



Safeguarding Newsletter:

Alcohol Addiction

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SITUATION:

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOLISM ON FAMILIES

Addiction can have a damaging effect on entire families, which can impact many generations. When a member of a family is suffering from alcoholism, those closest to them can find that they have to contend with financial problems, strained relationships, and harm to their own health and wellbeing.

ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Children can be greatly affected by alcoholism in their household. They can feel guilty, where they believe they are responsible for the drinking and the fact that it won't stop. They can also become frustrated and angry, as they try to make sense of why a person they care about is behaving in such a way.

As alcoholism can disrupt routines, this can mean a child misses out on steady mealtimes or bedtimes, or has to take on additional responsibilities to establish routine in the household. Their mood and behaviours can also become unpredictable, where they find it difficult to make friends and are afraid of going to school.

Older children of alcoholics can suffer from obsessive perfectionism, hoarding, isolation and excessive self-consciousness, as they worry that they are different from other people. They can also have problems in school, as family life makes it difficult to study and establish relationships.

The emotions and thoughts that present themselves in childhood can be carried into adulthood, where the person struggles to find healthy relationships, behaves erratically, makes poor choices and has a negative self-image. They can also continue to feel the anxiety, depression and introversion that started when they were a child.

ITS IMPACT ON SPOUSES AND PARTNERS

As a person becomes addicted to alcohol, their focus can shift, where they neglect their work in favour of drinking or dealing with the effects of drinking. This can lead to a spouse or partner having to deal with the repercussions of a loss of income or less money in the household. They may also have to take on more responsibilities with regards to the family and home.

A person with alcoholism may also put themselves and others in unsafe or risky situations when drinking or trying to acquire alcohol, which can be both draining and dangerous for those who care about them.

Alcohol statistics

The following figures are from <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-statistics>

In England there are an estimated 586,780 dependent drinkers. (2018)

Only 18% are receiving treatment.

24% of adults in England and Scotland regularly drink over the Chief Medical Officer's low-risk guidelines, and 27% of drinkers in Great Britain binge drink on their heaviest drinking days

Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year-olds in the UK, and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages

In England in 2018/19, there were 1.26 million hospital admissions related to alcohol consumption (7.4% of all hospital admissions), 8% higher than the previous year.

In 2018/19 in England, 75,555 people were in treatment at specialist alcohol misuse services, a fall of 18% since 2013/14.

In 2017/18, in 39% of violent incidents the victim believed the offender to be under the influence of alcohol .

In 2016, 23% of 15 year olds reported having been drunk in the last four weeks.

Of pupils who obtained alcohol in the last four weeks, 71% were given it by parents or guardians, 49% were given it by friends and 48% took it from home with permission.

61% of pupils who currently drink said that they never buy alcohol .

Alcohol Misuse during the Pandemic

With drinking now largely home-based, the Portman Group – the social responsibility and regulatory body for alcohol in the UK – said ongoing Covid restrictions and curfews had increased consumers' thirst for hangover-free options from the supermarket and corner shop.

Its research reveals that almost two-thirds of UK adults (62.5%) have tried beers, wines or spirits in the “nolo” drinks category. In addition, a quarter (25%) of drinkers consider themselves to be semi-regular consumers of low and no alcohol, with the highest consumption in Scotland (27%). Separate data from Nielsen Scantrack suggests that low and no alcohol sales rose by 30% year-on-year.

“2020 has been a year like no other,” said Dr Richard Piper, chief executive of Alcohol Change UK. “Many of us have spent the year stressed, scared and tired. When things get tough, we can find ourselves slipping into drinking habits we wish we could break, but Dry January can help. It’s our chance for a reset – 31 days to try something new, and to see some amazing benefits like brighter skin, a fuller wallet, a calmer mind and a better night’s sleep.”

National Abuse Helplines

- **Addaction** (www.addaction.org.uk) is a drug & alcohol treatment agency. Their services deal primarily with drug and alcohol problems including family support. Telephone 020 7251 5860
- **Al-Anon Family Groups** (www.al-anonuk.org.uk) is a service for friends and families of alcoholics, providing understanding, strength and hope whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else’s drinking. Telephone 020 7403 0888
- **Alcohol Concern** (www.alcoholconcern.org.uk) is the national organisation for alcohol misuse.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** (www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk) provides an opportunity for people to get together to solve their problems with alcohol and help others to recover. Telephone 0800 9177 650
- **Drinkline** (www.drinkaware.co.uk) provide information and self-help materials for callers worried about their own drinking and they offer support to friends and families. Telephone 0300 123 1110

Help and Advice

Dry January

The Dry January campaign to encourage abstinence at the start of the New Year was launched in 2013 in the UK by Alcohol Change UK – initially attracting just 4,000 people – but has since expanded, with Public Health England as a partner, to become a major fixture on the post-Christmas binge calendar.

The charity Alcohol Change UK said its polling shows more than 6.5 million adults intend to participate in dry January – up from 3.9 million last year. That is the equivalent of one in five of people who drink alcohol.

Its poll also showed that one in four adults who drink alcohol are aiming to cut down generally in 2021. People who download its free app, Try Dry, are twice as likely to have a totally alcohol-free month and drink more healthily in the longer-term.



NHS Support

If you have become physically dependent and need to stop drinking completely, stopping overnight could be harmful.

You should get advice about this and about any medicine you may need to do this safely.

A good place to start is with a GP. Try to be accurate and honest about how much you drink and any problems it may be causing you.

The GP may suggest different types of assessment and support options available to you, such as from local community alcohol services.

Please contact Alison Hill, District Safeguarding Officer for more help and guidance by calling 07483 362 735 or via email at safeguarding@sheffieldmethodist.org