



a young women and alcohol resource  
for youth workers



## What's in the pack?

The 'Here Come the Girls' resource pack contains 20 photographs of young women in alcohol related situations. Each photo has a number of questions designed to spark discussion on each situation. The questions are not prescriptive, rather are suggestions for discussions which are to be used at the discretion of the youth worker/teacher. In this booklet there is some additional information which can be used as back up for the worker using the resource. Finally, it also contains a list of relevant local (County Wicklow) and national websites.

## How can I use it?

Each photograph looks at an issue or situation involving young women and alcohol. The photographs can be used in a sessions exploring alcohol use with groups of young women. The aim of the pack is to spark discussion, provide opportunities to challenge certain attitudes and correct false information. If the pack is used to develop role play

scenarios, it can allow space for young women to explore different ways of dealing with the situations if they were to come across them personally.

## When can I use it?

The pack was designed to be used with young women aged between 14 and 19 years of age, in conjunction with other related educational activities.

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## Photo 1: Mum's Home

This photo shows mum coming home to an unexpected house party.



## Photo 2: Try it or Else

This photo shows a young girl being put under pressure to drink alcohol by her boyfriend in front of his peers



## Photo 3: What's in Your Drink?

This photo depicts a girl unaware of her drink being spiked by a tablet.



## Photo 4: If She's Drinking So Am I

This photo shows a young girl drinking alcohol that has been left over by her mother who has fallen asleep after having consumed alcohol



## Photo 5: Right Choices

This photo shows two girls who are drinking alcohol, one is in the car and is persuading the other girl to join her. The driver of the car is a young man who has also consumed alcohol.



## Photo 6: How Old is She?

This photo shows an underage young girl being served alcohol in an off-license



## Photo 7: Alcohol Fuelled Aggression

This photo shows two young women fighting and being encouraged by a group of young people, the fight is also being recorded on a mobile phone.



## Photo 8: Reduced Inhibitions

This photo shows a young woman becoming increasingly drunk and more & more attracted to a young man



### Photo 9: First Aid Kit

This photo shows two young women preparing to go out, this photo aims to encourage the target audience to discuss what should be in their handbags to ensure a safer night out.



### Photo 10: I Swear Mum!

This photo shows a young woman saying goodbye to her mother to go out on a night out, then changing her clothes to go on a completely different night out.



### Photo 11: Shoes or Booze

This photo depicts a young woman trying to make the decision whether to spend her money on new shoes or on alcohol for a night out.



### Photo 12: Alcohol and Friendship

This photo shows two young women, one is very drunk and is being helped by her friend who is sober, the young women are being watched and laughed at by a group of their peers.



## Photo 13: The Morning After

This photo shows a young woman who is sleeping off the night before, her mobile phone shows her mother has tried to call her a number of times already.



## Photo 14: Alone under the Influence

This photo shows a young girl alone while under the influence of alcohol, this photo can also be used to discuss the difference between boys and girls around alcohol use.



## Photo 15: For a Good Night Out, Drink..

This photo depicts a mock-up of alcohol advertising directed at young women.



## Photo 16: "Going Fishing"

This is a colloquial term for a young person persuading an adult to purchase alcohol for them.



### Photo 17: Drank too Much - What's at Risk?

This photo shows a young couple who are under the influence of alcohol and a) they are about to engage in sex or b) the young man is putting pressure on the young women to have sex.



### Photo 18: Legal Implications

This photo shows young women being taken into the squad car having been found drinking in a local field. It also shows the garda emptying the bottle of drink and warning the group of young onlookers.



### Photo 19: Drank Too Much - Who Else is Involved?

This photo depicts the paramedics attending to some young women who are in need of medical assistance due to having drunk too much alcohol.



### Photo 20: Who's Looking After Her?

This photo shows a group of young people drinking in a field. One of the young women has passed out from too much drink but is not being looked after.

# Alcohol and Mental Health

Alcohol can contribute to the development of mental health problems and can affect our ability to cope, manage and overcome everyday stresses and significant life events, such as exams or a death in the family.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to alcohol-related harms and risks due to the fact that their brains and bodies are still growing and developing:

- Biologically teenagers' brains are still developing – alcohol particularly affects the areas of the brain responsible for memory and impulse control. This damage can then impact on a young person's thinking, functioning and behaviour
- Adolescence can be a challenging time as young people navigate new experiences and stresses for the first time – therefore alcohol is being added to situations where there is no pre-existing "road map" and may leave a young person particularly vulnerable to exploitation or danger

- Behaviour patterns that can last a life time are being established during this formative period. Adult heavy drinkers generally established their drinking patterns in their teens

Alcohol is often used to change a mood or mental state, or to help cope with situations we think would be difficult to manage without the use of alcohol. It is also used to self-medicate and to relieve feelings of anxiety and depression.

By using alcohol in this way a young person can pass up the learning opportunities to acquire helpful coping and social skills. One recent study found that Irish third level students who were regular, heavy drinkers were less likely to use positive coping strategies when feeling anxious or depressed

Although, in the short-term it may seem and feel like a good idea to drink, alcohol can increase depression and anxiety soon after its use, leaving people feeling low and unable to cope.



The link between alcohol use and suicide has also been well established. A national study of youth mental health found strong links between excessive drinking and suicidal behaviour. The same study provided clear evidence that excessive drinking is associated with poor mental health and well-being.

For further information please see [www.alcoholireland.ie](http://www.alcoholireland.ie)

## How does a woman's body handle alcohol?

- Men have more bodily fluid than women, so alcohol is more dilute in their system.
- Women also tend to be smaller, so have less tissue to absorb alcohol.
- Women have less of an enzyme needed to break down alcohol in the stomach

What is a standard drink?



## What are the effects?

Alcohol use among teenagers can have serious effects on their physical and mental health. These include:

**Hangover:** When teenagers are 'hungover' they are experiencing a type of alcohol poisoning. They become dehydrated and as a result, feel sick, have headaches and become irritable.

**Poor school performance:** Teenagers who use alcohol may remember less of what they have learned. This has knock-on effects at school, especially around exam time. Alcohol use can be the result and cause of difficulties at school. It can also hinder the development of other skills, such as decision-making, personal and social skills.

**Anti-social behaviour and mental health:** Heavy drinking and binge drinking are linked to anti-social behaviour, mental health problems and permanent brain damage.

**Drinking, smoking and taking drugs:** Teenagers who drink and smoke are more likely to take other drugs.

**Premature death:** The main causes of death among 16 to 25 year olds are accidents, suicide and violence. Alcohol is often involved in these cases.

**Unsafe sex:** There is a definite link between drinking alcohol before sex and not using contraception. This can lead to crisis pregnancy and an increased risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

## If a teenager drinks before they are 15 they are:

- four times more likely to develop alcohol dependency than those who wait until they are 21;
- seven times more likely to be in a car crash because of drinking; and
- 11 times more likely to suffer unintentional injuries after drinking.

Heavy use of alcohol during teenage years can impair brain development and cause loss of memory and other skills.

(taken from [www.yourdrinking.ie](http://www.yourdrinking.ie) 25/3/13)

- Drink slowly so your body has a chance to deal with the alcohol.
- Count how much you are drinking.
- Eat before drinking and drink slowly so you are more aware of how you are being affected by alcohol.
- Drink a large glass of water between alcoholic drinks.
- Mind yourself - make sure you have a backup plan. Buy less drink rather than too much. Make a decision before you go out about how much you are going to drink and stick to your plan. Keep track of how much you are drinking.
- Mind your mates - do not leave friends alone if they are drinking. If the friend is in trouble you need to call a responsible adult or an ambulance if needed.
- Have a safety plan - mind your mates - do not leave friends alone if they are drinking, if a friend is in trouble call a responsible adult or the emergency services.

# What to do in an emergency

If a young person is unconscious or 'out of it' it is important that you know what to do - it could save their life!

- Turn them on their side or put them in the recovery position
- Dial 999 or 112 and ask for an ambulance.
- Do not leave them alone.
- Contact the other parents involved. Most parents would want to be kept informed.
- If they have taken pills or powder and you come across them, give them to the ambulance personnel.
- Do not worry about who is to blame – the important thing at this point is the young person's wellbeing.

# How to put someone into the recovery position.



*Put the right hand by the head (as if they were waving)*



*Put the left arm across the chest, so that the back of the hand rests against the cheek.*



*Put the left arm across the chest, so that the back of the hand rests against the cheek.*



*Turn the person on their side by pushing down on the knee.*

# What does the law say?

It is against the law for a young person under 18 to:

- buy alcohol;
- drink alcohol in a public place;
- pretend to be over 18 in order to buy alcohol;
- be in a pub after:
  - 9pm from 1 October to 30 April,
  - 10pm from 1 May to 30 September; or
- be on licensed premises during an exemption.

It is against the law for a young person under 15 to be in a pub without a parent or guardian.

A young person between 15 and 17 can attend a private function, such as a wedding in a pub after the times above if a proper meal is being served.

It is also against the law for an adult to buy alcohol for a young person under the age of 18. The penalty is a maximum fine of €1500.

(from 'Straight Talk' – [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie))

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## Website Resources

[www.alcoholireland.ie](http://www.alcoholireland.ie)

[www.bys.ie](http://www.bys.ie)

[www.crosscare.ie](http://www.crosscare.ie)

[www.ecrdtf.ie](http://www.ecrdtf.ie)

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

[www.yourdrinking.ie](http://www.yourdrinking.ie)