

Working with Young People Using Alcohol: Guidance for Practitioners

10 Really Good Reasons

10 reasons why we work with young people and parents to prevent alcohol misuse. These statements outline the possible consequences of drinking (and particularly binge drinking) at a young age.

Advice for young people

Messages for young people on:

- *how to say 'no' when offered alcohol*
- *how to minimise the risk of coming harm if you do drink*
- *how to stay safe if you go out for the evening*

This information has been approved by Vox and is published in young people friendly formats (cards and pens).

Top tips for parents

Messages for parents on when and how to talk to young people about alcohol.

This information is also available in leaflet form.

Screening tool for substance misuse

Following the instructions on this tool will provide a score to inform you of whether a young persons drinking and/or drug use is problematic and should be referred to a specialist agency.

Referral

If specialist support is required a referral should be made to the Young Persons Substance Misuse Service.

Sources of help

Local and national sources of advice and help.

**TACKLING
DRUGS
& ALCOHOL
CHANGING
LIVES
IN WARWICKSHIRE**
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

10 Really Good Reasons

why young people should choose not to get drunk

Alcohol can mess with...

1. Your mind.

Alcohol is a powerful mood altering drug. In small amounts it affects different people in a number of nice and not so nice ways. In larger doses it is a depressant, which is one of the reasons why it is recommended that young people should not drink alcohol until the age of 15, and preferably not until 18. Getting drunk can result in blackouts, memory loss and feelings of depression.

2. Your decision making.

Getting drunk makes people forget. This includes forgetting how to stay safe, forgetting how to care for yourself, and forgetting to be there for your mates. More than one drink is likely to affect the ability to think straight. People have increased self-confidence and are more easily influenced by friends. The pressure is on to do things that you would think twice about if you were sober.

3. Your health.

We understand that young people will want to try alcohol with friends and family and, at times, drink without their parents being around. But there are consequences to a drinking binge. The most common impact is vomiting and coma. Binge drinkers are also more likely to sustain an injury, through accidents or assault, ending up in the nearest A&E ward.

4. Your relationships.

Learning about relationships and sex is a normal part of growing up and having a sexual relationship is a healthy adult activity. But most of us know that that young people combine alcohol and sex, especially prior to their first sexual experience. This is because alcohol makes it easier to be influenced by friends, including the ones who may tell you that they are already having sex. Remember, it's ok to say 'no'. Having unprotected sex increases the risk of pregnancy and catching a sexually transmitted infection. A night to remember might turn out to be something you might like to forget; no matter how hard you try.

5. Your body and how you look.

If you drink too much booze your body will get rid of the unpleasant by-products through your breath, your sweat and your pee. Also all alcohol contains the kind of calories that you don't need - these are the ones that cause you put on weight but don't give you energy. Strangely, alcohol also

causes dehydration which leads to hangovers. In short, getting drunk does nothing for how nice you look, feel or smell.

6. Your family and friends.

Alcohol is used on many family occasions and is often part of our way of life. However, too much alcohol can lead to family problems. Drinking alcohol can have a negative effect on a young person's relationships with their parents, siblings and friends. More widely, drunkenness can lead to arguments and conflict within families and in some cases can fuel domestic abuse. Remember nobody respects a drunk...least of all a young drunk.

7. Your education.

The physical effects of alcohol can be felt long after your last drink. That's why it's called a hangover. Your body needs time to recover from being drunk; after all a hangover is the body's way of telling you that you have poisoned it. Fortunately, it does recover but not always in time for important things you need to do, like going to school or college or just life in general. All of which is going to have an impact upon grades and achievements.

8. Your money.

There are loads of ways to get cheap alcohol: from parents, or from older mates. For those lucky enough to look older than 18 you may even be able to get alcohol from the pub or shop. Buying booze can leave a significant dent in your wallet or purse. Even if you can afford the alcohol, you might not be able to afford the consequences of being drunk such as fines or loss of earnings.

9. Your actions.

It's very unlikely that young people get drunk to commit crime and yet there is a clear link between alcohol and crime. This is because if you are drunk you are far more likely to get a bit silly. Young people who had committed crime stated that they had been under the influence of alcohol when committing the crime. But of course none of this is funny when silliness becomes a violent assault or other serious offences against people and property.

10. Your future.

Alcohol can be directly related to deaths from certain types of diseases. The most well known is liver disease although drinking alcohol above recommended levels can also increase the risk of various cancers, heart attack and high blood pressure. Alcohol is the third leading risk factor for premature death and disability in developed countries. Alcohol abuse can also lead to long-term mental health problem and brain damage. People with alcohol problems usually started drinking regularly in their early teens. And all have regretted it since....

Advice for Young People

7 things to say if you don't want to drink

Remember that not all young people drink alcohol. In fact, more and more young people are choosing not to drink at all. If you're out with friends and they are drinking, you might feel pressured to join in. Simply be confident with people and say that you are not drinking. You don't have to explain yourself or lie. But it's just as well to have a few good reasons prepared:

1. You might have to keep a clear head for a test at school.
2. You might need to stay in shape for sports, particularly if you've got a game coming up.
3. Say that you're feeling unwell and don't want to make it any worse.
4. If you are taking medication, you should not drink alcohol.
5. Say that your parents won't let you drink.
6. Don't be afraid to say that you prefer soft drinks and don't like the taste of alcohol – many people, including many adults, are like this.
7. You could always pour yourself a soft drink and let other people assume it contains alcohol.

What would be more embarrassing, turning down a drink or being known as the person who can't handle their drink?

6 things to do if you do decide to drink

If you do drink, there are some simple precautions you can take to cut the risk of coming to harm:

1. Eat before you drink because alcohol will enter the bloodstream more slowly through your stomach if there is food there to absorb it.
2. Before you start drinking any alcohol at all, be clear how much you want to drink and when you're going to stop.
3. Make sure you drink soft drinks in between alcoholic drinks – this will stop you becoming too dehydrated.
4. Try to have standard-sized drinks so you have a better understanding of how many units of alcohol you are consuming.

5. If you go out and drink, make sure you know how you're going to get home and always have some money put aside for a taxi in case you need it.
6. Always tell someone where you're going if you're going out and think you'll be drinking.

Look after your health

England's Chief Medical Officer has advised that

- If you do drink, only do it now and again – and certainly don't do it more than once a week.
- If you do drink, never consume more than the recommended daily number of units for adults (which is 3–4 units a day for men and 2–3 units a day for women).
- If you do drink, make sure there is a responsible adult present to reduce the risk of harm.

4 things to remember to stay safe

If you're going out for the night, there are some simple things you can do to reduce the risk of falling into harm's way:

Say where you're going

- Tell your parents or carers as well as your friends where you're going, and when you are coming home

Agree how you're getting home

- Plan your night before you go out
- Keep money aside so you can get home
- Have a number for a trusted taxi company with you before you go out
- If you take a taxi, make sure it's licensed
- Never get into a car if you know the driver has been drinking

Find help

- Avoid aggressive people and walk away from someone who wants a fight
- Don't be shy of talking to a police officer if you feel threatened
- Don't be afraid to step in if you think one of your friends has had too much to drink – if you're worried about them find a responsible adult or call an ambulance

Everyone counts

- Keep close to at least one friend
- Never leave one of your friends out alone

7 Top Tips for Parents

on talking to your children about alcohol

The best way to protect your children from alcohol is to talk to them about it. You might find it difficult to believe, but you are one of the most important influences on what your children think and do.

1. Don't wait

Children are aware of alcohol from an earlier age than you might think. So don't be tempted to think that your own child is too young to know about alcohol. You should certainly be talking about it by the time your child makes the move to secondary school.

2. Be honest

Be prepared to talk openly about your own attitude to alcohol, how much you drink and why you drink. Your child is bound to want to talk about this.

3. Look for openers

The effects of alcohol often pop up in news stories, films and soaps. These all offer opportunities for talking about alcohol in your home. Or why not broach the topic in an everyday situation such as giving your child a lift in the car?

4. Don't forget to listen

Try asking your child what they understand about alcohol rather than telling them what you know. Get a conversation going. If there are questions you don't know the answers to, look them up together with your child.

5. Keep talking

Your child has to cope with many issues as they grow up. Try to get in the habit of talking with your child about all of them – including alcohol.

6. Pick your moment

If your child has drunk alcohol, pick your moment to talk to them about it. It's not a good idea to talk to your child about alcohol when they're drunk or have a hangover. Wait until they are in a receptive mood.

7. Set boundaries

Similarly, if your child is drinking alcohol, set some clear limits to the use of alcohol by your child and let them know why you are doing it. Explain what, when and how much you think it is appropriate for them to drink. Involve

them in a discussion so they know you've taken their views into account. Then stick consistently to the rules you've set.

One key thing to remember to say...

Make sure that your child knows that your number one concern is for their safety. You should always follow through on the consequences if they break your rules around alcohol use. But let them know that consequences always take second place to their safety. That way they will be more ready to talk to you if there's a problem.

One key thing to remember to do...

Look at your own alcohol use and ensure it's sending out the right messages to your child. Young people learn as much from seeing what their parents do as from listening to what they say. It is helpful to set an example to your child by creating some boundaries around your own use of alcohol.

Looking after their health

England's Chief Medical Officer has advised that children aged under 15 should never drink alcohol, even in small quantities. It is healthiest for your children not to drink alcohol until they are 18 years old.

Staying SAFE

If your child is going out for the night, ask them to do some simple things to reduce the risk of falling into harm's way:

Say where they are going

- Your child should let you, as well as their friends, know where they are going, and when they are coming home.

Agree how they are getting home

- Ask your child to plan their night before they go out and keep money aside so they can get home.
- Make sure they have a phone number for a trusted taxi company.
- Tell them never to get into a car if you know the driver has been drinking.

Find help

- Advise them to avoid aggressive people and walk away from someone who wants a fight. Young people should not be shy of talking to a police officer if they feel threatened.
- If your child becomes worried that one of their friends has had too much to drink, encourage them to find a responsible adult or call an ambulance.

Everyone counts

- Encourage them to keep close to at least one friend and never leave one of their friends out alone.

Compass Warwickshire Young Persons' Alcohol and Drugs Service

Screening Tool for Alcohol and Substance Misuse

This tool is designed to help people make decisions about how to respond to a young person's alcohol or substance use.

Please note: to refer a young person to Compass Warwickshire Young Persons' Substance Misuse Service, the following criteria must apply:

- The young person must be using alcohol or illicit substances.
- The young person must be made aware of the referral.
- The young person must be under 18 and living in Warwickshire

Instructions:

- Complete the form overleaf by ticking the most appropriate responses
- Add up the score for each section. Cross-reference with the Scoring Table below and take appropriate action.

Scoring Table		
Section 1: Substance Use		
Score 0-4	Score 5-6	Score 7+
Low Risk - Consider giving drug advice	Medium Risk - Seek advice from Compass Warwickshire	High Risk - Refer to Compass Warwickshire
Section 2: Social Situation/Behaviour		
Score 0-1	Score 2-5	Score 6+
Low Risk - Offer brief advice	Medium Risk - seek advice from Compass Warwickshire	High Risk - seek advice from Compass Warwickshire
Section 3: General and Psychological Health		
Score 0-4	Score 5-9	Score 10+
Low Risk - Offer brief advice	Medium Risk - seek advice from Compass Warwickshire	High Risk - seek advice from Compass Warwickshire

**Section 1:
Substance Use**

Tick	Score	Drug Type
	2	Alcohol
	2	Cannabis
	4	Amphetamine
	4	Solvents/Gas/Aerosols
	4	Crack
	4	Ecstasy
	4	Heroin
	4	LSD
	4	Magic Mushrooms
	2	Other(s) Please list and score 2
Tick	Score	Frequency of Substance Use
	1	One off (one time only)
	4	Occasionally (less than twice a month)
	6	Regularly (daily/weekly)
Tick	Score	Substance Intoxication Effects
	0	Substance use without side effects (e.g. loss of consciousness, hallucinations, aggression etc)
	5	Substance use with side effects (e.g. loss of consciousness, hallucinations, aggression etc)
Tick	Score	Injecting
	0	Not Injecting
	5	Injecting/recently Injecting
Tick	Score	Social Contact with Substance Users
	0	No Substance Using Social Contact(s)
	2	Some social contact(s) who use substances and some who don't
	4	All social contact(s) using substances
Tick	Score	Family Member/Carer(s) Substance Use
	0	No known family member(s)/carer(s) substance use
	2	Known substance use among family member(s)/carer(s)
	5	Significantly affected by family member(s)/Carer(s)
		Total Score

**Section 2:
Social Situation/Behaviour**

Tick	Score	Living Situation
	0	No problems with accommodation
	1	Problems with accommodation, insecure or inadequate housing
	1	Looked after by local authority
	6	Homeless
Tick	Score	Adult Support
	0	Has supportive relationships with more than one adult
	1	Has a supportive relationship with one adult
	2	Has no supportive relationships with adults
Tick	Score	Occupation
	0	In education/training/employment
	1	Truanting from school/ at risk of exclusion/drug or alcohol related absences at work
	2	Excluded from School/Unemployed
Tick	Score	Criminal Involvement
	0	No criminal involvement
	1	At risk of involvement in the Criminal Justice System
	2	Involved in the Criminal Justice System or committing more serious crimes
Tick	Score	Sexual Behaviour
	0	Age appropriate/ safe sexual behaviour
	2	Inappropriate unsafe sexual behaviour
	6	Commercial sex/abusive relations
		Total Score

Section 3: General and Psychological Health

Tick	Score	General Health
	0	Young person reports no significant health problems
	1	Teeth problems
	1	Stomach problems
	1	Regular headaches
	1	Difficulty sleeping
	5	Chronic fatigue
	5	Severe sleep problems
	5	Self neglect
	10	Extreme weight loss
	10	Blackouts and/or memory loss
	10	Pregnant
	10	Fitting
	10	Accidental/planned overdose
Tick	Score	Psychological Health
	0	Young person reports no significant psychological problems
	1	Low self esteem
	1	Mild anxiety
	1	Shyness
	5	Eating disorder
	5	Bouts of unhappiness/ Depression
	5	Self Harm
	5	Severe anxiety/panic attacks
	10	Severe paranoia
	10	Suicide attempts
	10	Hallucinations (when not under the influence of substances)
		Total Score

Young Person's Details	
Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Date of Birth:	
Gender:	

**Compass YPSMS
Referral Form**

Date Received by Compass:	Date of allocation to Compass Worker:	Date of 1st appointment offered:
Contact Details of Young Person:		
Name of Young Person:		
Address:		Postcode:
Home Tel. number:	Mobile Tel. number:	
Date of Birth:	Age:	Sex: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Ethnicity:	Any Disability:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the young person cared for by Local Authority? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Is Client? CAF <input type="checkbox"/> LAC <input type="checkbox"/> CIN <input type="checkbox"/> CP <input type="checkbox"/>		
How would the young person like to be contacted by Compass?	By Post to home address <input type="checkbox"/>	A call to their home phone <input type="checkbox"/> A call to their mobile phone <input type="checkbox"/>
If Compass contact via a phone call, is the young Person happy for a message to be left for them?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Young Person's carer/parent aware of the referral?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact Details of Referrer		
Name:	Relationship to young person:	
Organisation:	Mobile no:	Landline:
Address:	Email address:	
Would you prefer a male or female worker? Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>		
Where would the Young Person like to meet up?		
When is best for the Young Person to meet up?		
Would the Young Person like the family to be offered support?		
If the Young Person wishes to be accompanied, by who / relationship?		
Known substance issues:		
Any other agencies involved in supporting young person		
Please record any other behaviour which puts the young person or other people at increased risk which you think Compass should be aware of.		
Why would the young person like to be referred to Compass?		
Please fax or post referrals to Compass:		
Compass Warwickshire Young Peoples Drug and Alcohol Service Suite 4 Hilton House, Corporation Street, Rugby. CV21 2DN Telephone: 01788 578227 Fax : 01788 573289		

Sources of help

Telephone numbers

Compass Warwickshire– 01788 578227 (for practitioners) or 08000 887248 (for young people and parents)

Warwickshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (Commissioning for young people) – 01926 742011

Websites

www.compass-uk.org

Compass website with further information about their approach to supporting young people.

www.teenlifecheck.co.uk

NHS website for young people.

www.talktofrank.com

Home Office campaign providing information on drugs.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/alcohol

WCC Drug and Alcohol Action Team with links to local services and advice.

www.kooth.com

Online counselling site for young people. Commissioned by Warwickshire County Council.

www.respectyourself.info

WCC information for young people about sex and relationships.

www.wpthezone.co.uk

Warwickshire partnership website with information on health issues.

www.gotateenager.org.uk

National website for young people.

<http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx>

NHS advice on alcohol consumption.

This document is for practitioners working with young people in Warwickshire. It sets out the reasons why want to tackle the use of alcohol by young people, it gives advice on what to say to young people and parents, and it provides screening and referral forms to ensure that young people receive the support they need.

The document has been developed by Warwickshire Children's Trust, Warwickshire Drug and Alcohol Action team and Compass Warwickshire.

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