

## FEELINGS

Sad, depressed, angry, despairing, anxious, nervous, always watching and waiting for something to happen, always worried, scared, embarrassed, lonely, confused, distressed, lost, numb, emotionally draining, makes me feel helpless, useless, alone.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Young people can have difficulty in developing trusting relationships. Their experience is that adults do not provide and they have to do everything, even provide for themselves. **"I was already, at nine years old, covering up, pretending that life inside our house was as pretty as the outside."** Katy aged 20

## COMING SECOND TO ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS:

(Views of children were taken from the Steps to Cope Pilot)  
"Most times I'm worried about going home because I don't know what state she would be in (mum), I don't have any food in cupboards and my clothes are dirty. I'm ashamed and sometimes people make fun of me."

## Do you think your kids ever feel this way?

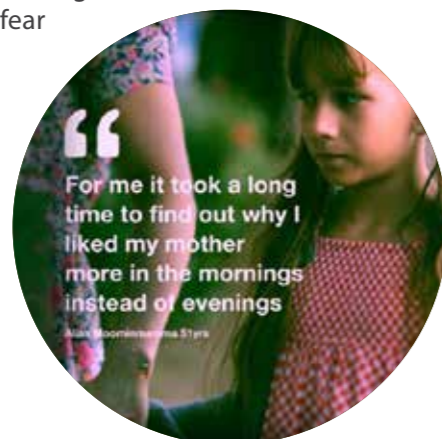
## WHAT DO CHILDREN SEE WHEN PARENTS ARE DRUNK?

"Monsters" is a campaign from Fragile Childhood in Finland. What children mostly recall is that how their loving parent turned into something totally different when drinking or hungover. There was a fear of how unpredictable they would become.

Fragile Childhood's other powerful campaign "Orphanage" raises the question, "if kids could choose their parent, would they choose you. Are you the loving, caring parent every child has a right to?"

## TO VIEW FRAGILE CHILDHOOD'S "MONSTERS" ON YOU TUBE VISIT:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwdUXS94yNk>  
or "Orphanage" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B\\_eMzI4ibyU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_eMzI4ibyU)  
With grateful acknowledgement to Fragile Childhood  
[www.lasinenlapsuus.fi/en](http://www.lasinenlapsuus.fi/en)



Having adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) like a parent drinking or drug taking can have an impact on their mental and physical health that can follow them into adulthood.

## What can you do with all this?

You may feel everyone is against you or pushing you toward something you are not ready to do. Their main concern really is the same as yours: What's important for your kids? What do you want to do with this? What would your goal be?

## IMPORTANCE OF MAKING A CHANGE

On a scale of 0 (not important) to 10 (very important) how would you rate the importance of making a change now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### Why have you given this number?

### What would help you get it to a point where you would give it a higher number?

Confidence about making a change regarding alcohol. On a scale of 0 (not important) to 10 (very important) how would you rate your confidence of making this change?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### Why have you picked this number?

### What would help you feel more confident about making a change about drinking? (Think about changes you have made in the past)

If you see the need to make a change with your drinking:

- Think through the reasons you want to make a change.
- Make a firm committed decision to change.
- Make a plan: how are you going to do it
- Get support

### What are two or three reasons for changing that you can think of?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## Where can I get support?

ALCOHOL  
and you

Alcohol and You is a website that has information and a self-help section. [www.alcoholandyouni.com](http://www.alcoholandyouni.com)

The website has a range of online information and alcohol tools within their 'Resources' section. Its main feature is the online alcohol **self-help section** that can let you work at your own pace with a drinks diary, unit checker and more.

For support on alcohol and drugs across Northern Ireland see: [www.drugsandalcoholni.info](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info)

If you think you are dependent on alcohol see your GP for a referral to the Community Addiction Team.

### Are you affected by someone else's drinking?

Support is available for family members affected by another person's drinking or drug taking. The person misusing alcohol or drugs does not need to be seeking help with their drinking for you to make use of this service.

- Visit: [www.drugsandalcoholni.info](http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info)
- Steps to Cope: Support for 11–18 year olds affected by their parents drinking [www.ascert.biz/stepstocope](http://www.ascert.biz/stepstocope)

### Other useful contacts

- 24 hr Domestic Violence helpline 0800 9171 414  
(This number will not appear on your phone bill or be disclosed via 1471) [24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org](mailto:24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org)
- Family Support [www.familysupportni.gov.uk](http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk)

In Crisis? Lifeline

24/7 CRISIS RESPONSE HELPLINE  
0808 808 8000



ALCOHOL  
and you

Alcohol and You is the SEHSCT, ASCERT and the Public Health Agency working together to reduce alcohol related harm. This leaflet was originally funded by the Big Lottery's Impact of Alcohol Programme.



# PARENTS AND ALCOHOL

How alcohol can affect your children  
and what you can do about it

ALCOHOL  
and you

IS IT TIME  
FOR A  
CHANGE?

## Being a parent

Being a parent is one of the most important jobs anyone can do. We have responsibility for the care and growth of our children including:

- Keeping them safe
- Making sure their physical and emotional needs are met
- Raising them to be able to cope with the demands life can throw at them
- Making sure they feel loved and secure.



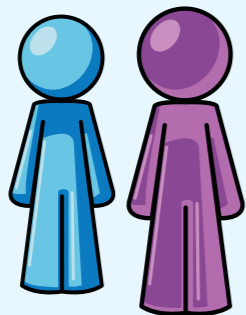
Being a parent can be hard work. But it is all worth it when we see our children grow healthy like we want them to.

## What are the most important things you want for your children?

When you are drinking or the next day, how does alcohol get in the way of these important needs?

### What do children need?

- Basic care: warmth, food
- To feel safe
- Emotional warmth and love
- Stimulation: play, learning
- Guidance and boundaries
- Rules and values to live by
- Stability; Knowing things at home are secure.



## Parenting Capacity

Parenting capacity means meeting the needs of your children consistently.

Although parents who drink may often have good parenting skills, when they are drinking heavily they may be unable to use these skills consistently.

The most destructive thing about heavy drinking, when it becomes a regular pattern is its wearing away of family unity, stability, consistency and predictability. *Jim Orford*

### So what about alcohol?

As an adult, if you like a glass of wine or a glass of beer there is nothing wrong with that. But do you ever overdo it?

Being drunk in front of children can be frightening to a child or young person especially if it leads to tears or arguments. A hangover can mean we are not fully in charge and the sore head or tiredness can mean we don't have energy for our kids. This leaflet is asking you to think about the way you drink and if it is getting in the way of you being the kind of parent you want to be?

## A closer look at your drinking

Answer this question. When was the last time you had more than 4 or 5 drinks on one go?

If your answer was *within the past 3 months* go a bit further..



QUESTIONS	SCORING SYSTEM				
	0	1	2	3	4
How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?	Never	Less than monthly	2-4 times per month	2-3 times per week	4+ times per week
How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking?	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-9	10+
How often have you had 6 or more units if female, or 8 or more if male, on a single occasion in the last year?	Never	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily or almost daily

### What does your score mean?

A total of **5+** indicates increasing or higher risk.

Your score total:

If your score is **8** or over it could suggest its becoming more of a problem and there is a potential for dependence.

### Know your weekly limit in units & measures

**THERE IS NO COMPLETELY SAFE LIMIT OF DRINKING**

**REMEMBER ANY DECREASE HELPS!**

- 6X 175ml = 14 units GLASSES OF 13% ABV WINE
- OR
- 6X 568ml = 14 units PINTS OF 4% ABV BEER
- OR
- 5X 568ml = 14 units PINTS OF 4.5% ABV CIDER
- OR
- 10X 35ml = 14 units MEASURES OF 40% ABV SPIRITS



## How much are you drinking on an average week?

INSERT YOUR UNITS BELOW AND TOTAL UP

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Was your mood affected on any of those days?

YES NO

## Should you be worried?

- Do you drink to forget or cope?
- Do you ever regret what you do when you've been drinking- like being aggressive?
- Does your drinking worry your family?
- Do you ever drink more than you intended to?
- Do you ever forget what you did when you were drinking?
- Are you teaching your kids it's ok to drink a lot?
- Do you get bad headaches or hangovers?
- Do your kids see you drinking or the effects of it?
- Are you prepared to talk to your children about alcohol? If they know you drink they will have questions even at a very young age.

Other people may see your drinking as worrying. Why do you think they have concerns?

## How are children and young people affected by their parent's heavy drinking?

This is what children and young people have said how their parents excessive drinking has affected them. "I felt sad and angry. I used to cry at night in bed on my own. I found it hard to sleep at night... family life was hard and lonely" (Taken from the "Steps to Cope" pilot).

### WORRIES

"I worry all the time about Mum and family"  
 "Scared Dad will die"  
 "Worried about everything"  
 "I am so alone"

### HEALTH

"Always wake up during the night, feel drained"  
 "No food in the house and I got really hungry"  
 "My stomach is always sore"