

Mental Health & Addiction Awareness Video Worksheet

This worksheet has been created for teachers to use as a guideline to open up a discussion with students after viewing the video. Henry & Sally are pleased to acknowledge input from Professor Christopher Cook, Director of the Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Durham University, who advised on the content of this worksheet. Professor Cook worked for many years in the NHS in the care of patients with addictive disorders.

1) What were the signs that things were getting worse for Tom?

Possible answers: Relationship ending, losing his license, losing confidence and his mental health deteriorating, increasing consumption, increasing salience of drinking over other priorities in life, denial of having a problem.

2) What can be the triggers of an addiction?

Possible answers: trauma, illness, depression, mental health deterioration, pressure, stress.

3) What are some of the key signs of knowing someone has an addiction?

Possible answers: Hiding alcohol (to feed the addiction), using alcohol as a coping mechanism/escapism. The 7 key features of dependence would be: narrowing of drinking repertoire (less variety of drinking behaviour), salience of alcohol seeking behaviour (drinking takes priority over other things), stereotyped pattern of drinking (drinking pattern becomes much the same every day), increased tolerance, repeated withdrawal symptoms, relief drinking to avoid withdrawal symptoms, subjective compulsion to drink, and reinstatement after abstinence. However, please note, some people may have a serious drinking problem and not be addicted!

4) Tom was addicted to alcohol for around 10 years before eventually dying at just 29 years old. What harm does an addiction to alcohol cause to an addict's health?

Possible answers:

Social – Accidents, crime, family disharmony, loss of friends (loneliness), problems at work.
Psychological – Anxiety, panic attacks, mental health deterioration e.g., depression, suicidal thoughts, mood swings and hallucinations.

Physical – Cirrhosis of the liver, jaundice, stomach pains, leg pains, tiredness, the shakes, alcohol fits (which can happen irrespective of prior or current history of epilepsy).

5) If Tom was your brother, when would you have first realised something was wrong?

Answer: This could lead to a discussion about looking out for the signs of addiction (and drink problems) in a family member or a friend.

Answer from Henry & Sally Maybury: Using alcohol as a coping mechanism, hiding alcohol, in denial, prioritising alcohol over family, Signs of different behaviour, mood swings, leaving the room at various times to go and drink secretly, making sure there is always drink in the

house, more frequent visits to the pub eg. after work and coming back and continuing the drinking, longer drinking sessions over the weekend, taking money to feed the addiction, continuously drunk (topping up their drink intake).

6) Does drinking cause depression or does depression cause drinking?

Possible answers: Both are true but this could lead to an interesting discussion between the students. this may help them address any mental health issues they may have that may lead them to drinking excessively.

7) Tom eventually lost his life to addiction, what else did he lose along the way?

Possible answers: his jobs, friends, relationships, pride and dignity, his appearance deteriorated, physical and mental health.

8) In the song Lost Days, Henry sings the lyric “all we can do is pray.” This is referring to the family losing hope as the addiction is now at its worst and completely taken control of the addict. What can you do to help an addict at this point in their addiction? (also think about how you would help a friend if you were worried by how much they were drinking?)

Possible answers: Try talking to them, show that you are worried about them, try to get them to see they have a problem. Act as a signpost and point them in the right direction for help e.g., Nacoa for children and AA for adults, GP/Doctor, school nurse, teacher, parents/relatives’ friends. Talk about tough love.

-Also discuss what you shouldn’t do at this point in someone’s addiction. Possible answers: Be wary of how you engage with someone who is in a vulnerable state as someone who is under the influence of alcohol could become aggressive, don’t buy them alcohol, don’t unnecessarily provoke them or give them other excuses for drinking.

9) What is binge drinking?

Possible answers: Drinking excessively in a short space of time e.g., one night of alcohol abuse or weekend. In the UK, binge drinking is defined as drinking more than 8 units in a single session (for men), or more than 6 units in a single session (for women). Remember you can overdose on alcohol as alcohol is a drug and it can lead to hospitalisation. It is possible to die of alcohol poisoning after a very large overdose of alcohol.

10) What is the drinking limit for driving?

Possible answers: It is advisable to check this as this might change but as of September 28th 2021 the levels of alcohol are as below.

	England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Scotland
Micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath	35	22

Milligrams per 100 millilitres
of blood 80

50

There are several factors that can impact upon how much alcohol is absorbed into your blood, which can tip you over the limit.

These levels can be dependent on:

- your weight, age and sex
- the type and amount of alcohol you're drinking
- what you've eaten recently
- your stress levels at the time

11) How can alcohol affect driving?

Possible answers: impaired reaction times, impaired judgement, impaired coordination, impaired vision.

12) If you were in a situation where the person is driving you back home from a party and this person has been drinking and gone over the limit what would you do and how would you stop this person from driving home?

Possible answers: This is open for an interesting discussion and could potentially help someone being prepared for this if they are put in this position.

13) What is peer pressure? If you were in a situation where you were being pressured to drink but you didn't want to, what would you do to deal with this?

Possible answers: it's okay to say no, people should respect your decision. Do not be afraid to say no.

14) Is alcohol a stimulant, hallucinogenic, depressant or painkiller? (Discuss what Stimulants, Hallucinogenic, depressant and painkillers are).

Answer: Alcohol is usually considered to be a depressant drug. However, it does also fall into all four categories! It can appear to be a stimulant, because it depresses the areas of the brain that are inhibitory (so – a kind of “double negative” – which appears like a positive effect) and so can cause aggression and impulsiveness. It does have some anaesthetic effects (painkiller category) and with chronic heavy drinking can lead to hallucinations.