

Working with families and whānau

This presentation addresses the following competencies:

6. A competent addiction professional works effectively with families, whānau and significant others to support recovery and wellbeing

6.2 Addresses safety and risk issues within families and whānau including family violence, child safety etc

B.2 Collaborates with the client to apply, screening, brief and comprehensive assessment processes appropriate to the client's age. This may include application of diagnostic tools

Assessment and intervention of family needs and safety includes considering older adults (OAs). A public health concern regarding OAs and alcohol use has been in place for many years. An increase in the proportion of OAs with substance misuse difficulties continues to rise out of proportion to the increase in the numbers of OAs in the UK (Crome, 2018). Indicating an increasing risk.

Challenges with accurate assessment of OAs and alcohol have also been established for many years. Despite this OAs are frequently not perceived as alcohol users and therefore opportunities for screening and intervention are missed.

In a New Zealand context, there is evidence of social workers making decisions to screen OAs for alcohol use based on perception and not evidence. There is limited evidence of AOD clinicians' approach to this work. This presentation presents the evidence regarding the barriers of screening for OAs and considers what tools maybe most effective for this cohort.

Webinars focus on discussions regarding AOD perceptions of OAs and what may contribute to barriers of screening:

Do AOD practitioners consider OAs as alcohol users?

What informs AOD practitioners' decisions to ask OAs about alcohol use?

How does an AOD background contribute to decision making regarding whether to ask OAs about alcohol use?

What approaches work in terms of assessing OAs and alcohol use?

What tools have you found useful in assessing OAs and alcohol use?

Lee Henley bio

Lee comes from a social work background and is not an AOD clinician, please excuse any less than up to date terminology. He has worked in direct practice and management roles in the UK and New Zealand. He managed Community Mental Health and Addiction services and was Allied Health Director for Mental Health and Addictions for a mid-size DHB. A role in ACC developing approaches to reducing falls for older adults led to an interest in older adults and alcohol use. Lee completed his Masters in 2016 focusing on social workers' perceptions of older adults and alcohol and is now embarking on a PhD exploring Allied Health practitioner's decision-making regarding screening older adults and alcohol. Lee currently works for a rurally based NGO in Battambang, Cambodia. As part of community-based services alcohol reduction groups are provided. If any AOD practitioners are interested in visiting and teaching the NGO how to run these groups properly, you would be most welcome, post Covid or course!