

# Alcohol and

## Mental Health



Lots of us use alcohol as a way to boost our confidence, but this can be very short-lived. Long term drinking can worsen anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

### What is Alcohol?

Alcohol is a depressant drug that can change the way you think and reduces your ability to deal with difficulties. Alcohol can lower our mood and increase anxiety.

Alcohol can intensify feelings of being sleepy, drowsy or lightheaded.

### Facts about Alcohol

- It is extremely addictive
- 80% of people in the UK drink Alcohol
- Alcohol is associated with 2.8 million deaths per year worldwide
- Alcohol can lower blood sugar levels

## What part of the brain does Alcohol affect?



Alcohol affects parts of the brain which can negatively affect your mental health.

### Thinking and Memory-

Alcohol relaxes this area and slows down the processing of information. It affects the ability to think clearly or make rational decisions.

### Life support Functions-

Alcohol induces sleepiness, lowers body temperature and slows down your breathing.

### Motivational Behaviour-

The pituitary gland regulates your hormones. Alcohol affects this along with your hunger, thirst behaviour and ability to deal with stress.

### Movement and Balance-

Alcohol controls your movement and balance resulting in being off balance when you drink too much.

## Signs to look out for

Long- term use can lead to dependence, addiction, debt, chronic disease or other health related issues.

### Behaviour

- Regular change in mood
- Aggressive or agitated behaviours
- Withdrawing socially
- Making bad decisions
- Depression

### Health

- Heart racing
- Ulcers
- High blood pressure
- Trembling hands
- Liver Problems

### Social

- Arguments
- Bad relationships
- Work/School problems
- Regrets of things you have done



## Where to get Help for Alcohol related issues

There are a wide range of early intervention , treatment and support services in place throughout Northern Ireland

Visit Drugs and Alcohol NI at:

[www.drugsandalcoholni.info](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info)

and click on the 'Services Near You' section. You will find a range of search options to find what is most appropriate for you



"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

Another useful website is Alcohol and you. It features a range of online information about alcohol as well as a number of alcohol tools in their 'Resource' section

[www.alcoholandyouni.com](http://www.alcoholandyouni.com)



## Getting Support

Lifeline is a 24hr help and counselling service. They can give you immediate support and information on local services.



You can:

- See your doctor
- Call the out of hours GP service
- Go to A&E department
- Call emergency services
- Call Samaritans on 116 123
- Text Shout 85258
- Don't let things build up; talk to people you love and trust.



"Only in the Darkness can you see the stars"

## Take 5 Steps for Wellbeing

The Take 5 Steps for wellbeing are an evidenced based way to promote mental health.



Do something nice for a friend. Smile. Volunteer your time and help your club.

Surround yourself with Family , friends or teammates. Good connections will help you feel supported.



Don't be afraid to try something new. Take up a hobby and something you enjoy and learn a new skill.

Exercise acts as an anti-depressant. Being active is good for your mental health and physical health.



Be aware of the world around you and how you are feeling. Take a step back, breath and take a time out.

[www.tamhi.org](http://www.tamhi.org)