing things while out drinking.

His wife left because she couldn't cope with his drinking.

## Resource 2b: Alcohol Abuse or Alcohol Addiction?

### Alcohol Abuse

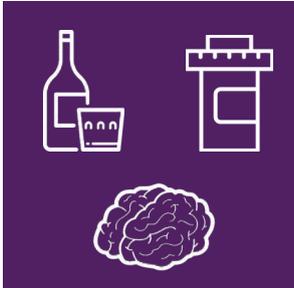
What sorts of things did you think were examples of alcohol abuse/misuse?

Why did those examples make you less concerned than the examples you chose for alcohol addiction?

### Alcohol Addiction

What sorts of things in the examples made you think the person was addicted to alcohol?

How can we tell whether someone's abuse/misuse of alcohol has become an addiction?



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 3: Alcohol - Fact or Fiction?

- \* Remind pupils about what they have learned already about hidden harm and the effects of alcohol more generally. It would be sensible here to review the work done on the effects of alcohol on the body (Activity 1), particularly to address any misconceptions or areas of confusion.
- \* Once the review of their previous learning has been completed to your satisfaction, have the pupils answer the 'Alcohol Quiz' (Resource 3a). This should be completed individually, without discussion, and should not require more than 5 minutes for everyone to complete (the purpose of the task is to address the myths and anecdotal evidence that exist about alcohol, so quick responses could be just as revealing as considered answers).
- \* Distribute copies of the 'Quiz Answers' (Resource 3b) for pupils to mark their own work. You may prefer to have pupils mark each other's work here to help emphasise the differences of opinion that should emerge about some of the statements. Another approach would be to have the pupils answer the questions a second time with the answer sheet to emphasise how their responses might change.
- \* Lead a review of each of the statements. Pupils could be selected to explain the answers which they gave and their reasoning, as well as how the information provided on the answer sheet affected their thinking. Focus your questioning on why the pupils gave the answers they did and whether their responses would have been different if the answer sheet had been provided in advance. Many of the answers are neither simple nor straightforward, so there is room for debate.

## Resource 3a: Alcohol Quiz

### Alcohol - True or False?

		True	False	Not Sure
1	Alcohol gives you a lift.			
2	"Guinness is good for you."			
3	Drinking coffee will sober you up.			
4	Drinking a pint of water will cure a hangover.			
5	Some drinks are more addictive than others.			
6	Being alcoholic means drinking every day.			
7	Alcoholism is a disease.			
8	An alcohol habit is impossible to break.			
9	The effects of alcohol are obvious.			
10	Alcohol misuse can lead to violence.			

## Resource 3b: Alcohol Quiz Answers

### Alcohol - True or False? Answers

**1. Alcohol gives you a lift.**

Alcohol is a depressive drug, which means it slows down the brain and the reactions of the body. It will make the user relaxed and calm but also less in control.

**2. "Guinness is good for you."**

Guinness has relatively high levels of iron compared to some drinks, but if you're low on iron you'd be better off drinking an egg yolk than a pint of stout.

**3. Drinking coffee will help you sober up.**

Coffee contains caffeine, which is a relatively weak stimulant drug, so it might perk you up but it doesn't reduce the amount of alcohol in your body.

**4. Drinking a pint of water will cure a hangover.**

Headaches after drinking have a lot to do with dehydration, although there are also toxic chemicals produced when we process alcohol that make us feel sick.

**5. Some drinks are more addictive than others.**

Different drinks have different strengths, but the difference is only in the quantity of alcohol, not how it affects the body and the brain.

**6. Being alcoholic means drinking every day.**

Alcoholism is simply addiction to alcohol. This means not being able to go without drinking and drink getting in the way of other aspects of life.

**7. Alcoholism is a disease.**

Diseases happen when something goes wrong in the body or something infects the body. This might suggest that drinking is not something the alcoholic can control.

**8. An alcohol habit is impossible to break.**

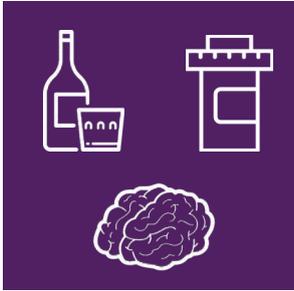
Lots of people with alcohol problems have successfully overcome them and stopped drinking. However, relapse (going back to drinking) is often a possibility.

**9. The effects of alcohol are obvious.**

Alcohol can cause physical effects, both in the short and the long-term, and psychological effects, including to those people living with the drinker.

**10. Alcohol misuse can lead to violence.**

Alcohol reduces our ability to think clearly, which makes us more likely to react in extreme ways under stress – a classic 'fight or flight' response.



## **Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness**

### **Activity 4: How Does Someone Become Addicted?**

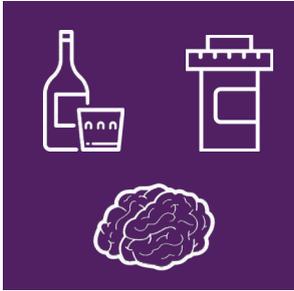
The purpose of this activity is to show how addiction is something which develops over time due to the choices people make and the experiences individuals have. However, there is a fierce debate about the causes of addiction and it is important to be aware of these as some of these views will inform pupils' opinions about the influence of certain choices. ASCERT (and other organisations) provide training in this area which you may wish to avail of if this is a topic you expect to be teaching regularly. In addition, a number of websites provide information about this subject – for example, NHS Choices offers a simple summary and there are a number of helpful articles published on the Beating Addictions website.

#### Useful links

ASCERT - Training  
[ascert.biz/training-consultancy/](https://ascert.biz/training-consultancy/)

Beating Addictions – About Addictions...  
[beatingaddictions.co.uk/aboutaddictionscategory.html](https://beatingaddictions.co.uk/aboutaddictionscategory.html)

NHS Choices - Addiction: what is it?  
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/addiction-what-is-it/>



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 4: How Does Someone Become Addicted?

- \* In class, divide the pupils into small groups and explain to the groups that their goal is to think about people's behaviour in such a way as to show how each action can contribute to the development of addiction by influencing other actions and choices.
- \* Provide groups with the 'How Does Someone Become Addicted to Drink?' resource pack (either Resource 4a and 4b or Resource 4c and 4d). The difference between the resources is the metaphor used to describe addiction (as a wall or a path). Using Resource 4a and 4b the groups will create a wall, with the bricks at the bottom as the starting points of addiction and increasing in the severity of the user's dependence as the wall is built up, blocking the user off from the image of a happy life they might aspire to. Resource 4c and 4d involve behaviours as stones, following a path to addiction. You may want to have different groups working on different resources to encourage different perspectives.
- \* Empty bricks or stones should be provided with a suitable pen so that groups can add in other actions that they think reflect addictive behaviours not mentioned on the cards.

**Resource 4a: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?**



## Resource 4b: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?

Enjoying an occasional glass.

Drinking at social events.

Going out intending to get drunk.

Not being able to go a few days without.

Getting the shakes and sweats if you stop.

Wanting a drink first thing in the morning.

Hiding drink from family members.

Planning social events around alcohol.

Never refusing a drink when it's offered.

Developing a taste for a specific drink.

Getting into arguments with family and friends.

Starting to develop health problems.

Being cut off by family or friends.

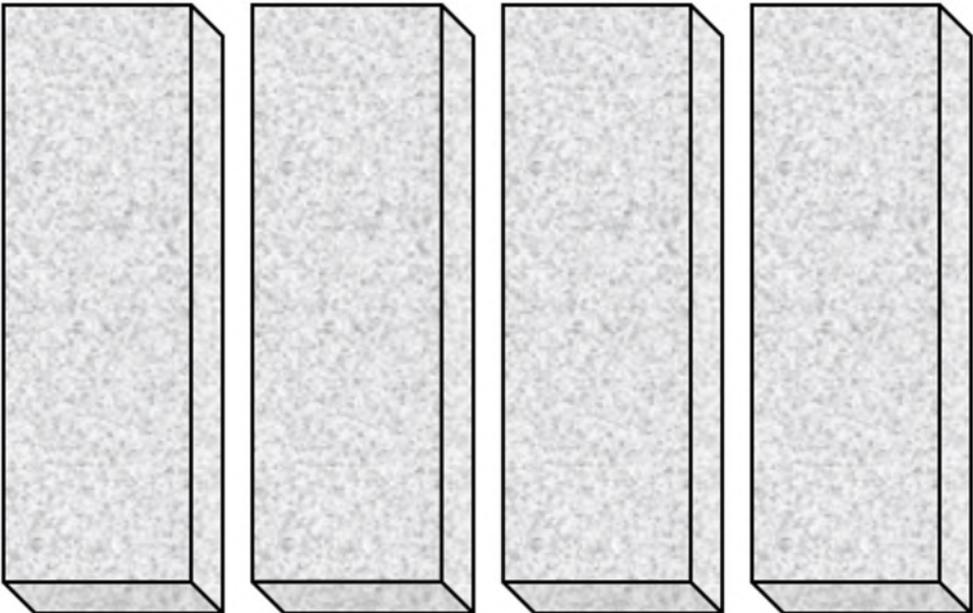
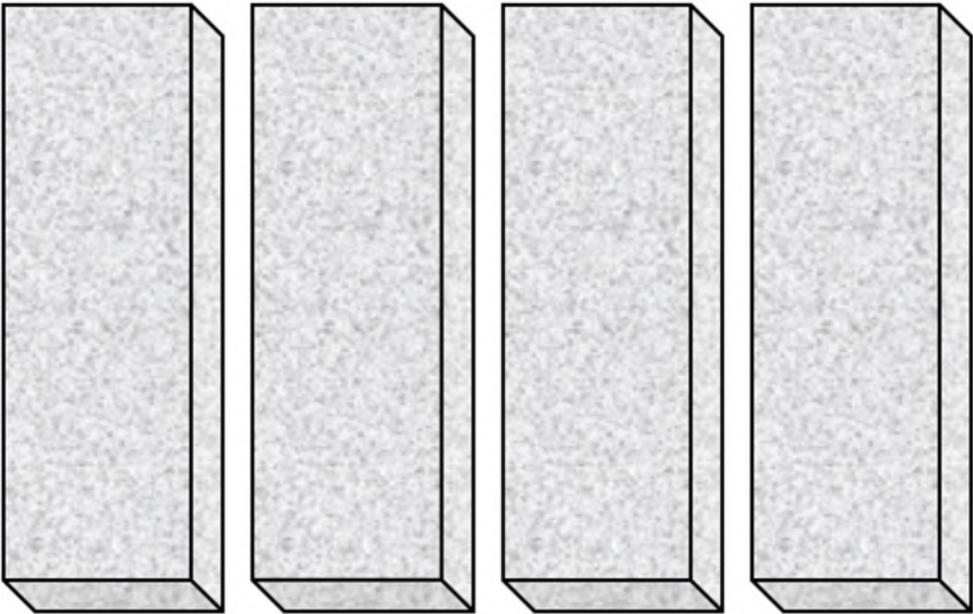
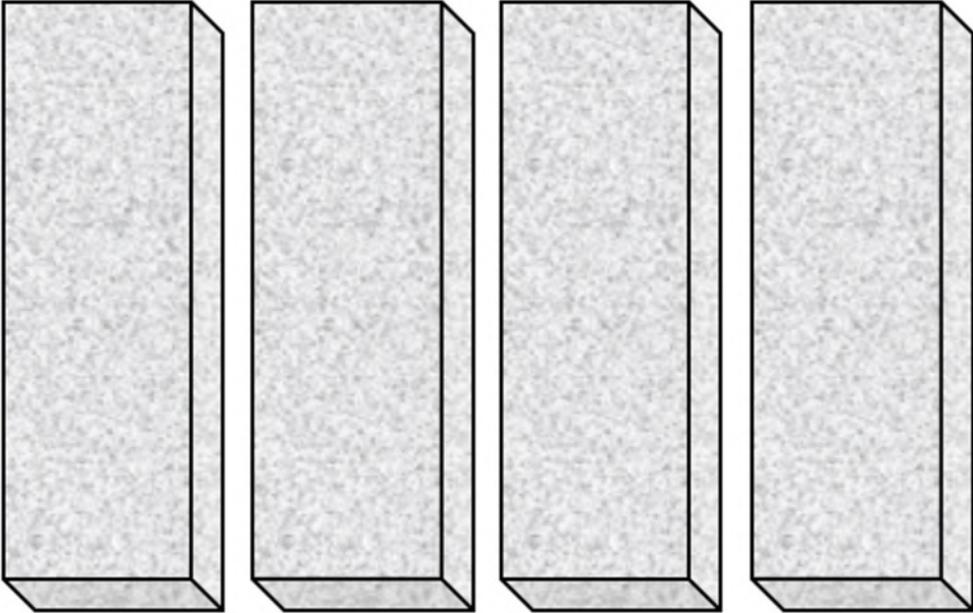
Drinking to deal with stress.

Drinking all day or through the night.

Drinking to forget problems.

Getting aggressive when drunk.

**Resource 4b: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?**



**Resource 4c: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?**



## Resource 4d: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?

Enjoying an occasional glass.

Drinking at social events.

Wanting a drink first thing in the morning.

Never refusing a drink when it's offered.

Planning social events around alcohol.

Going out intending to get drunk.

Not being able to go a few days without.

Hiding drink from family members.

Getting the shakes and sweats if you stop.

Developing a taste for a specific drink.

**Resource 4d: How Does Someone Get Addicted to Drink?**

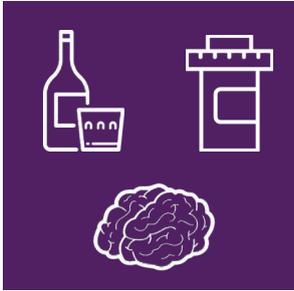
Getting into arguments.

Developing health problems.

Being cut off by family or friends.

Drinking to deal with stress.

Drinking all day or through the night.

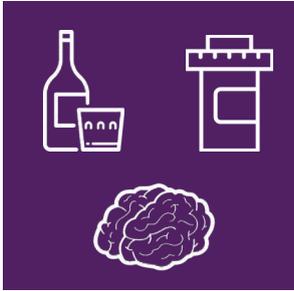


## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 5: Alcohol Awareness Campaign

This activity has quite a loose structure and will require careful time management by both the teacher and pupils. However, this will provide an excellent opportunity for the integration of the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities framework. Make sure that you set specific time-frames. The aim of the activity is to encourage focus on what is described as harm reduction within drug and alcohol support services: what can be done to reduce the specific impact that alcohol has in people's lives?

- \* Begin with an open discussion of the harms caused by alcohol. This should draw on previous activities where possible. Summarise the discussion using the whiteboard or a flipchart. If possible, draw out a range of issues, including physical, psychological and social effects. Connect this to the goal of harm reduction and explain that support services try to address specific problems.
- \* Divide the class into groups of 4-5. It may be advisable to organise this in advance as the task requires the groups to manage their own work and you will be able to judge which pupils will work best together. Explain that the pupils will be creating promotional material to draw attention to one of the harms caused by alcohol. It is up to you how much freedom you want to give the class. A simple task is to create a poster, but there are a range of options detailed in the 'Alcohol Awareness Campaign' handout (Resource 5a). Likewise, you may decide to allow groups to decide on their topics for themselves or offer a limited range of topics (Resource 5b) to ensure variety and focus.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 5: Alcohol Awareness Campaign

\* An alternative is to align your teaching with Alcohol Awareness Week. Alcohol Concern organise the UK-wide promotion in November each year, while NI Alcohol Awareness Week is typically organised by the PHA and the Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Coordination Teams (NIDACTS) in June. One advantage of this approach is that specific themes will be suggested by the organisers that you can use to focus pupils' activity.

#### \* Useful Links

Alcohol Concern – Alcohol Awareness Week  
[alcoholconcern.org.uk/alcohol-awareness-week](http://alcoholconcern.org.uk/alcohol-awareness-week)

CCEA – Think Skills & Personal Capabilities microsite  
[nicurriculum.org.uk/curriculum\\_microsite/TSPC/index.asp](http://nicurriculum.org.uk/curriculum_microsite/TSPC/index.asp)

NIDACTS Campaigns  
[drugsandalcoholni.info/campaigns/](http://drugsandalcoholni.info/campaigns/)

## Resource 5a: Alcohol Awareness Campaign

### Advert

What is it?

A short video that draws attention to the specific issue to increase people's awareness and encourage them to get involved in some way.

What do you need to do?

Come up with an idea for a story that will grab people's attention, write a script and then act it out, either in class or on camera!

### Assembly

What is it?

A five-minute presentation that could be given during assembly to let other pupils know about the issue.

What do you need to do?

Decide on some key messages you want to put across, create a backdrop presentation and make sure everyone has a role, then present it to the class, or the school assembly...

### Fundraiser

What is it?

An activity everyone can join in with that is linked to the issue you want to address and that will encourage donations or sponsorship.

What do you need to do?

Choose a fun activity, set some goals and timeframes and create a simple flyer to let everyone know. Be sure you can manage the cash...

### Leaflet

What is it?

A more detailed flyer that draws attention to the issue but also provides helpful information.

What do you need to do?

Write a summary of the issue and identify some helpful techniques for dealing with it, then organise it all into a simple, attractive format and print out some examples.

### Poster

What is it?

An eye-catching way of drawing attention to an issue you want to address.

What do you need to do?

Agree on a single focus and create an overall design, then divide out the different parts and get creative with your designs. Make it a visual feast rather than a word salad!

### Promo Freebie

What is it?

An item that can be given away to people to draw attention to the issue.

What do you need to do?

Dream up an item that links to the issue and will appeal to everyone, then sketch some colourful designs.

You may even develop a prototype. You'll need a logo or a snappy slogan to catch the eye.

## Resource 5b: Alcohol Awareness Issues

### **Alcoholism and Addiction**

Alcohol is a drug just like any other, which means that drinkers can find it hard to stop even when faced with serious consequences. Recognising the problem and finding effective treatment is the first step on the road to recovery.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

There is a strong link between alcohol and criminal or anti-social behaviour like vandalism or violence. Often this is also linked to underage drinking. Communities can find it difficult to know how best to address these issues.

### **Drink Driving**

Alcohol is one of the biggest causes of death and serious injury on the road, yet people still take risks by driving under the influence. Maybe if we understood the risks more clearly we might change our behaviour.

### **Healthy Drinking**

Drinking alcohol can have a big impact on physical health, from sleep patterns to heart disease. One way to reduce the risk of developing health problems is to stick to the unit guidelines set by the Chief Medical Officer.

### **Hidden Harm**

Alcohol use doesn't just affect the drinker, but also the people around them. Family members often end up feeling scared and helpless and this has a negative impact on their lives as well, leading to problems down the line.

### **Mental Health Problems**

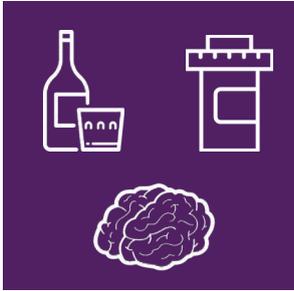
Alcohol can disrupt the balance of chemicals in our bodies, affecting our thoughts, feelings and actions – and sometimes our long-term mental health. Despite that, many people see it as a way of coping with their problems ("self-medication").

### **Obesity**

People often forget about the calories in alcohol and heavy drinking especially can lead to weight gain. As well as the extra calories, alcohol can also stimulate appetite and encourage unhealthy eating habits.

### **Relationships**

Although alcohol is usually seen as making people more sociable and easy-going, it often causes issues in relationships. People who drink may be less sensitive to others' feelings and their personality might change over time.



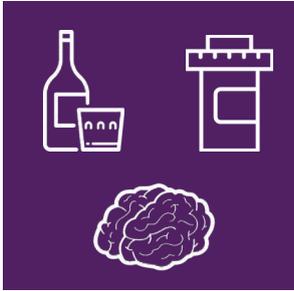
## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 6: Does Treatment Work for Problem Drinkers?

This is a complex activity that requires a high degree of engagement from pupils in order to be effective. Evaluation of alcohol services relies on a good understanding of how the particular service works and a clear set of criteria for judging effectiveness. Although all of the necessary information is provided in the resources, you will need to feel confident that pupils will be motivated and self-reliant enough to share opinions and make use of existing knowledge to support their judgements. Previous activities will be a useful guide for predicting success in this regard.

\* The information cards (Resource 6a) describe the three levels of problem drinking (hazardous, harmful, and dependent), with examples of behaviours for each level. Resource 6b describes five different types of alcohol treatment, numbered by complexity (brief intervention, harm reduction, peer support, counselling, and residential rehab).

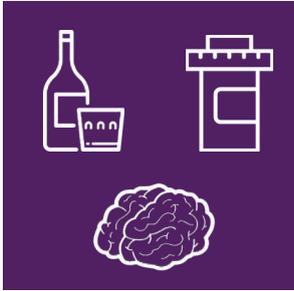
\* The evaluation activity can be organised in a number of ways using best practice for group work. One approach that might assist focus is for pupils to be given responsibility for just one part of the analysis. Divide the class into five groups, distribute copies of the evaluation worksheet (Resource 6c) and allocate one of the treatment models to each group. Depending on the autonomy of your students, you may choose to provide them with specific information (for example, service leaflets) or allow them to conduct their own research (using ICT resources or as a homework task). Each of the treatment models includes a specific type of service that can be easily searched online and links are provided below to assist your preparation.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

### Activity 6: Does Treatment Work for Problem Drinkers?

- ✱ Once the groups have completed their analysis bring the class back together for the reporting phase. This could be a simple presentation to the class or you could organise them to divide into new groups with a representative for each treatment model. Each group member would then be responsible for instructing their new colleagues about the first group's findings. This has the distinct advantage of making it very difficult for any one pupil using the group format to avoid engaging with the activity. All pupils should end up with a completed evaluation grid.
- ✱ Once the feedback has been completed display the key question on the board and tell the pupils that they have 2 minutes to write a brief, personal response to the question in the relevant box on the evaluation worksheet (Resource 6c). This could serve as a helpful lead-in to a whole-class discussion of the key question and the different forms of treatment.



# Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Alcohol Awareness

## Activity 6: Does Treatment Work for Problem Drinkers?

### Useful Links

Alcohol & You

<http://www.alcoholandyouni.com/>

Alcoholics Anonymous – Information on AA

<http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/Information-on-AA>

Carlisle House – Treatment

<http://www.carlislehouse.org/treatment/>

Health Service Executive – Alcohol misuse

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/A/Alcohol-misuse/>

NHS – Alcohol Support

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-support/>

NHS – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Cognitive-behavioural-therapy/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Public Health Agency – Alcohol MOT

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/alcohol-mot>

Wikipedia – Drug rehabilitation

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug\\_rehabilitation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug_rehabilitation)

## Resource 6a: Problem Drinking Info Cards



### **Hazardous**

Increased risk of harmful consequences caused by the person's drinking



### **Harmful**

Already causing damage to the person's physical or mental health.



### **Dependent**

Person has difficulty controlling their use and may suffer withdrawal.

## Resource 6a: Problem Drinking Info Cards

### Examples of hazardous drinking

- Getting into arguments or fights.
- Falling over or walking into things.
- Drink driving.
- Drinking when looking after children.
- Engaging in risky sexual behaviour (e.g. unprotected sex).

### Examples of harmful drinking

- Regularly drinking more than the recommended limits.
- Struggling to cope with day-to-day responsibilities.
- Gaining or losing weight.
- Getting into trouble with the police.
- Falling out with family members or close friends.

### Examples of dependent drinking

- Drinking at all times of the day, especially first thing.
- Worrying about where the next drink is coming from.
- Not being able to stop a drinking session.
- Lying about drinking habits.
- Experiencing physical withdrawal (shakes, sweats).

## Resource 6b: Problem Drinking Treatment Options

### Treatment Options for Problem Drinking

#### 1. Brief Intervention

- Generally takes no more than 10-15 minutes.
- Can be done face-to-face or online.
- Begins with assessment of the person's drinking.
- Advice is given based on the assessment.
- Drinker will receive information on the risks of alcohol and guidance about healthy drinking.

#### 2. Harm Reduction

- Aims to reduce the negative results of risky behaviour.
- Drinker chooses to receive the support.
- Non-judgemental approach that does not try to force change.
- Usually involves a series of steps followed through with the support of a key worker.
- Focuses on small positive changes made by the drinker.

#### 3. Peer Support

- Drinkers join a group to address their problem together.
- No outside or professional input - support is based on direct personal experience of problem drinking.
- Members both give and receive support.
- Individual drinker makes changes based on personal choice.
- Support is available for as long as the drinker needs it.

#### 4. Counselling

- One-to-one support from a trained addiction specialist or counsellor.
- Begins by addressing the drinker's situation and their goals.
- Usually aims to help the drinker stop drinking completely.
- Addresses all aspects of the drinker's lifestyle, including family support where needed.

#### 5. Residential Rehab

- Safe environment to help drinkers address the reasons for their drinking and find solutions.
- Range of different therapies led by trained professionals.
- Supported accommodation to help drinkers move back into their communities.
- In almost all cases the drinker is not allowed any alcohol.

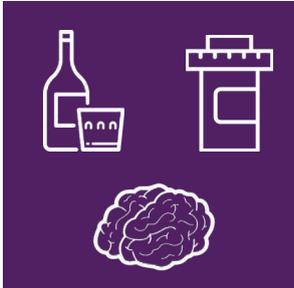


## Resource 6c: Treatment Evaluation Grid

	How does it support..?		
	Hazardous Drinkers	Harmful Drinkers	Dependent Drinkers
Brief Intervention (Alcohol MOT)			
Harm Reduction (Alcohol & You)			
Peer Support (Alcoholics Anonymous)			

# Resource 6c: Treatment Evaluation Grid

				How does it support...?		
				Hazardous Drinkers	Harmful Drinkers	Dependent Drinkers
Counselling (CBT)						
Residential Rehab (Carlisle House)						
Does treatment work for problem drinkers?						



# Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

## Lesson Plan

### Aim

To encourage reflection about different ways of coping with the impact of alcohol misuse as a route to boosting young people's resilience.

### Learning Intentions

- Further consideration of both helpful and unhelpful methods for coping with the hidden harms of alcohol.
- Promote the use of balanced inquiry to support judgements.

### Success Criteria

**Level 1** Share ideas about ways of coping with stressful situations.

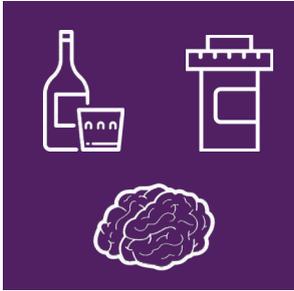
**Level 2** Compare different coping strategies for dealing with the hidden harms of alcohol and its misuse.

**Level 3** Make suggestions of life skills that could be applied to support people coping with the hidden harms of alcohol.

**Level 4** Group coping strategies according to different coping styles and link these with different personality types.

**Level 5** Pick a set of coping strategies that would support the growth of resilience in someone dealing with hidden harm.

**Level 6** Justify choice of coping strategies for building resilience in someone dealing with hidden harm.



# Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

## Activity 1: What is Coping?

- \* Introduce the topic using Resource 1a, which describes stress and coping methods.
- \* Break the class into small groups and get them thinking and talking about how they deal with stressful situations – in other words, what they do to de-stress, calm down and relax. Provide some copies of the ‘Stressful Situations’ prompt (Resource 1b) to help them focus their discussion on real-world scenarios.
- \* Ask each group to feed back their three best or most popular ways of coping with stress and write these onto the whiteboard or a flipchart.
- \* Review the coping section of Resource 1a, focusing on the coping methods not mentioned during the discussion.

## Resource 1a: Coping With Stress

### Coping With Stress

Stress is a feeling we get when we're struggling to cope. Most stress is mental or emotional - we're under too much pressure.

You might be stressed if you have some of these symptoms:

- Short-tempered
- Overwhelmed
- Butterflies in your stomach
- Not able to concentrate
- Losing control
- Feeling you might be missing out
- Short of breath

There are many methods that someone may choose to use in order to cope with stress; some may be more helpful than others:

- Ask for help
- Avoid the problem
- Blame others
- Challenge your thoughts
- Colour in
- Count to 10
- Deep breathing
- Drink or take drugs
- Exercise
- Fix the problem
- Happy place
- Meditate
- Hit a punching bag
- Routines
- Scream and shout
- Set targets
- Stay in bed
- Talk it through

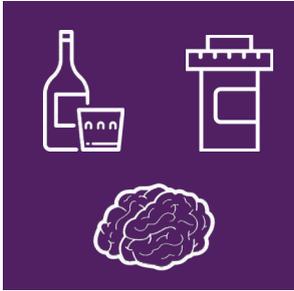


## Resource 1b: Stressful Situations

### Stressful Situations

Below are some examples of stressful situations that you might encounter at some time in your life. What would you do to cope with the stress that is created?

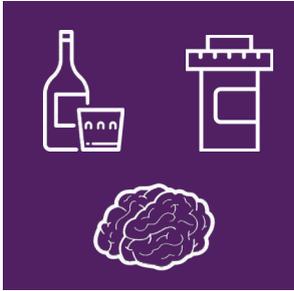
-  A: Your teacher has set a piece of homework that is required for your report. You were off sick on the day it was given out. You have been given some instructions and your teacher has been through the work you missed but you still don't really understand exactly what you need to do. The teacher is quite strict and you're worried you won't be able to do the work exactly how they want it to be done.
  
-  B: You have a big competition tomorrow and your dad would normally drive you but won't be able to tomorrow, so you have to catch the bus into the town centre. You need to be there early enough to register but there is only one bus from your house that goes at that time. There's another route nearby that goes more often but you've never been on that bus before.
  
-  C: Last night you were playing a game online with some of your friends and something you did caused your team to lose. Some of your teammates were really annoyed and said it was a really stupid mistake. You got in a really big argument with one of your friends and you have to go into school today and face them.
  
-  D: When you get up one morning you find your mum on the sofa sleeping off a hangover. The living room is a tip and there's nothing much in the kitchen for breakfast. Your mum promised to take you up town today to get some new clothes and a present for the birthday party you're going to later, but that doesn't look too likely at this point.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

### Activity 2: How Can I Deal With This?

- \* If necessary, remind the pupils of the discussion about dealing with stress from the last activity. For example, ask them to explain what they learnt from the activity in no more than 30 seconds without using the word 'stress', or select some pupils to define stress or coping in no more than three words.
- \* Tell the pupils that this activity involves looking at different coping methods and whether or not they are effective. The coping strategies relate specifically to dealing with parental alcohol misuse, although they could apply to other stressful situations as well.
- \* Organise the class so that pupils are working in pairs or threes and provide each mini group with a set of 'Coping Strategies' (either Resource 2a or 2b). Pupils should organise the strategies into two sets - effective and not effective. Circulate around the groups and question them about their choices.
- \* Next, groups should reorganise the coping strategies as a list descending from the most to the least effective.
- \* Conduct a plenary to hear from each group. Hear responses across the range from most to least effective.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

### Activity 2: How Can I Deal With This?

Guidelines for group work:

- \* It may be helpful to allocate specific roles to the mini groups to focus their thinking and encourage discussion.
- \* If working in pairs, appoint one person as the reporter and one as the decision maker. The reporter's job is to report the group's ideas and opinions back to you and the rest of the class. The decision maker is the one who will have the final say about the selections that are made within the group activity. The reporter must report back the decisions made within the group rather than their own opinions, and the decision maker must explain their choices clearly to the rest of the group.
- \* If working in threes, appoint the additional group member as an administrator. Their job is to organise the resources, to keep the group focused on the task in hand, monitor any time constraints and provide mediation between the decision maker and the reporter.

## Resource 2a: Coping Activities

Talk to a friend

Talk to a friend

Talk to a friend

Talk to a parent

Talk to a parent

Talk to a parent

Go somewhere  
else

Go somewhere  
else

Go somewhere  
else

Confront it

Confront it

Confront it

Hide in your  
bedroom

Hide in your  
bedroom

Hide in your  
bedroom

Ask for help

Ask for help

Ask for help

Forget about it

Forget about it

Forget about it

Take  
medication

Take  
medication

Take  
medication

Focus on  
something else

Focus on  
something else

Focus on  
something else

Keep it to  
yourself

Keep it to  
yourself

Keep it to  
yourself

Write in a diary

Write in a diary

Write in a diary

Google it

Google it

Google it

## Resource 2b: Coping Activities

Stay in your bedroom out of the way.

Don't let others see you suffering.

Hide money to have it in case you  
need it.

Do whatever you can to keep  
the peace.

Blame yourself for things that  
happen.

Pour the drink away to stop  
them from drinking.

Act up to make them notice  
you.

## Resource 2b: Coping Activities

Tell them off for what they've been doing.

Talk to someone you can trust, like a friend.

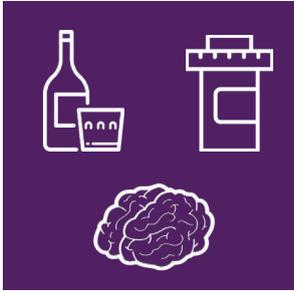
Stay away from the house, if possible.

Talk to a counsellor or social worker.

Ignore it in hope that it will go away.

Start taking something for the stress.

Write about your feelings in a diary.



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

### Activity 3: Does Coping Come Naturally?

- \* Pupils will need to circulate around the room and speak to their classmates to match a person to a coping activity. Pupils with the worksheet will need to record the name of the appropriate person under the activity, while those with profiles should write the coping activities they are matched with on the back of their card.
- \* Hand out copies of the 'Coping Activities' worksheet (Resource 3a) to half the class. The other half of the class should receive one each of the 'Person Profiles' (Resource 3b).
- \* Each of the coping activities must be matched with a different person - there can be no duplication of names on a worksheet. However, profiles can be matched to different coping activities.
- \* Once the matching process has been completed, lead a debrief that aims to draw out any patterns in the connections which were made. Does it seem that particular coping strategies are more appropriate for certain types of people?
- \* To consolidate pupils' learning, hand out copies of the 'Resilient Personalities' worksheet (Resource 3c) for completion.

## Resource 3b: Coping Activity Worksheet

Write the name of a person who would be suited to each activity. No duplication allowed!

Counselling	Safe space	Saving money
Get outdoors	Meeting friends	Mindfulness
Exercise	Reading	Playing games
Prayer	Going on a trip	Volunteering
Keeping a diary	Family time	Making jokes

## Resource 3b: Person Profiles



**Scarlett**  
**Active**

Likes to be up and moving around.



**Ciaran**  
**Focused**

Has clear goals and likes to be organised.



**Séamus**  
**Creative**

The life and soul of the party. A social butterfly.



**Thomas**  
**Caring**

Pays attention to the needs of others.



**Susana**  
**Ethical**

Feels responsible for her actions.



**Johnny**  
**Introspective**

Pays attention to his thoughts and feelings.



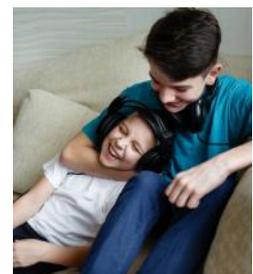
**Josh**  
**Open**

Comfortable talking about how he feels.



**Jamie**  
**Practical**

Plans ahead and thinks things through carefully.



**Oliver**  
**Protective**

Shields others and protects them from harm.

## Resource 3b: Person Profiles



**Sophie**  
**Spiritual**

Able to rely on her beliefs for comfort.



**Matty**  
**Sporty**

Fit and healthy and works well with others.



**Séamus**  
**Creative**

Able to express himself through art.



**Charlotte**  
**Thoughtful**

Doesn't rush to judgement.



**Ciara**  
**Reflective**

Tries hard to learn from her experiences.



**Orla**  
**Sociable**

Easy-going and good company.

## Resource 3c: Resilient Personalities Worksheet

### Resilient Personalities

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficult times. It means being able to bend, not break. As we have seen, everyone experiences stress at some time or another. The important thing is being able to deal with the problems we face.

Our ability to respond to difficulties is based on who we are as people. How we respond will be affected by our preferences and our circumstances. We can reduce this down to three key factors: our support networks, our personality and our skills. In the boxes below, write down the answers you think would be given by a resilient person.

#### I Have...

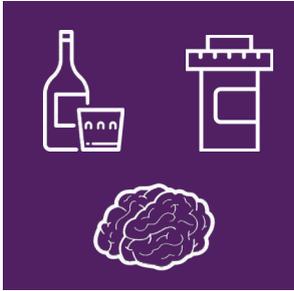
(Who are the people around to support you? What sort of social supports do you have?)

#### I Am...

(What kind of person are you? What are the most important things in your life?)

#### I Can...

(What are your special skills? How do you respond to problems you might face?)



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

### Activity 4: What Makes Us Resilient?

- \* Hand out blank cards or post-it notes and tell the pupils to write down as many different coping strategies as they can think of. These can be strategies previously discussed or new ideas. The aim is to gather as many as possible. Create a central bank on the whiteboard or a display board.
- \* Hand out copies of the 'Coping Styles' information sheet (Resource 4) and have the pupils read through it. Emphasise that each of us has our own approach to coping and that this will affect our preference for specific coping strategies - what seems relaxing to one person may well be frustrating to others.
- \* On the bottom of the information sheet is a grid with the four main coping styles we recognise in young people dealing with hidden harm. Have the pupils populate this grid with as many coping strategies as they can. Aim for at least four coping strategies in each of the sections of the grid. Ask some of the pupils to share their answers.

# Resource 4: Coping Styles

## Coping Styles

Usually, when faced with a problem, we will have our own way to deal with it. This could include:

- Avoiding the situation
- Looking for help
- Protecting yourself
- Blaming yourself or others

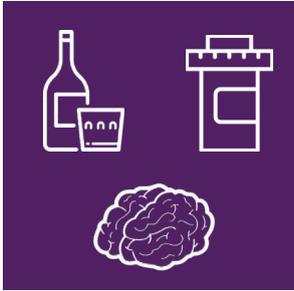
This is what we call a coping style, and each of us will have our own preferred approach. In fact, what is most likely is that we will adopt different styles at different times.

Each of the coping styles will involve different coping strategies, so someone who prefers to avoid the situation might hide away in their room and refuse to talk or switch off and daydream instead of thinking about what has happened.

All of this is perfectly normal but if you're ever suffering remember to ask yourself, 'is what I'm doing making me feel better or worse?'

Below is a grid with four headings - each of these headings is a coping style that we recognise in young people dealing with the effects of parental alcohol misuse. Using the ideas you have collected together as a class, fill in each of the boxes with the kinds of coping strategies you think match that coping style.

<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
<b>Self-protection</b>	<b>Challenging</b>



## Steps to Cope Lesson Supplements: Coping Strategies

### Activity 5: How Can We Become More Resilient?

- \* Divide the class into five groups and hand out copies of the five case studies (Resource 5a), a 'Resilience' information sheet (Resource 5b) and a sheet of A3 paper for each group. Try to provide space for pupils to circulate.
- \* After 5 minutes, rotate the groups to the next table and repeat the process so that there are two sets of observations on the page.
- \* Each group should write 'Stresses' in the centre of the page and brainstorm reasons why the person in their case study is stressed, recording them on the page in a spider diagram.
- \* Rotate the groups again but this time get them to turn over the A3 page and write the heading 'What Would Help and Why?' at the top of the page. They must then come up with suggestions for coping strategies that would help the person in the case study, along with a sentence explaining why this would help. Highlight the goal of building the young person's resilience.
- \* After 5 minutes, rotate the groups and repeat.
- \* Following a final rotation, each group must report back to the class about the case study and the previous groups' observations. Allow sufficient time for them to review the answers and to agree their key points.
- \* To summarise, clear away the resources and lead a whole-class discussion. If possible, organise the class so that they are sitting in one large circle and control discussion using an appropriate 'speaking object' – stress balls are handy here! The topic for discussion should be, 'Can We Become More Resilient?' Write this onto the whiteboard for reference.

## Resource 5a: Coping Case Studies

### A

My mum's drinking makes me feel so angry. She's been doing it for so long I just don't believe it's ever going to change. She has all these places she hides bottles and she thinks I don't know where they are, but I do. I could confront her about it, or take them and pour them down the sink (I've done that a few times), but it would just make her start shouting and screaming and she'll just go and buy more. She might even throw me out. That might even be a relief, to be honest - I stay away from home as much as possible. Sometimes I go round to a friend's house but other times I just hang about on the street or at the park. There might be somebody else around but not always. They might be drinking, too, which makes me feel weird 'cause that's what I'm trying to avoid.

### B

I feel really guilty about my mum's drinking, like maybe it's my fault somehow. I know that she started drinking really young, about how old I am now. Sometimes when she's drunk and angry she blames me - she'll say that she only ended up this way because she got pregnant with me. I'm not really sure why she says that. She doesn't really go out that much anymore, just drinks on the sofa at home. The house is a mess. I feel like I have to clean up after her and I feel bad if I don't. I have to look after my little sister as well. Sometimes I find bottles with drink left in them and pour them away. I just pretend they were empty if she asks me, but I reckon she knows it was me. I don't really talk to her much anymore - what's the point, anyway? She's obviously pretty messed up, but it's not like she's even trying to get better.

### C

My mum's drinking's been getting worse recently and it's making me worried. I'm scared she might die. Nobody else seems to be bothered though. My brother is out all the time with his mates but my mum never says anything, even though he smells of cigarettes and weed when he comes back in. My dad's no use either - he doesn't live with us anymore, he's got a new wife and a little baby. He doesn't really care about us. If him and my mum ever have to talk to each other they end up arguing, but that's what it was like before he left too. I wish things were more normal. A couple of my friends know about my mum, but I don't talk to them about it much, it's too embarrassing. At least I can go round to their houses sometimes to avoid being at home.

### D

A couple of weeks ago my mum and dad had this massive row. They'd had some friends round at the house. Everyone was drinking and it was really loud. After everyone left my mum was shouting at my dad about him getting too drunk. I didn't really hear everything but there was a bad atmosphere in the house for a while afterwards. It worries me a lot what might happen with my mum and dad, whether they might split up. My granddad was an alcoholic and he died when I was only little. Maybe my mum thinks my dad might end up like him. Alcohol's pretty scary, people get really aggressive and hyper when they drink it and you never know what they might do.

### E

Some of my friends have started going out drinking alcohol at the weekends. They just go over the park. Sometimes there's someone older that buys it or sometimes they steal it from home. Most of their parents don't realise what's happening. It's stupid, though, they don't know how risky it is. My dad's an alcoholic, so I know exactly what it's like. If you drink, you'll get addicted and it'll ruin your life. You fall out with everyone and people get really angry with you. You can't even look after yourself properly. My dad's been in rehab twice but it made no difference - he just came out and ended up drinking again within a few months. The other kids don't realise that's what will happen to them.

## Resource 5b: Resilience Information

### Being Resilient

As we have seen, resilience depends on a range of factors. We assess people's resilience in five areas. Below are the five areas of resilience with suggestions of attitudes that reflect a resilient approach:

#### Identity

- Being happy with your life and who you are.
- Having goals and being confident in your ability to achieve them.
- Not letting things overwhelm you.
- Being able to make choices about your future.

#### Social Skills

- Being able to meet new people and develop friendships.
- Getting involved in conversations.
- Being able to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Knowing how to comfort others when they are feeling low.

#### Structure

- Being able to organise your time and activities.
- Using rules and guidelines to simplify life.
- Making plans and establishing goals.

#### Family

- Being able to share our feelings and ideas.
- Spending time together as a family.
- Supporting each other through the difficult times.

#### Support Networks

- Having people in your life who will support and encourage you.
- Having people you know you can rely on.
- I have friends and family members that respect me for who I am.