

Social Work Blog

Alcohol Awareness Month

April 2022

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. It highlights the dangers of unsafe alcohol consumption and promote awareness in reducing alcohol use disorder. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, [14.5 million people ages 12 and older](#) had an [alcohol use disorder](#) (AUD) in 2019. During the COVID-19 pandemic alcohol use along with mental health challenges have been exacerbated by pre-existing and new [stressors](#). According to a journal article written in [Toxicology Reports](#) a recent study showed that Americans drank an increase of 14% more alcohol in 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 2019.



Social workers provide counseling services and mental health treatment to individuals who may also have an alcohol use disorder and help them address barriers to treatment. They also provide education around [potential harm](#) due to misuse and use [treatment modalities](#) that are flexible and work for both harm reduction and abstinence.



When alcohol is consumed [drinking in moderation](#) is considered 2 drinks or less per day for men and 1 drink per day for women. Having conversations around consumption and alcohol use during early screenings can be used as an opportunity to discuss frequency of use, volume of use and possible need for treatment. [Stigmas](#) around treatment and seeking help are prevalent. Education and screening may be beneficial in informing individuals of treatment options and resources available to them.

Facts regarding alcohol use include the following:

- A [standard drink](#) contains 0.6 fluid ounces or 14 grams of pure alcohol.
- [Underage drinking](#) is common and early use can lead to an alcohol use disorder later in life.
- Men are almost two times more likely to [binge drink](#) more than women.

- Women face [higher risk for alcohol related consequences](#) due to having less water in their bodies than men.
- Before a person knows they are pregnant, alcohol can cause developmental problems for their developing baby. There is no safe time or amount of alcohol use in [pregnancy](#).
- Alcohol levels are usually highest in [breast milk 30-60 minutes after an alcoholic beverage is consumed](#), and can be generally detected in breast milk for about 2-3 hours per drink after it is consumed.

In honor of Alcohol Awareness Month, NASW has compiled the following list of resources.

- *Al-Anon Meetings*. Find an Al-Anon or Alateen Face to Face, Phone, or Online Meeting. Retrieved 3/22/22. <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/>
- *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Have a problem with alcohol? There is a solution. Resource to finding meeting locations. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://www.aa.org/>
- *Alcohol Facts and Statistics*. Alcohol Use in the United States. Updated March 2022. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>
- *Alcohol Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT): Best Practices for the Prevention and Treatment of Risky Drinking in Girls/Women of Childbearing Age*. Assessment and interventions of risky alcohol use is extremely important amongst girls and women. Winter 2020. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=mXPYgpIQBkg%3d&portalid=0>
- *Binge Drinking*. Binge drinking is a serious but preventable public health problem. January 6, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm>
- *COVID-19 pandemic and alcohol consumption: Impacts and interconnections*. The effects of alcohol consumption and the consequences during social isolation and lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic. Toxicology Reports. 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214750021000469>
- *Dangerous Rites of Passage: Trends in College Alcohol Consumption*. Research continues to focus on binge drinking and college alcohol consumption. June 2011. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=eJmbVNdAhnA%3d&portalid=0>
- *Drinking Levels Defined*. Overview of alcohol consumption. Retrieved March 18, 2022. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/moderate-binge-drinking>
- *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs): Clinical Resources for Social Work Practice*. Social workers can help with prevention by screening clients for risky alcohol use. 2019. <http://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gxtcgelepHw=&portalid=0>
- *Is It Safe for Mothers to Breastfeed Their Infant if They Have Consumed Alcohol?* Pumping after alcohol consumption does not reduce the presence of alcohol in breast milk. February 9, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/vaccinations-medications-drugs/alcohol.html>

- *Moderation Management Non-Profit for Self-Managed Alcohol Moderation*. Source of information from a non-profit dedicated to reducing the harm caused by the misuse of alcohol. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://moderation.org/>
- *NASW Standards for Social Work Practice with Clients and Substance Use Disorders*. A document outlining standards for professional practice, professional preparation and development for social workers working with clients with substance use disorders. 2013. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ICxAggMy9CU%3d&portalid=0>
- *NASW Practice Perspectives: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: A Guide to Resources*. Resources to various agencies and websites that provide information on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Spring 2017. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Xi0H5JNZ9Bg%3d&portalid=0>
- *NIAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator*. Source of information for persons seeking providers. <https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/how-to-find-alcohol-treatment/step-1-search-trusted-sources-to-find-providers>
- *Preventing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies: Tools and Strategies for the Social Work Practitioner*. The role of social worker practitioners and the tools and strategies to help with prevention. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://media.bcm.edu/documents/2017/fb/preventing-alcohol-exposed-pregnancies-tools-and-strategies-for-the-social-work-practitioner.pdf>
- *Smart Recovery*. Resource to finding support meetings which are free and open to anyone. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://www.smartrecovery.org/>
- *SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator*. A confidential and anonymous source of information for persons seeking treatment facilities. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- *The Worsening Outcomes of the COVID-19 Lockdowns on Patients with a History of Alcoholism*. Stress exacerbates alcohol consumption and use which leads to additional stress. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*. April 12, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07347324.2021.1914257>
- *Treating Alcoholism*. Understanding alcohol treatment, when to seek treatment and the types of treatment. Updated March 1, 2022. <https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/Treatment/>
- *Underage Drinking*. Underage drinking is common, dangerous, associated with adult drinking and preventable. October 6, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>
- *US Department of Veterans Affairs Substance Use Disorder Program Locations*. Resource to help locate specialized SUD programs for veterans based upon state. Retrieved March 22, 2022. <https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/SUD.asp>
- *What's a "Standard Drink"? Rethinking Drinking, Alcohol and Your Health*. How much is too much? What counts as a drink? Alcohol consumption facts. Retrieved March 21, 2022. <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/What-counts-as-a-drink/Whats-A-Standard-Drink.aspx>

- *What Are the Consequences.* There are short term and long-term consequences associated with alcohol misuse. Retrieved March 17, 2022.
<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/Whats-the-harm/What-Are-The-Consequences.aspx>
- *What Are the Symptoms of an Alcohol Use Disorder.* Questions to help you think about alcohol symptoms and behaviors that may indicate it is time to seek help. Retrieved March 18, 2022. <https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/Whats-the-harm/What-Are-Symptoms-Of-Alcohol-Use-Disorder.aspx>
- *What Are the U.S. Guidelines for Drinking.* Drinking in moderation, the patterns and risk of consumption. Retrieved March 17, 2022.
<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/Is-your-drinking-pattern-risky/Drinking-Levels.aspx>
- *Words Matter-Terms to Use and Avoid When Talking About Addiction.* Terms to consider using to reduce stigma and negative bias when talking about addiction. November 29, 2021.
<https://nida.nih.gov/nidamed-medical-health-professionals/health-professionals-education/words-matter-terms-to-use-avoid-when-talking-about-addiction>

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