



Strategic Partnership Boards
SAFETY SAFEGUARDING WELLBEING



Bitesize video guide: Alcohol

Hello, my name is Kellie and I am a family worker offering early help support to families.

Today I am going to talk about problematic alcohol use and how to have difficult conversations with people about this.

Many people consume alcohol as means of celebration, to socialise and relax. It is our role as practitioners to discuss with families when alcohol use starts to effect quality of life, physical and mental health, and responsibilities as a carer or parents raising safeguarding concerns.

My role is to make contact with families, establish rapport and help them in the areas they need support. This often includes having difficult conversations with families. It's important that I am open, transparent and maintain boundaries and I am non-judgemental in my approach, while always being mindful about safeguarding.

I need to be curious about a person's drinking and discuss with them how much it impacts on them and their family, taking a Think Family approach so I look at the person in the context of their family and how everyone's needs are affected by other members of the family. I explore what lead to the situation and what they would imagine life to be like if they were able to overcome the problem. It's important I encourage the person to reflect on what will motivate them to want to change things. This conversation could be with an adult or a child in the family.

Here are some pointers for having difficult conversations about alcohol, and how you can help a family reach their goals.

Introduce the subject sensitively to help the person feel at ease and that you are there to offer support.

Think about different ways to start a conversation, using open questions will give you more information

Express empathy showing an active interest in seeing the world through their eyes. Explore their opinions and ideas so you have a real sense of how they experience their world.

Shape and agree goals building on the person's suggestions for change. Agree what they will do, and what you will do separately which may include referral to specialist services

Be aware and alert to the potential need to initiate a safeguarding process and be open and transparent with the person about this if doing so will not place a child or adult at risk of further harm. The safeguarding could be in relation to a child and parenting or in relation to an adult who is self-neglecting. Please watch the self-neglect bitesize for more information

Seek advice about referring to other services such as their GP or other specialist services and safeguarding for children or adults as appropriate when:

- They express the desire to talk in-depth with someone about alcohol. They display alcohol dependence
- Have a high level of alcohol harm, physically and mentally
- When brief intervention does not seem appropriate

And finally, there are tools available to help you further with adults see Audit C available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-use-screening-tests> and for children the DUST assessment

Your three messages to take away

1. As practitioners we need to have challenging conversations and there are ways of making this conversation more constructive.
2. You need to take a Think Family approach and think about how the person's alcohol use affects all members of the family and address all in your assessment and planning.
3. As a practitioner you need be alert to potential safeguarding concerns for children and adults and act appropriately following pan London procedures.