

Clinical Tips: Harm Reduction and Psychoeducation

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is an approach focused on reducing the negative health, social and economic consequences of alcohol and other drug use on both individuals and the community as a whole.

Examples of harm reduction may include:

- planning transport, having a designated driver or using public transport
- actively preventing, trying to prevent, and encouraging friends from drink-driving
- avoiding venues with violent reputations, and choosing venues where staff and patrons are relaxed and friendly;
- staying with, and looking after, friends and partners, including avoiding and defusing arguments and fights amongst friends, other patrons and/or security staff;
- eating before drinking and drinking later in the night;
- if taking drugs, taking care in procuring them, understanding their effects (e.g., dehydration), understanding dosage (e.g. GHB) and the risks associated with combining them with alcohol and other drugs;
- Education on safe sex and provision of condoms;
- Needle and syringe programs for young people who are injecting drugs (see “[Needle and syringe programs](#)”)

Psychoeducation

Providing education and information on the effects of AOD use and ways to manage use may assist a young person to manage their use. Information on specific risks of interacting particular drugs is available on the Australian Drug Foundation website under [Drug Facts](#). It is important to seek permission to give this information to a young person. However, taking a non-judgemental stance to a young person’s substance use needs to be balanced with clinical responsibility and consideration of the safety of the young person.

ReachOut provides information about binge drinking in teenager friendly way.

<http://au.reachout.com/all-about-binge-drinking>

These are useful resources to assist young people to drink responsibly.

<http://au.reachout.com/tips-for-drinking-responsibly>

<http://yodaa.org.au/youth/alcohol-heads>

<http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/alcohol/>.