

## **Directions in Counselling and Pastoral Care of Alcohol Use, Abuse, and Addiction: Part 1**

Patterns of the consumption of alcohol vary enormously in different countries and social groups in Europe. We will look at the difference between healthy and unhealthy drinking patterns, how to recognize misuse and addiction and how to get help. Abuse of alcohol is often a way of coping with depression, anxiety, trauma, and marriage problems, but of course it only makes the situation worse by adding financial and eventually physical problems. There are no quick fixes but there are ways of helping people in counselling, support groups, and in the pastoral care of the church, to move towards healing and health.

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### **I. Drinking patterns**

- A. Low risk/"safe" drinking
  
- B. Binge drinking
  
- C. Frequent drinking
  
- D. Abuse
  
- E. Dependence (Addiction)
  
  
- F. Differences between European countries

### **II. Women and Alcohol**

- A. Metabolism

- B. Psycho-social vulnerability
- C. Health consequences

### **III. Health benefits v. risks**

### **IV. Dangers to health**

- A. Digestive problems
- B. Heart disease and stroke
- C. Brain damage
- D. Cancer
- E. Drinking and driving
- F. Dis-inhibition and violence

### **V. Steps to Recovery**

- A. Push past denial
  - 1. Denial, minimization and rationalization
  - 2. Intervention may be needed – tough love
    - a. 10-30% abstain or seriously limit their drinking without treatment
    - b. With treatment 50% relapse in first 3 months
    - c. With treatment 17-35% abstinence rate after 1 year
- B. Education
- C. Evaluation
- D. Is detox necessary
- E. Working with a counselor and doctor:
  - 1. Insight
  - 2. Identify triggers
  - 3. Relapse prevention skills

#### 4. Alcoholics Anonymous

- F. Pastoral counseling:
  - 1. Spiritual awakening
  - 2. Reclaiming values
  - 3. Deepening of faith
  - 4. Forgiveness

#### **VI. Working with family - Living with an alcoholic**

- A. Effects
  
- B. Help for family
  
- C. Problems of children of alcoholics

#### **Suggested Readings:**

*Alcohol Use and Abuse*. A Harvard Medical School Special Health Report. Order from [www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

*Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel*, Ed Welch, 2001