

ALCOHOL + SUICIDE

Suicide and suicide attempts are one of the top three causes of injury and injury-related deaths in Nova Scotia.

In Spring 2015, Injury Free Nova Scotia conducted a literature review to explore the relationship between alcohol and suicide.



The acute use of alcohol (AUA) and alcohol use disorder (AUD) each play a serious role in the risk of suicide.



The Acute Use of Alcohol (AUA)



AUA increases the risk of suicide by 5-10 times.



Alcohol intoxication increases suicide risk up to 90 times, in comparison with abstinence.



33-69% of people who die by suicide have AUA at time of death.

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

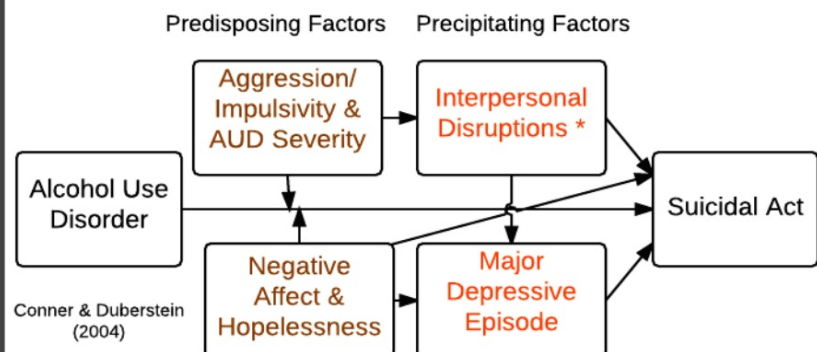
Prevalence of AUD leading up to suicide ranges from 15 – 56%.

Individuals with AUD are 5.24 times more at risk of suicide compared to individuals without AUD.

Compared to the non-psychiatrically ill population, individuals with AUD have a 60 – 120 times greater suicide risk.

Risk Factors for Suicide with AUD

* Other stressful life events may be substituted for interpersonal disruptions, though they are less relevant (eg legal, employment, & financial related events)



Concurrent Disorders

One study found that 85% of completed suicides involved individuals who experienced either depression or AUD or both (Cornelius et al, 2004).



Substance use and mood disorders interact with one another: AUD can promote depression, which results in more drinking.

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Definitions



Suicide

Suicide is the act of taking one's own life on purpose.

Suicidal behaviour is any self inflicted action that could cause a person to die, and ranges from ideation (having thoughts of suicide), to suicide attempts, to suicide death.

Alcohol Use

Alcohol use can be looked at in two different ways:

Acute Use of Alcohol (AUA)

Alcohol use on an occasion, its effects/consequences within minutes or hours, and the impact.

Sometimes also called: heavy episodic drinking, intoxication, binge drinking, and positive blood alcohol level.



Chronic Use of Alcohol

Chronic use of alcohol refers to long term use of alcohol.

One form of chronic alcohol use is Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), which ranges from mild to severe.

Sometimes also called: abuse, misuse, dependence, alcoholism, long-term use, addiction, problem drinking, and at-risk drinking.

Concurrent Disorders

Concurrent disorders is a term for any combination of mental health and substance use disorders.

Depression and alcohol dependence are most commonly diagnosed among people who die by suicide.

