

YOUR

CHOICE

Alcohol and Violence Prevention Toolkit

This Toolkit contains:

Facts and Information
Discussion Topics
Being a Bystander
Group Activities

**All activities and discussions can be adapted for
facilitating at a social distance or online**

No knives, better lives.

www.noknivesbetterlives.com

ACTIVITY

30 WORDS

See how many words/phrases you or your group can think of for being drunk (try and get to 30)

- Is there anything that springs to mind?
- Why do you think there are so many terms for being drunk?
- Are they positive or negative words?
- What does that tell us about how people think about alcohol?

BLOOTERED

PISHED

MINGIN

SWALLY

HAMMERED

SLAUGHTERED

TANKED UP

HOWLIN

PLASTERED

AWA WI'T

REEKIN

TOOTEROO

STOATING

GUTTERED

WRECKED

OOT YER TREE

OOT THE GAME

RUINED

BLOTTO

TROLLIED

GOOSED

MINCED

SOZZLED

TRAMLINED

SLOSHED

RAT ARSED

BEVVIED

BUCKLED

STEAMBOATS

PARALYTIC

FOUTERED

RUBBERED

DESTROYED

Introduction

If you have just completed the first activity, you will know that there are loads of words to describe being or getting drunk.

Getting drunk seems to be a right-of passage for many young Scots. Being around alcohol consumption also increases your risk of exposure to aggressive behaviour, which can escalate to violence in some cases.

This toolkit is intended to create space to talk through the issue of alcohol and its relationship to violence in Scotland. It's not about saying to young people, 'don't drink!' or 'never go out' or 'avoid certain crowds', because we know from experience and evidence that those *Just Say No* approaches have little impact on young people's behaviour.

No Knives Better Lives believes in empowering young people to deal with situations more effectively, by having information which can help understand certain situations and by equipping them to help each other be safe and secure.

No Knives Better Lives believes that young people have a right to be heard and to express their opinions.

Throughout the toolkit there are examples of activities, discussion points and stories that allow an exchange of information between practitioners and young people.

PLEASE make these activities and discussions your own by adapting them for your audience's needs. You can deliver these discussions at a social distance, or even online. You can offer prizes, or make a display or presentation of the group's efforts. BE CREATIVE!

#Don't Preach – Teach

WHAT?

What is the Problem?

Scotland, Alcohol & Violence

We are very used to seeing headlines such as this:

Girls attacked in Meadows by older girls sustain facial injuries

TEENAGER CHARGED AFTER MAN SERIOUSLY INJURED IN ATTACK

Alcohol Fuelled Violence Leads to Stabbing

SHOCKING SCENES As Violence Erupts at Glasgow Park

Cops pelted with bottles, fights and some injured as thousands of rowdy youths turn park into Glastonbury



Alcohol is involved in a huge number of crimes as well as increasing incidences of antisocial behaviour. Headlines like the ones shown are common (all of these are real headlines from 2021).

DISCUSSION TOPIC – The Media

Invent your own headlines: Have a group write newspaper headlines like the ones shown, depicting young people in a negative light and another group showing young people in a positive light.

ASK:

Which headlines will you most likely see in a newspaper and why?

CONCLUSION:

Newspapers want to sell stories and bad behaviour stories sell more than good behaviour stories

This can give other people, adults and vulnerable older people a wrong or distorted view of groups of young people

Stories such as the ones above can lead to young people to 'expect' trouble and increase the likelihood of trouble happening (increases hypervigilance and fear)

Facts and Figures

Alcohol-related crime in Scotland

alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/alcohol-information/alcohol-facts-and-figures



- **46% of violent crime is alcohol-related.**
(from Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017/18).



- In relation to all incidents of violent crime in 2017/18, **victims reported having consumed alcohol immediately before the incident in 25% of cases** (from Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017/18).



- **15 of the 77 (19%) persons accused in homicide cases in 2016-17 were under the influence of alcohol** (from Homicide in Scotland 2016-17).



- In the past 10 years, **42% of those accused of murder were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the murder** (from Homicide in Scotland 2016-17).



- **Two in five (41%) of prisoners report being drunk at the time of their offence** (from Prisoner Survey 2015)



- **60% of young of young offenders were drunk at the time of their offence** (from Prisoners Survey 2015 - Young People in Custody).

WHY?

Why is alcohol use such a 'Scottish' problem?

When we ask 'what is it?' about alcohol that makes it so 'normal' and so much a part of Scottish culture we refer to something called the **4As**.

Each of these As are important in shaping our views, core beliefs and our practical concerns such as how we can obtain alcohol, and even what sort of alcohol we should be obtaining.

Introducing the **4As**:

A A A A
Acceptability / Availability / Affordability / Attractiveness



Acceptability

Why do people strongly associate drinking alcohol with Scottish culture?

Scotland's long-term relationship with alcohol is complicated. Weddings, funerals, birthdays, barbecues, nights out with mates, or just sitting in front of the TV. We celebrate with it. We commiserate with it. We congratulate with it.

Scotland is a country steeped in alcohol – from whisky production to TV comedy stereotypes, it has become part of what we're culturally known for.

Growing up in such an environment, it's perhaps not surprising that over a third (36%) of 13-year-olds and nearly three-quarters (71%) of 15 year olds in Scotland have drunk alcohol, nor is it particularly shocking to find that 44% of 13 year olds and 70% of 15 year olds who have tried alcohol have been drunk at least once.

Whilst experimenting with alcohol in adolescence is often widely thought of as a 'rite of passage', drinking alcohol can seriously impair judgement and put a young drinker at risk of aggressive behaviour. Drinking alcohol is 'normalised' in Scottish culture.

It is not always easy to reassure young people that they don't have to drink or they can choose to moderate. They will have their own views and experiences of Scottish culture that reinforce their belief that drinking is a normal part of growing up.

Part of the problem – ACCEPTABILITY

Alcohol Story 1

“The first time I took a drink was when I was 13. My dad gave me a can at a family party and said, ‘here son, try this.’ I guess he didn’t want me to miss out and that was his way of saying I was an adult.”

Can you remember the first time you tried alcohol?

DISCUSSION TOPIC - ACCEPTABILITY

Let’s empower young people to share their own views. It’s important to hear what they’re saying – that way you can really understand and empathise with their issues. Questions regarding the law and legality of drinking will have little impact on young people when drinking alcohol is so socially acceptable.

ASK: Have you ever felt pressure to drink alcohol?

WHEN? WHO? WHERE? WHAT HAPPENED?

Potential follow up questions: Why does this pressure exist? Why is alcohol so acceptable? At what age is it okay to drink alcohol? What happens when you get drunk? What are the risks of drinking alcohol? Can you imagine a society where no one drank? Do we view boys who drink differently from girls who drink?

CONCLUSION:

- It is acceptable to choose not to drink
- It is acceptable to limit drinking
- It is acceptable to say no if others try and make you drink



Availability

How do young people get hold of alcohol when there are laws to prevent this happening?

Laws aren't always a guarantee that young people won't get hold of alcohol, and with alcohol being so socially acceptable sometimes all young people have to do is ask an older friend, sibling or even a parent.

The truth is that alcohol is easy to acquire despite licensing laws.

Part of the problem - AVAILABILITY

Alcohol Story 2

“I’d taken a few cans from the back of the cupboard and hid them in my bedroom. I didn’t think they (the folks) would miss the nearly full bottle of holiday rum, so I took that too. Just for good measure I got my older brother to buy me a bottle of Glen’s (vodka). I was ready to party.”

Guess how many units of alcohol this would be? What could happen if you drank this much?

*A can of strong lager can be 3-5 units, a full bottle of 70 cl spirits such as vodka will be 40 units. The amount outlined above can cause alcohol poisoning, and even lead to coma and death.

DISCUSSION TOPIC – AVAILABILITY**TOP RANKING:**

Rank from easy to difficult with 5 being the most difficult it would be to get the following:

	YOUR RANK
• A 75 cl bottle of Buckfast	<input type="radio"/>
• A can of Dragon Soop	<input type="radio"/>
• A 50 cl bottle of vodka	<input type="radio"/>
• A can of lager	<input type="radio"/>
• A 2 l bottle of strong cider	<input type="radio"/>

ASK:

What alcohol is the easiest for you to get and why?

What alcohol is the hardest for you to get and why?

CONCLUSION

Alcohol is widely available even if there are laws in place to prevent you from buying it or drinking it in venues



Affordability

Can you get drunk on a fiver?

In 2018 Scotland implemented a minimum price of 50p per unit of alcohol, which means that a 2 litre bottle of cider containing 10 units of alcohol now costs £5 rather than the previous £2. Ten units is enough alcohol to be considered a binge.

A binge is when you drink over 8 units or more if you are male in a single night, or 6 units or more if you are female.

Young people do not necessarily need to buy alcohol themselves, sometimes it can be freely available at parties or in cupboards at home.

Yes you can get drunk on a fiver.

Part of the problem – AFFORDABILITY

Alcohol Story 3

“So I had a fiver on me and got my older pal who looks about 20, even though he’s only 15 to buy a 2 litre bottle of ‘Scrumpy Bob’ strong cider (ABV 5%) from the shop.”

How many units of alcohol in 2 litres of ‘Scrumpy Bob’? What might happen if you drank the whole bottle? *14 units, which is considered a ‘binge’ and can also get you very drunk. If you drink it all you can suffer severe affects such as; drunkenness, impaired judgement, blackout and vomiting.

DISCUSSION TOPIC – AFFORDABILITY

WHAT’S IN THE BAG?



ASK:

What alcohol brands do you think are in the bag?

How much did this cost?

How many units do you think there are?

You can end up drinking a lot more than you realise

You can end up very drunk and put yourself at big risks

CONCLUSION

Alcohol is relatively cheap (despite minimum pricing in Scotland)

You can drink a lot for five pounds (technically a binge)

AAAA

Attractiveness

How the alcohol industry markets alcohol?

The alcohol industry uses product placement, advertising and directly marketing products to new and emerging markets i.e. young people. Drinks companies deliberately target a young audience – the drinkers of today are the drinkers of tomorrow. Drinks are sweeter and have more youthful appeal, with trendy or regional names associated with having fun or being tough. Sometimes companies sponsor events, gigs, sporting events, festivals or trendy venues.

Part of the problem – ATTRACTIVENESS



Alcohol Story 4

“I tried alcohol and hated it at first! But this drink just tastes like fruit juice and gives you a buzz. They were giving it out for free at the last gig I went to.”

Why would it be given out free at a gig?

*Marketing companies know their audience and ‘free’ alcohol will target young people at particular events such as gigs or festivals.

DISCUSSION TOPIC - ATTRACTIVENESS

DESIGN A BRAND

Get groups of young people to think and act like a group of creatives from a marketing agency. Their task is to design a brand of alcohol especially marketed towards young people (your groups of young people should be experts at knowing what will appeal to their own tribe!).

ASK:

What does it taste like?

What's it called?

What does the container look like?

Where would you sell/punt this?

CONCLUSION

Alcohol brands are deliberately developed and marketed to young people

Why do you think that is? (You will get some interesting answers here about perpetuating the market for alcohol – today's youth are tomorrow's drinkers)

HOW?

The science

How does alcohol make us more aggressive and violent?

Many people who drink are never violent and even those who do become aggressive won't do so all the time. We DO know however that there is a link between alcohol and violence, and that it's all about how alcohol can impact on the parts of the brain that control impulsiveness and decisions.

FACT:

There is a proven link between binge drinking and becoming more aggressive or angry

A prominent theory is that alcohol causes a brain short-sightedness or 'alcohol myopia'. This in effect means that a drunk person cannot think straight and has a narrower focus of thinking. Things that might not bother a person sober, or a trivial matter that they can shrug off becomes much more important – to the point of fixation. They might miss social and environmental cues that would normally help them to interpret a situation rationally. If someone provokes them when they are drunk they might rise to the bait rather than thinking and shrugging off the provocation. This can lead to angry or violent response.

The way we process information also changes as we drink alcohol, which is why things get misinterpreted. A throw away comment or a joke could really set someone off if they think it's been said in the wrong way.

The parts of the brain that relax with alcohol are also the parts that suppress aggression and allow a person to self-regulate their own behaviour. When these receptors are switched off you are much more likely to do things you might regret later.

Alcohol can lead to disinhibited behaviour

- Impaired judgement
- Failure to pick up on social cues
- Tendency to overreact
- Inability to use restraint
- Unable to regulate anger
- Fixation
- Reactive/swift and unthinking responses
- Alcohol increases risk taking behaviours

And the teenage brain...

doesn't stop growing until the mid-20s, which makes teenagers more prone to risk-taking behaviours to begin with.

YOUR BRAIN ON ALCOHOL

CEREBRAL CORTEX: RED ALERT! ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE PART OF YOUR BRAIN THAT MAKES DECISIONS.

IT CAN MAKE YOU ANGRY OR ACT WITHOUT THINKING.



CEREBELLUM: ALCOHOL AFFECTS YOUR BALANCE AND MAKES YOU STAGGER AND SWAY.



HIPPOCAMPUS: AFFECTS YOUR MEMORY. CALLED A BLACKOUT, YOU MAY NOT KNOW OR REMEMBER WHAT YOU ARE DOING.



... WHAT WAS I DOING LAST NIGHT?

MEDULLA: LARGE AMOUNTS OF ALCOHOL CAN SHUT DOWN YOUR INVOLUNTARY REFLEXES SUCH AS BREATHING AND LEAD TO A COMA.



HYPOTHALAMUS: DRINKING MAKES YOU HOT AND BOTHERED.



CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM: THIS SLOWS WAY DOWN UNDER THE INFLUENCE AND MAKES THINKING, SPEAKING AND MOVING HARDER.



I... AH, UH...
AH, CANNAE
... UM...

BYSTANDER

Being a bystander?

A bystander is a person who observes or knows about a situation (such as getting really drunk and being in situations that could lead to violence). They know that the behaviour is unacceptable and is likely to have destructive consequences or result in injury or death. An active bystander takes steps that make a difference.

Being a bystander means taking active steps to help a friend being harmed or harming someone in the first case. Intervening earlier if you know a mate is getting drunk and angry with an individual or a group could prevent an escalation to violent behaviour.

Put simply, being an active bystander is about being a good citizen or even just a good mate.

- Q: If you could help someone not be harmed, would you?
- Q: Would you want someone to intervene if you were going to be harmed or harm yourself?

DISCUSSION TOPIC – GETTING INVOLVED

ASK:

Can you think of a bad situation where you wished you had done something?

Can you replay it?

What would you have done?

CONCLUSION:

We all have times when we wish we'd got involved and helped stop a bad situation from getting worse

Some of us will already have had an experience where we've intervened in a situation and stopped a potentially bad situation from happening

Intervening to stop a bad situation developing can make a massive difference to everyone involved

A SUMMER STORY







SAFETY

Staying Safe

Meeting up with mates in summer is one of the best things and is a fundamental human right! However, it sometimes goes wrong. **Too much alcohol, sunshine and bravado can be a problem.** We've already seen how alcohol can have a detrimental impact on our thinking and behaviour making us more angry and reactive.

DISCUSSION TOPIC – STAYING SAFE:

Read through 'A Summer Story'. Does this ring true? Have you ever been in a situation similar to the one in the cartoon? What happened? Was there anything different that you could have done?

ASK:

Can you come up with a list of things that would keep you safe if you were meeting up with the gang outside for a few drinks?

CONCLUSION:

Look after each other (first and foremost!)

Stay together and don't leave anyone behind (especially if they are drunk)

Use your phone to arrange meeting places – use WhatsApp, Messenger, Snapchat, or text and stay in touch with each other

- Know your own and others limits
- Respond to the warning signs (emotional and physical)
- Intervene to stop bad situations becoming worse
- Eat food (this soaks up the alcohol and can make you feel a bit less drunk)
- Get a lift home, get a taxi or chum each other home

YOUR CHOICE

At the end of the day, it's your choice whether you choose to drink alcohol. It's also your choice to act responsibly to keep yourself and others from harm:

In order to stay safe:

STAY TOGETHER

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Cocktail Energiser

A variation of fruit salad

Time required: 10 Minutes

Objectives: To move about/have fun. This exercise also helps to dispel tension, get the group settled into the subject of alcohol, and a safe space to move about, have fun and be energised!

Description: Energiser

Resources required: Chairs (without wheels!)

Nominate one person to stand in the middle.

Go round the group and give each person the name of two forms of alcohol and a classic mixer drink: i.e. RUM, VODKA, COKE (don't forget to give the person in the middle a name)

The person in the middle must try and get a seat!

The person in the middle states one of the fruit names i.e. RUM

The RUMS must swap seats (and the person in the middle grabs a seat)

The new person in the middle must try and grab a seat!

NB: The person in the middle can use any combination i.e. RUM, VODKA, COKE or if they want everyone to get up and move about can say COCKTAIL!

Risky Business

HIGH RISK/MEDIUM RISK/LOW RISK

Time required:	30 Minutes
Objectives:	To engage with young people around risk and possible strategies for avoiding risk
Description:	Group discussion
Resources required:	Scenarios and High Risk, Medium Risk, Low Risk written on 3 sheets of flipchart paper, chalked on the ground outside, or indicated on a continuum.

Hand out the scenarios to individuals, pairs or small groups depending on the size of the group, or read them out.

Ask each to consider whether their scenario is high risk, medium risk, or low risk and get them to place their statement on a piece of paper explaining their choice, stand in the area indicated or organise themselves into a line with highest risk at one end and lowest risk at the other.

Ask them to justify their choice and whether the rest of the group agrees or disagrees.

Facilitators Notes

Often these scenarios lead onto a discussion about real life scenarios. Be aware of confidentiality – you might have to ask the group members not to share any personal information or share 'real' names.

Ask the group the following questions;

- What are the risks? (worst case scenario!)
- How could they be safer?
- Could they do anything differently?
- Could someone have helped them?
- Could they ask for help?
- What if they were really drunk? What might happen?

BYSTANDER ALERT!

How could you intervene if your friend was doing the things outlined in these scenarios?

Risky Business Scenarios

- **Carrying a knife for protection**
- **Starting a fight with a rival group**
- **Having unprotected sex**
- **Walking home alone**
- **Passing out in a doorway**
- **Mixing drugs with alcohol**
- **Getting a lift from a drunk driver**
- **Sending a naked selfie on Snapchat**
- **Meeting a Tinder date for the first time**
- **Throwing stones at someone's window**
- **Eating cannabis infused chocolate**
- **Texting someone you hate**

You can invent some more scenarios of your own, and even customise them to match local problems in your community.

It's Okay/Not Okay

Time required:	30 Minutes
Objectives:	To engage with young people around risk and possible strategies for avoiding risk
Description:	Group discussion
Resources required:	Statements and It's Okay/Not Okay sheets, or alternatively get participants to line up on a continuum with 'least okay' at one end (this can lead onto a discussion about what is the most risky scenario)

Place the 2 (It's okay/not okay) sheets of paper a distance apart on the floor. The group participants can either be seated in a circle or be standing.

Hand out the statements to the group.

Ask each person to read out their statement and place it on either the It's Okay or It's Not Okay sheet.

Explain that Okay is where they feel comfortable and confident about a situation, and Not Okay is where they find something uncomfortable, unacceptable or worrying.

Discuss each statement in turn, asking why the person has placed it where they did.

If a person has placed their statement on the Not Okay sheet, ask them why, and what might be the risks associated with the scenario. Next, ask the group members to suggest ways of making the situation safer, ways they could be more assertive and what might a potential solution be to a problematic scenario.

Discuss any left in the middle, until a consensus can be reached.

Now play this back to everyone but tell them they have had too much alcohol and are now drunk!

Have the risks increased? You betcha.

It's Okay/Not Okay Statements

Your friend is drunk at a party and you want to go home so you leave them there

A mate of yours is very drunk at a party – she is being sick and feels faint

Your friend leaves you drunk at a party

A mate dares you to walk across a ledge on a high railway bridge

It is late and you haven't told your parents/carer where you are and your phone has run out of battery

Someone keeps sending you abusive text messages threatening you

A boy/girlfriend from a rival gang starts to flirt with you when you and your mates are drinking at the park

You are in a public toilet and a drunk stranger approaches you

Your friend asks you to carry a knife for him

After a football match, you're caught in the wrong part of town wearing the opposing team football shirt

A girl from school shouts insults at you in the street and has told her friends that you hit her

A lad at school has been caught smoking – he tells the teacher that you gave them to him

A mate of yours is very drunk at a party – she is being sick and feels faint

You hear that a guy from a rival gang wants to arrange a fight with you

A mate of yours offers you a lift home in his car – you know he has been smoking weed

Your friends are shoplifting in town and want you to go too

You are going to a party and everyone wants you to go into the off licence to buy vodka as you look the oldest

You take some of your parents' cans of lager to share with your mates



**IT'S
OKAY**



**IT'S NOT
OKAY**

No knives, better lives.
www.noknivesbetterlives.com



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot