

# alcohol, drugs, and risk.

Drugs are also known as  
“substances” and substances can be a broad  
range of things affecting our body  
and brain

If you experiment with alcohol or drugs be  
informed!  
Even if you are “experienced” act to minimise your  
risk

**What are you taking?**  
**How much are you taking?**  
**Who will you call if the effects are not what  
you are expecting?**

If you or your friend becomes impulsive, angry,  
depressed or acting dangerously,  
act to stay safe or keep your friend safe

Ask how they feel – Are you suicidal?

Remove yourself/them from  
the situation and go to a safe place

Call someone you trust—get help

Call 000 if there is an immediate risk  
Go to your closest Emergency Dept

## Information & Advice

Alcohol & Drug Information  
Service (02) 9361 8000

Lifeline – 13 11 14  
[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

• Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Website  
<https://suicideriskassessment.com.au/>

Drug & Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre  
[www.ahmrc.org.au/members](http://www.ahmrc.org.au/members)

email  
[admin@suicideriskassessment.com.au](mailto:admin@suicideriskassessment.com.au)

Poisons Information Hotline  
13 11 26

Smart Recovery  
[www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au](http://www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au)

National Cannabis Info & Helpline  
1800 30 40 50

Kids Helpline  
1800 55 1800  
[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

# alcohol, drugs & Suicide.



# Suicide risk and substances

People often start drinking alcohol or using different substances to feel different, to relate to their friends or to have fun

Sometimes though, substance use may have unexpected consequences, for example:

**You** do something you didn't want to do making you feel guilty, ashamed, embarrassed or sad

**You** might hurt people because of your use through being dishonest, lying, behaving badly or stealing.

**You** could get physically, sexually or emotionally hurt when intoxicated or under the influence

**You** fail to meet major obligations or responsibilities; school, work, family, socially and financially

**It is also hard to change how we feel when we are also responding to chemical processes in our brain.**

## How does this affect us?

We feel depressed, angry or can have rapid changes in mood

Behave impulsively or aggressively

Take risks or act dangerously

Hate and feel stuck in the cycle of using, increasing hopelessness

Cause conflict with people we love

All of these factors increase our risk for suicide or the risk for someone we love

## What to do?

**Recognise** if substance use is playing a role in how we feel

**Ask for help** – go to your GP, AOD Counsellor, Community Health Nurse or get a referral to see a Psychologist

**Avoid** situations where you are at risk of either feeling bad or using

**Take care of yourself** – sleep, exercise, consider other drug treatment options

## How do they work?

Alcohol and drugs (substances) work on our brain to cause different feelings, perceptions and experiences by affecting our brain chemistry.

Different “classes” of drugs work in different ways. Sometimes our brain and body change in response to the substance. This includes affecting our emotions and behaviour

### What is Tolerance?

Tolerance is when you need to use more of the substance to achieve the same effect

### What is Dependence?

Dependence is when you get used to a substance and you experience physical or psychological symptoms where you want to keep using the substance even when it causes you problems.

### What is Withdrawal?

Physical or psychological symptoms that are frequently unpleasant after you stop using a substance

**If you feel suicidal please call Lifeline – 131 114 Suicide  
Call Back Service – 1300 65 94 67  
or a number on the back of this page**