

YOUR GUIDE TO
DEALING WITH
TEENAGERS
AND GROOM



INTRODUCTION



“Grog takes away our connection to our culture”



This book is for Aboriginal parents and carers.

It talks about one way we can help our sons and daughters grow into strong and proud Koori adults. If you support them not to drink grog or tell them how to drink grog without harming themselves or others, they will be a lot better off.

Just like younger kids, teenagers need our help and advice – even though they don't always know it.

This book will give you some information to pass on to your teenager to delay or prevent their drinking and guide you in how to talk to them about grog.

Being a parent is hard. Don't be shamed if you need to ask for help.

See the back of this book for contacts.



Most teenagers will try grog.

You may have noticed that they are starting to drink grog at a younger age than you did (if you drink).

As a parent, you may feel shame if your teenager gets into trouble because of grog.

Talking about grog before this happens will help them.

This book will give you some good reasons why your teenager shouldn't start drinking before they are 18.

Knowing what grog can do and how to deal with your teenager if he or she starts drinking can help.

Just like all of us, teenagers need to be loved and feel safe.

K.MAY.08

Listen to them. Talk to them. Let them know you are here to help no matter how big or small the problem is.

Tell them it's okay to say 'no' to grog and not give in to pressure from family and/or friends.

Be a good role model.

TEENAGERS AND GROG

**LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE
HERE TO HELP**



**TELL THEM IT'S
OKAY TO SAY NO
TO GROG**

TEENAGERS AND GROG

Teenagers drink grog for the same reason adults do – to mix with their friends, relax or maybe change the way they feel.

Some teenagers just drink to get drunk. This is their way of feeling like an adult.

Grog can make them feel more friendly and confident.

But it also makes them more likely to take risks, end up in fights or accidents, or with an unwanted pregnancy.

Drinking a lot can also lead to death and disability.

“Young Aboriginal people in NSW up to 17 years old are more than two and a half times more likely to die an alcohol-related death than non-Aboriginal people.”

Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996-2005

DID YOU KNOW?
The human liver can only process about one alcoholic drink per hour.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT THEM?

Grog is a drug that can stop a person's brain from working properly.

It affects adults, but it affects teenagers much more.

This is because:

- teenagers can stay awake and drink for longer than adults.
- drinking alcohol before they are 18 can affect their brain development. This can make it harder for them to learn and remember things and could affect their future.

Drinking can lead teenagers to:

- **make poor choices** – where they are more likely to have an accident, get into a fight or be forced into sex
- **drive a car when they're drunk** – putting themselves and others in danger
- **take risks** – such as unsafe sex and mixing drugs
- **make regular activities dangerous** – such as swimming and playing sports
- **poison themselves** – causing their bodies to start to shut down after drinking too much grog
- **black out** – when they faint or lose their memory

Early age drinkers may have problems later in life. They may choose to drink grog rather than spending time with family or playing sport. They may turn to grog whenever they feel unhappy or depressed.

Grog isn't a part of Aboriginal culture. It can hurt people, families and communities.

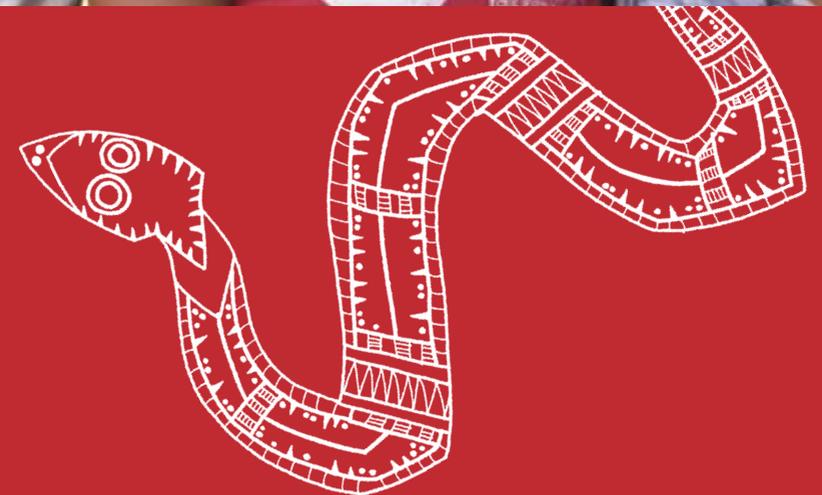
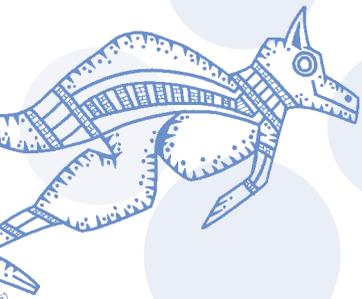
WHAT HAPPENS IF THEY MIX GROG WITH OTHER DRUGS?

Mixing grog with other drugs can be dangerous. This includes over-the-counter, prescription or illegal drugs.

Grog can stop medicines from working and can make the bad effects of the drug worse.

Mixing grog with yandji, methadone, heroin or benzos can make the body slow down. This can lead to coma or death.

If your teenager mixes grog with ecstasy, speed, ice or cocaine they may not know how drunk they are and take more risks. This could put them or their mates in danger.





WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Talk to them

When your kid reaches the teenage years it can be hard for both of you.

You want to make sure they are safe, but you also want them to be more responsible.

Talking to your teenager and listening with respect to what he or she has to say is very important during this time.

Wait until the grog has worn off and then talk to them.

Try not to be angry with them. This may make them shut down because they think you are being mean or treating them like a child.

As a parent, it is important to:

- **Be patient** — some teenagers have trouble telling you what they really think.

- **Communicate in a non-threatening way** — try to use a soft tone of voice and try not to swear.

- **Listen** — hear what they have to say and try not to butt in.

- **Let them talk when they are ready** — try not to force them to talk to you. They might feel better talking to another family member instead of you.

- **Help teenagers think for themselves** — about the bad things that might happen if they have too much grog.

- **Work with them, not against them** — your teenager is more likely to listen to you if you listen to them first.

- **Share stories** — if you know any, share stories of where families have beaten the grog.

- **Share your experiences** — let them know you were a teenager and have been in their situation too.

- **Know the law** — make sure they know what the law says they can and can't do.

YOUNG KOORIS NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED WHEN THEY ARE DOING THE RIGHT THING. LET THEM KNOW WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING GOOD. TELL THEM HOW 'DEADLY' THEY ARE.

"TELL THEM IT'S OKAY TO SAY NO TO GROG."



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

"You are better off if you have a strong, healthy mind and body."

Be a good role model

Teenagers notice what their parents do. Even if sometimes it doesn't seem like it, they look up to you.

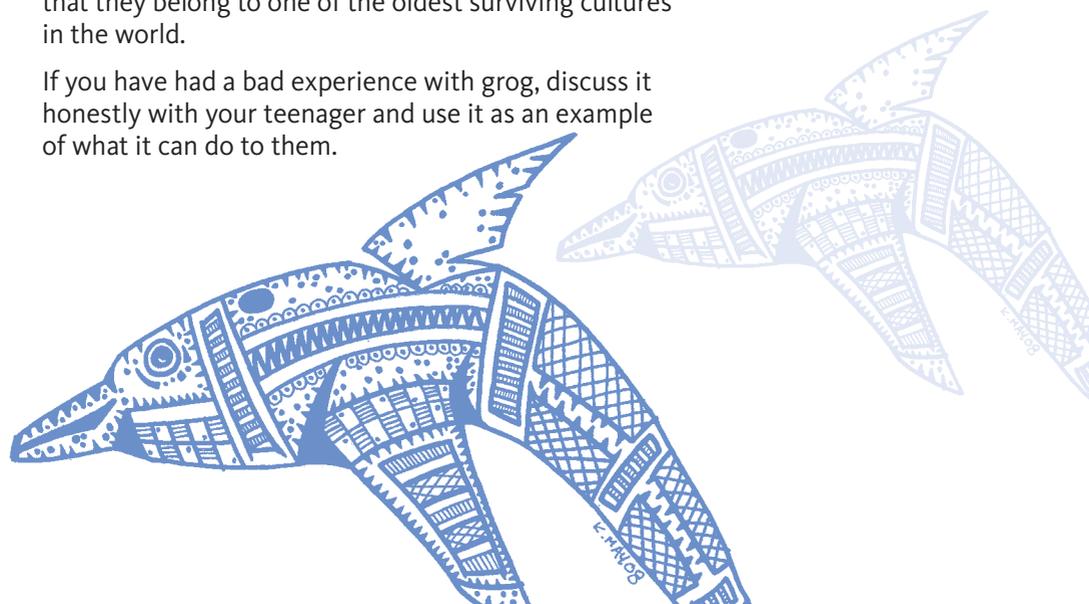
If they see you drinking too much, they might think it's okay for them to do it too.

If you do drink, make sure not to be drunk in front of them.

Teach them it's okay to say 'no' to grog.

Remind young Kooris to be proud of who they are and that they belong to one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world.

If you have had a bad experience with grog, discuss it honestly with your teenager and use it as an example of what it can do to them.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Set limits

Make sure your teenagers know they don't need grog to have a good time.

Delay the time your son or daughter starts drinking grog as long as possible.

Don't give them grog or buy it for them.

If you know teenagers are planning a night out on the grog you can help them by **talking to them** about it first.

Reach an agreement with them on how much grog they can have and make them promise to stick to it.

Make your kids aware that you care for them. Encourage them to **think of others** as well as themselves.

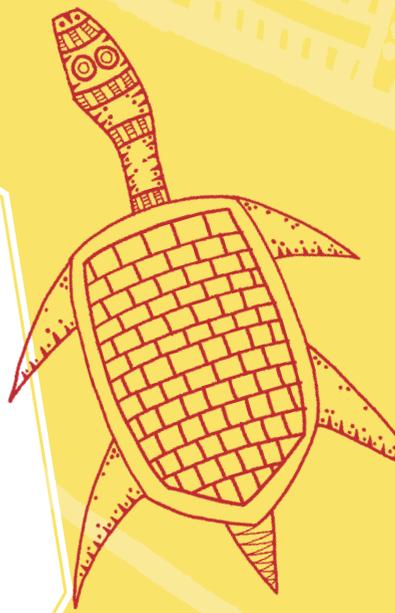
Don't let them lose their spirit to grog.

Make the time — to talk and listen, if you are busy with work or family commitments they may feel as though you are not interested in what is going on with them. Go for a walk, drive or something that will take you both away for some time out to yarn about things.

In NSW, 1 in every 6 hospitalisations for alcohol-related injury is for a young person aged 15 to 24 years.

Centre for Epidemiology and Research, NSW Health 2009

DID YOU KNOW?
Cocktails can contain as many as five or more standard drinks.



MAKE SURE YOUR TEENAGERS KNOW THEY DON'T NEED GROG TO HAVE A GOOD TIME.



“If your kid gets charged up on grog, it’s good to know how to handle it.”

DEALING WITH GROG

TIPS FOR YOU...TIPS FOR THEM

Teenagers don’t like rules or being told what to do. They have less problems with tips for having a better night.

Tips for you

Make sure your teenager knows that drinking grog can be dangerous

- If they are under 18, make sure they know that **underage drinking is illegal** and that they can be fined up to \$2,200 if they are found drinking on licensed premises or public space.

- **Try to understand, not judge.**

- Get to know your teenager’s friends and where they get together.

- If they drink too much grog or get into trouble help them as they get better and tell them how they could do things differently next time.

- Make sure you can be contacted in an emergency, and **be there to help them** if they get into trouble.

TIPS FOR THEM (IF THEY DRINK GROG)

If you know your teenager is going to a party where they are likely to have grog, try to get them to follow these tips to help them have a better time.

Before

• Eat something.

- Plan how you are going to get home.
- Put some cash separate from your money for the night — in case you need it to get home.
- **If you drink, don't drive.**
- If you take the car, get someone who's not drinking to drive.
- Don't start drinking grog before you go out.

During

- **Drink water** or soft drinks between drinks.
- Don't drink straight spirits, shots or cocktails.
- Avoid rounds or shouts you could end up drinking and paying more.
- Avoid mixing drinks (if you start on beer stick to it).
- **Eat something** (not salty snacks that make you thirsty).

• Watch your drink

- someone might put extra grog or drugs in it. This is called drink spiking and happens mostly at parties by someone you know.
- Dance or move around.
- Change your plan for getting home if you need to.
- If you leave, tell your mates where you're going and who with.
- **Look after your mates** and never leave a drunk mate on their own.

After

- **Never drive** if you've been drinking.
- Don't let your drunk mate drive.
- Never ride with someone who has been drinking – stay with friends instead.
- **Drink water** before you go to bed and your hangover won't be so bad.
- **Hang out with people who will look after you if you get into trouble.**



IF TEENAGERS ARE UNDER 18 AND DRINKING GROG IN A PUBLIC PLACE WITHOUT A PARENT OR GUARDIAN BEING THERE THEY ARE BREAKING THE LAW.



KNOW THE LAW

What you should know

It is illegal to supply grog to anyone under 18 unless you are their parent or guardian. This law applies at all times, whether you are in your own home or in a public place, including parks or beaches.

If you do you could face a fine of \$11,000 for each minor supplied, and/or 12 months jail.

It is also illegal for a parent or guardian to supply alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 in a pub or club, including your own child.

DID YOU KNOW?

Grog can stay in your system the next day – you could still be over the limit if you drive somewhere after you wake up.

What they should know

If your teenager is under 18 and caught drinking grog in a pub or club he or she could receive a fine of up to \$2,200.

They can also be fined if they are caught drinking in a public place without their parent or guardian.



WHEN IS TOO MUCH DANGEROUS?

If you see any one of the following seek medical help immediately:

- a person is **unconscious** and pinching, poking or shouting at them won't wake them up
- their **skin is cold**, clammy, pale or bluish/purplish (this means they are not getting enough oxygen)
- they are **vomiting, but not waking up**
- they are **breathing very slowly** (if there's more than 10 seconds between each breath they could die)

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Call 000 immediately (112 for mobiles) and stay with them until the ambos arrive.

Ambos are there to help, not dob. They could save your mate's life.

While you're waiting, **roll the person onto their side** and open their mouth to **clear away any fluid or vomit**. If the person is not breathing and you can do CPR then start that immediately.

DID YOU KNOW? Coffee, vomiting or a cold shower doesn't get rid of the grog out of your body.



GETTING HELP

IF YOU THINK YOUR TEENAGER HAS A PROBLEM

For **24 hour information and support** call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service in **Sydney** on **(02) 9361 8000** or toll-free in **NSW country** areas on **1800 422 599**.

You can also call your local service on the number below.

USEFUL WEB LINKS

www.WhatAreYouDoingtoYourself.com

Information about binge drinking – the effects, knowing your limits and the risks. Take the risky drinking test.

www.YourRoom.com.au

Explore this interactive house, test your drug + alcohol knowledge, find information and support.

www.drinkwise.com.au

How alcohol consumption affects your kids.

www.fds.org.au

Information and support for families of drug users, covering all aspects of illicit drug and alcohol use.

NSW HEALTH

© NSW Health 2009
SHPN (MHDAO) 090084
ISBN 978-1-74187-440-2

To order this resource:
Email: drugaction@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9424 5946