

Question 14: How do you define harmful drinking? What factors do you take account in deciding whether heavy drinking has become problematic drinking :

The following are some issues to consider when defining harmful drinking:

1. Drinking over the recommended guidelines
2. When physical and mental health become effected by drinking
3. Where drinking has an adverse impact on any of the following
 - i. Finances
 - ii. Social relationships
 - iii. Work / Training / Education
 - iv. Self- Care / Living Skills
 - v. Daily Activities
 - vi. Family
4. A persons drinking patterns, need to be taken into consideration, i.e. drinking the morning, on there own (escapism), with a crowd (who)
5. When a person starts to drink for confidence
6. When someone suffers withdrawal symptoms from drink (DT's)
7. Binge Drinking

What factors do you take into account in deciding whether heavy drinking has become problematic?

The following outline factors to look for, however none of these should be look in isolation, and need to be considered in conjunction with other factors. This not mean more than one factor needs to be apparent for problematic drinking Problematic drinking does usually affect more than one aspect of a person's life; tough this may not be obvious for some time.

All of the above factors are taken into account, to summarise further, the three: of assessment for problematic drinking are -

Physiological
Psychological
Emotional

Obvious indicators for problematic drinking are

- i. Crime related to drinking (assault, domestic violence, drink driving etc)
- ii. The impact of a person(s) drinking habits on the family
- iii. The person(s) drinking in relation to there culture, norms etc
- iv. How the person sees their drinking (i.e. denial etc)
- v. Behavioural changes
- vi. Persons ability to cope with day to day life

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Question 22: What are the links between alcohol misuse and mental health. problems, including depression and suicide?

Alcohol misuse and mental health are related. Where there is a case of alcohol misuse there is most often an underlying mental health issue i.e. depression, phobias, schizophrenia (or symptoms of), etc. We would also say the alcohol misuse is often a form of self-harm that affects not only physical health but also psychological a emotional stability. Another inter-link between alcohol misuse and mental health is the fact that alcohol misuse is often a trigger for mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks etc. How are services - both those aimed at prevention and treatment - best co-ordinated?

Services need to work together on cases of dual diagnoses; to do this services need to be accountable to the fact that they have dual diagnosis service users. Structures necessary:

- Mandatory joint working between mental health and substance use services
Communication / co-operation
 - Recognition from a top down level of dual diagnosis (govt. - agencies - professionals , - workers etc.)
 - Mandatory joint working between mental health and substance use agencies.
 - More funding for dual diagnosis - for training, staff, facilities (treatment etc)
Flexibility from professionals in approach and knowledge / willingness recognise/use different approaches
 - To start calling alcohol what it is, which is a drug, and start treating it as such
There needs to be more emphasis in education and the media around issues of alcohol
/ drugs / mental health (more social awareness)
 - Training of current professionals / staff on these topics with an emphasis on bringing the issues together, also training for upcoming workers on these
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