

Alcohol/Waipiro

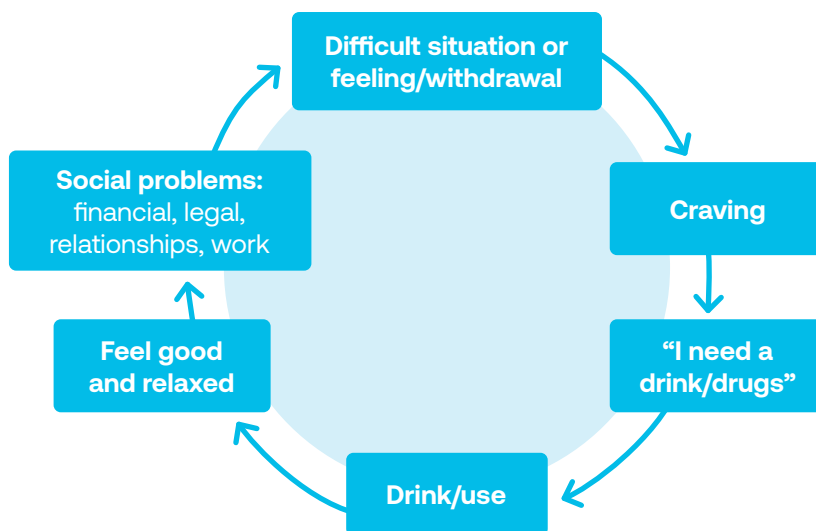
Adapted from www.drugfoundation.org.nz info and www.getselfhelp.co.uk

This resource is for people thinking about how alcohol/waipiro affects them and wanting to change their drinking behaviour. It provides some useful suggestions and resources to help get started.

People often start using alcohol in social situations as it can make them feel relaxed, confident, and sociable. Some people might rely on alcohol to cope with difficult situations or emotions.

Alcohol in any amount affects people's wellbeing. It slows down reflexes and coordination and makes it hard to concentrate. Drinking alcohol too much or too often, along with its after-effects, like hangovers and blackouts, can leave people feeling guilty/kaniawhea, anxious/manawāpa, sad/matapōuri or irritable/āritarita.

After a while, people may start relying on alcohol to make themselves feel better. This can make things worse or create new problems. This may include social problems like issues with whānau or relationships, work/mahi, study or finances. In turn, drinking may be used to cope with these problems.



You don't have to do this alone. Seeking support from your whānau, friends, GP or health professional can help you get through. If you feel overwhelmed and want some support around your drinking, call **0800 787 797**, text **8681** or check out other support options available at the end of this document.

Making the decision to change

- › Write down the reasons why you want to change. Keep a copy with you.
- › List the pros and cons of drinking or not to help make your decision.
- › Set goals for what you want to achieve, like reducing the amount or how often you drink.
- › Keep a record of how much and how often you drink and spend on alcohol.
- › Let friends or whānau know about your plans to change and ask for their support.

An important note. If you have been drinking most days, especially over 10 standard drinks a day, you should not stop drinking on your own. Talk to your GP about how to safely slow down or stop drinking. A sudden stop can lead to alcohol withdrawal/maunuwara and potentially negative outcomes like seizures and death. Your doctor may involve your local community alcohol and drug service to help you safely slow down or stop.

Identify your triggers and high-risk situations

To be triggered is to experience an intense emotional or physical reaction to something that makes you feel like you want to drink alcohol. Understanding your triggers can help you identify when you are most likely to drink. Triggers are different for everyone and may include stress, social events, or certain places.

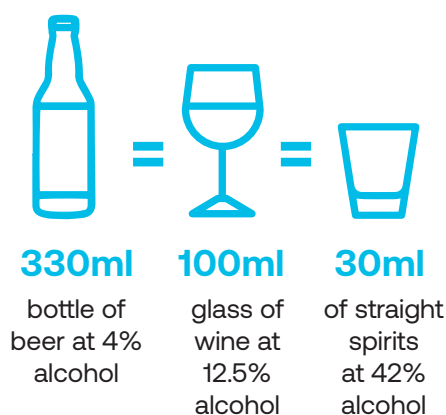
- › What are your triggers?
- › Certain places, people, or things? Hearing certain things?
- › Attending parties or social events?
- › Feeling stressed/tāmitanga, anxious/manawāpa, angry/riri, or sad/matapōuri?
- › Experiencing self-critical thoughts?
- › Feeling hungry/hiakai, thirsty/hiainu, lonely/aroaroā, or tired/ngenge?
- › What other things might be your triggers?

Get to know your triggers and develop plans to manage them

- › Identify triggers and high-risk situations that increase your desire to drink.
- › Plan to avoid predictable triggers.
- › Write a journal and record the date, situation, thoughts, feelings, and intensity of your need to drink.
- › Write down what was happening and possible triggers if you have a slip. Add it to your list of triggers.
- › Use your information to understand your patterns of use to avoid further slips.

Some ideas for reducing your drinking

- › Choose to have alcohol-free days.
- › Drink water for thirst rather than alcohol.
- › Delay your first drink of the day by an hour.
- › Plan how many standard drinks you will have and stick to it. For example, 330ml of 4% beer is 1.0 standard drink.
- › Buy only what you plan to drink.
- › Eat kai before drinking.
- › Try slowly drinking a glass of water in between drinks.
- › Take smaller sips and put your glass down between sips.
- › Keep busy.
- › Change what you drink to a lower alcohol content option, for example, from spirits to beer.
- › Drink for taste.



- › Avoid drinking beer, wine and or spirits together.
- › If going out, match the slowest drinker and avoid joining in with rounds. Pace yourself.
- › Be the sober driver.

Some ideas for social support

- › Let others know your plan and why it is important to you. Ask them to support you to make changes. Start with whānau, friends, your GP or health professional.
- › Check out support groups like Living Sober, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and SMART Recovery.
- › Spend time with whānau and friends who support your decision to change.
- › Avoid social situations that are focused on drinking.

Things you can do

- › Try different non-alcoholic drinks as alternatives when you cannot avoid being around alcohol.
- › Practice saying “No – I don’t drink” if you have decided to stop.
- › Congratulate yourself when you stick to your plan. Celebrate your success.
- › Do something else that uses all your senses, like movement, sound, sight, smell, and taste.
- › Put on some music (not associated with alcohol use).
- › Do something new that you enjoy and find relaxing that is different from what you normally do.
- › Take up a new hobby or get back into one you previously enjoyed.
- › Spend time with whānau and friends.
- › Exercise – swim, dance, walk, jog or cycle.
- › Use medication only as prescribed.
- › Avoid replacing alcohol with something like kai or cannabis.
- › Eat healthy kai such as fresh fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of water.

Ways to improve your thinking patterns

- › Imagine yourself being successful.
- › Encourage and tell yourself “I am doing this!”
- › Relax, meditate, or use karakia.
- › Take one step at a time. Do not plan too far ahead.
- › Tell yourself it is okay if you have a setback. Figure out why it happened to learn from it. Do not dwell on it too much.

Further support and information

Support

- › The Alcohol Drug Helpline provides trained counsellors 24 hours a day.
0800 787 797 or text, **8681** | <https://alcoholdrughelp.org.nz/helpline>
 - › Pasifika Helpline **0800 787 799**
 - › Māori Helpline **0800 787 798**
- › Family Drug Support provides support for whānau | **0800 337 877** | www.fds.org.nz
- › Living Sober is an online community that offers support for reducing alcohol use | www.livingsober.org.nz
- › If you speak Chinese, Korean or Japanese, this page provides information in your language. | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/initiatives/asian-language-resources>
- › Manaaki ora app by Te Rau Ora and the Centre for Māori Suicide Prevention is a free tool offering guidance and tips on how to support your own or someone else's wellbeing, substance use, and mental health when going through difficult times | <https://terauora.com/news/self-help-wellbeing-app-launched-to-support-maori-experiencing-mental-distress>

Information

- › Alcohol.org.nz provides information, advice, research, and resources to help prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm | <https://www.alcohol.org.nz>
- › Te Pou has a booklet for people thinking about stopping or wanting to stop drinking or using substances. <https://www.tepou.co.nz/resources/managing-your-own-withdrawal>
- › The Level offers practical advice on reducing alcohol use | www.thelevel.org.nz
- › Health Navigator New Zealand offers information, advice, and self-help resources to help reduce problematic drinking | <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/a/alcohol-and-mental-health>
- › Addiction 101 by Blueprint for Learning is a one-day workshop for everyone designed to increase awareness and reduce the stigma associated with substance use. They offer both online and in-person workshops | <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/9-addiction-101>
- › Te Hikuwai – Resources for wellbeing provides information on a range of topics from anxiety, depression, cannabis, and alcohol to sleep, stress, relaxation, and wellbeing | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/tehikuwai>

Iti nei, iti nei

Take smalls steps to achieve your goals

