

# 8 Jul 17 - Project Alert Lesson 3

## What Teenagers Want to Know About Alcohol

### Did you know?

- Alcohol can be deadly. If you drink a quart of vodka at one sitting, it can kill you (drinking games where large amounts of alcohol are ingested over a short period of time, including beer pong, chugging, or super charging).
- Alcohol is a powerful depressant. It slows breathing and heart rate and lowers blood pressure.
- Once you drink, nothing sobers you up but time, at least one hour for each ounce of alcohol consumed (whether a mixed drink, a can of beer, or a glass of wine).
- Alcohol-related car crashes are a leading cause of death to teenagers.

### What happens when a person drinks alcohol?

- The first thing that happens is loss of judgment (this can happen with only one drink). It could mean:
  - Drinking and deciding to drive, or getting into a car with someone who has been drinking.
  - Drinking and deciding to do something you later regret (have sex, do something physically dangerous, steal).
- The next thing that happens when you drink is *loss of coordination* (this can happen with two or three beers). It could mean:
  - Getting into a car crash and hurting yourself or other people.
  - Losing your balance and falling, or going swimming and drowning.
- If you drink regularly (like partying on weekends), drinking may *interfere with your ability to cope with emotions*. This means:
  - Drinking every time you feel nervous in social situations (party, date).  
Result: you don't learn how to feel less nervous without drinking.
  - Drinking every time you feel angry, depressed, bored, or lonely.  
Result: you don't learn how to cope with these feelings without the aid of alcohol.
- Drinking under the age of 21 is against the law. Penalties include not getting a driver's license on time, having the license taken away, losing a job or college scholarship.

## What can happen if you drink regularly over time?

- Addiction. Alcohol is mentally and physically addicting. This means that you need to drink in order to feel okay. *Alcoholism* is the word used for addiction to alcohol.
- Teen brains are still developing. Research shows that heavy drinking in teens can cause long-lasting harm to thinking abilities.
- Liver damage, nerve damage, brain damage.
- Death.

## Who drinks? Who becomes an alcoholic?

- Many adults don't drink alcohol at all.
- Of the adults who drink alcohol, three out of every ten drink regularly and one out of ten will become an alcoholic.
- The more a teenager drinks over time, the *more likely it is that he or she will become an alcoholic*. The younger you are when you start drinking the greater the chance of addiction; 4 in 10 people who begin drinking before age 15 eventually become an alcoholic.
- Even if you are not an alcoholic, heavy drinking can hurt your family, your life at school, and your friendships.
- Teenagers who come from families in which a family member is an alcoholic are twice as likely to become alcoholics themselves. However, most of teens in this situation do not become alcoholics.

## What are the signs that a teenager could be dependent on alcohol?

- Drinking every day.
- Drinking regularly to relieve shyness, anger, fear.
- Drinking in the morning.
- Drinking alone regularly.
- Needing a drink at a certain time every day.
- Having a loss of memory during or after drinking.
- Becoming more moody or irritable after drinking.
- Depending on alcohol to deal with difficult or uncomfortable situations or feelings (stress, conflict, disappointment, loss)
- Craving – a strong need or urge to drink
- Loss of control, not being able to stop or cut down drinking
- Not feeling well after drinking: upset stomach, headaches, sweating, shakiness or nervousness
- Neglecting activities; cutting back or giving up on other activities
- Continuing to drink even though alcohol is causing problems

Even if only one of these signs applies to you, you could be in danger of becoming alcohol dependent.

## Reasons Why People Drink

- \* Friends do it

  - Cool, sophisticated

  - Rebellion

  - Parents drink

  - To escape problems, responsibility

- \* To escape feelings: depression, shyness, loneliness, nervousness, anger, boredom

  - Think it's less harmful than marijuana or other drugs (but it's not)

  - Like the feeling of getting high

  - Curiosity, to experiment

  - Think it tastes good

  - Ads and social media make it seem fun, sexy

  - Alcohol is easy to get

  - Seems more legal than marijuana (but is not legal for teenagers)

## What Can Happen to You When You Drink Alcohol?

### Any time

- \* Do something you might regret (loss of judgment, ride with driver who has been drinking, sex, vandalism, violence)
- \* Can't drive safely (Car crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers, and of these fatalities, one-third are alcohol related.)
- \* Lose control (poor coordination, dizzy, bump into things, fall down)  
Get into other accidents (drown, fall off roof)  
Drunk, act silly  
Slurred speech (can't speak clearly)  
Throw up  
Pass out  
Hangover

### Regular or heavy drinking

- \* Addiction, alcoholism (Body needs alcohol to feel "*normal*"; 10% of all drinkers become alcoholics.)
- \* Lose interest in school, friends, life
- \* Suicidal feelings/depression (More than half of teenagers who attempt or commit suicide are involved with alcohol or other drugs.)
- \* Death  
Brain damage (wet brain)  
Nerve damage  
Liver damage

## Alcohol Facts Game: Follow-up Information

1. **A can of beer = a glass of wine = a shot of liquor = a mixed drink.**

All have about the same amount of alcohol.

2. **Alcohol can be poisonous.**

Alcohol can kill you. If you drink a large amount of alcohol at once (for example, a quart of vodka, but the exact amount varies for each person), your body can't process it fast enough and you could pass out, go into a coma, and die.

3. **Coffee and cold showers do not make you sober. Only time makes you sober.**

In general, it takes approximately one hour for one standard drink (5 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces of liquor, 12 ounces of beer) to be processed by the liver.

4. **When alcohol wears off, uncomfortable feelings and problems are still there.**

5. **Drinking and driving don't mix.**

Even one drink can affect your ability to drive safely.

6. **If a parent is an alcoholic, the child might become one, too.**

If somebody in your family is an alcoholic, there is a higher risk that you could become an alcoholic, too.

7. **Alcohol can be addicting.**

8. **Alcohol can affect your judgment.**

You might do something you will regret later.

9. **Alcohol is as dangerous as marijuana.**

10. **Alcohol can make you pass out.**

11. **If a pregnant woman drinks, her unborn baby is drinking, too.**

12. **One out of every ten drinkers in the U.S. will become an alcoholic.**

## Myths and Facts About Alcohol

- Myth:** A can of beer will not have as much effect as a mixed drink (or a shot of liquor).

**Fact:** A can of beer, a glass of wine, a mixed drink, and a shot of liquor all have about the same amount of alcohol and will have about the same effect.
- Myth:** Black coffee and a cold shower can sober you up quickly.

**Fact:** Only time sobers you. The liver needs one hour to burn up one ounce of pure alcohol (the amount contained in a can of beer, glass of wine, or mixed drink). Coffee and cold water may make a person less sleepy, but neither improves judgment or coordination, or lessens the effects of alcohol.
- Myth:** Alcohol is not a drug.

**Fact:** Alcohol is a drug that affects the brain. It slows down the brain area that controls judgment, thought, and muscular coordination.
- Myth:** Drinking makes your problems disappear.

**Fact:** You may feel you have escaped your problems by drinking, but when you get sober, the problems are still there.
- Myth:** Drinking makes uncomfortable feelings go away (anger, shyness, loneliness, frustration).

**Fact:** Alcohol may cover up uncomfortable feelings for a while, but they come back when you are sober again. Drinking isn't always a reprieve from uncomfortable feelings. The fact is that alcohol just as often has the opposite effect and intensifies feelings with sometimes catastrophic results: sadness (poor choices, uncontrolled crying, suicide) or anger (domestic violence, rage).
- Myth:** Alcohol is not as dangerous as other drugs.

**Fact:** Alcohol can be deadly. Drinking a quart of vodka in one sitting can kill you. Even one drink can affect your judgment and cause you to lose control. Auto crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers, and of these fatalities, over one-third are alcohol-related.

# Biggest Dangers with Alcohol

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## Drinking alcohol

1. Increases risk of death or injury from accidents, homicide, or suicide
  2. Causes loss of judgment
  3. Causes loss of coordination
  4. Interferes with your ability to cope with emotions
  5. Over time, can cause
    - dependence
    - liver damage
    - brain damage
    - death from brain or liver damage, heart attack
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## Drinking alcohol

1. Increases risk of death or injury from accidents, homicide, or suicide  
Alcohol is a major factor in the three leading causes of teenage deaths: motor vehicle crashes, homicide, and suicide.
2. Causes loss of judgment  
After only one or two drinks, you might agree to do something you would not agree to do if you had not been drinking.  
Examples:
  - Drinking and agreeing to drive a car
  - Drinking and agreeing to go driving with another person who has been drinking
  - Drinking and going swimming (risk of drowning)
  - Drinking and forgetting to be responsible (call home, be some place on time)
  - Drinking and sexual activity
  - Mixing alcohol with another drug (like sleeping pills, pain medication, muscle relaxers) increases the risk of overdose and death
3. Causes loss of coordination  
Three or four drinks cause unsteady walk, slurred speech, and slowed reaction time.  
Examples:
  - Getting into a car crash while driving. Statistics show that about 41% of all fatal

crashes are alcohol-related, resulting in over 16,000 lost lives and about 600,000 injuries every year.

- Losing your balance and falling
- Drowning

4. Interferes with your ability to cope with emotions

Drinking to escape feelings makes it harder for you to learn how to cope with them.

Examples:

- Drinking every time you feel nervous in a social situation - on a date, at a party (you don't learn how to feel less nervous without the aid of alcohol)
- Drinking every time you feel angry with your friends or your parents (you don't learn how to handle your anger or how to tell people you are angry with them)
- Drinking every time you feel bored (you don't learn how to handle boredom in your life)
- Drinking every time you feel tense or uptight in general. Drinking alcohol may block out uncomfortable feelings (anxiety, anger) for the moment. As soon as the alcohol wears off, however, you are left with these same feelings. Alcohol is a depressant. If you drink to escape feeling depressed and keep on drinking, eventually the alcohol itself will make you feel depressed. Even if you drink just to feel good at parties, you can become dependent on alcohol. Over time, you can lose the ability to feel good without drinking.

5. Over time, can cause

- **Dependence:** Feeling that you must have a drink in order to feel okay and drinking to avoid physical withdrawal symptoms (exhibited in the most severe form as the D.T.'s, or delirium tremens). Teenagers who are addicted to alcohol will most likely not be doing well in school, and may drop out of school. Dependence can cause antisocial behavior, such as violence and paranoia, and can lead to depression with serious results (suicide, personal injury). Indications of teenage alcohol dependence include needing to drink before going out of the house or before a social event, needing alcohol to feel able to function at school or with friends, feeling depressed and fearful when alcohol is not available, and continuing to drink even when problems from drinking have occurred.
- **Liver damage:** The liver processes over 90% of the alcohol you drink. Drinking heavily or drinking over a long period of time may result in alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis of the liver.
- **Brain damage:** Brain damage, or wet brain, is a result of long-term drinking. In some cases, the brain injury causes permanent mental retardation.
- **Death:** Brain or liver damage, heart attack, car crash, homicide or suicide.

6. Other dangers of alcohol

- You can get into legal trouble when you drink. In all 50 states it is illegal to buy alcohol for use by someone under 21 years of age. All states have zero-tolerance laws that make it illegal for youth under 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their system.
- Drinking can contribute to the following problems:
  - Ulcers and gastritis
  - Throat and mouth cancer
  - Heart attack
  - Family problems (divorce, child abuse, family violence, child neglect)
  - Criminal behavior
  - Suicide
- Dangers during pregnancy: For pregnant women, any drinking may be risky. A high number of congenital heart defects in newborns result from the mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Drinking during pregnancy may cause the babies to have low birth weight, mental retardation, and deformities. There is no known safe level of alcohol use for pregnant women.
- Children who grow up in families in which one or both parents are alcoholics have a far greater risk of becoming alcoholics themselves. However, most children of alcoholic parents do not become alcoholics themselves.

## Alcohol Facts

### Alcohol is addictive and damaging

- Alcohol abuse contributes to 100,000 deaths annually, making it the third leading cause of preventable death after tobacco and diet/activity patterns in the United States.
- Alcohol is addictive. Alcoholics are psychologically and physically addicted to alcohol, cannot control their drinking, and depend on alcohol to function.
- If you use alcohol before the age of 15, you are more likely to have problems with heavy alcohol and other drug use later in life than someone who doesn't.
- Many people (about one-third of the population) won't drink at all. About 10% of the people who drink will become alcoholics. Another 10% will become alcohol abusers whose health or social relationships suffer because of drinking.
- Alcohol is lethal. It can permanently harm and eventually kill brain cells.
- It is against the law in all fifty states to purchase alcohol for use by persons under age twenty-one.

### Alcohol affects your brain and body right away

- Alcohol use can be more dangerous for teenagers than for adults because a teenager's body and brain are still growing and developing.
- Alcohol is absorbed directly into the bloodstream and is carried throughout the body, affecting body systems immediately. It is not digested by the body, as food and non-alcoholic beverages are.
- When alcohol first reaches the brain, it begins to depress brain cell activity. The drinker tends to feel relaxed and uninhibited.
- As more alcohol reaches the brain, brain cell function is altered further. The drinker exhibits clumsiness, slurred speech, numbness, blurred vision, dizziness, and lack of motor control. The result may be loss of balance and coordination.
- Heavy drinking may bring loss of memory - a blackout about what happened the night before.
- When alcohol is consumed in heavy doses, it can cause unconsciousness and even death.

### Drinking and driving is dangerous

- Drinking impairs judgment and slows your reflexes. If you drink and drive, you are at risk of getting into a car crash.
- Alcohol related car crashes are the number one killer of teens. Alcohol use is also

associated with homicides, suicides, and drownings - the next three leading causes of death among youth.

- About 3 in 10 Americans will be in an alcohol-related car crash at some time during their lifetime.
- Zero-tolerance laws, in all states, make it illegal for youth under age 21 years to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in their system.

### Drinking may damage your body over time

- Too much drinking may do irreversible damage to the brain, the central nervous system, the heart, lungs, pancreas, and liver.
- Too much drinking may lead to malnutrition, lowered resistance to infections, and the increased risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, and liver.
- Moderate drinking for adults is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men.
- About one-quarter of all persons admitted to general hospitals have alcohol problems or are undiagnosed alcoholics being treated for the consequences of their drinking.
- Although there has been some research into the possibility that drinking a glass of red wine a day decreases risk of heart attack for adults, doctors do not generally advise adult patients to drink wine for this purpose, and red wine does nothing to reduce the risk of heart attack for youth. Teenagers rarely have heart attacks that are not induced by inhalants or cocaine or birth defects. And even for adults, more than one ounce of alcohol daily - wine, beer, or distilled liquor - raises blood pressure and can produce arrhythmias (irregular heart beat), leading to stroke and heart attack.

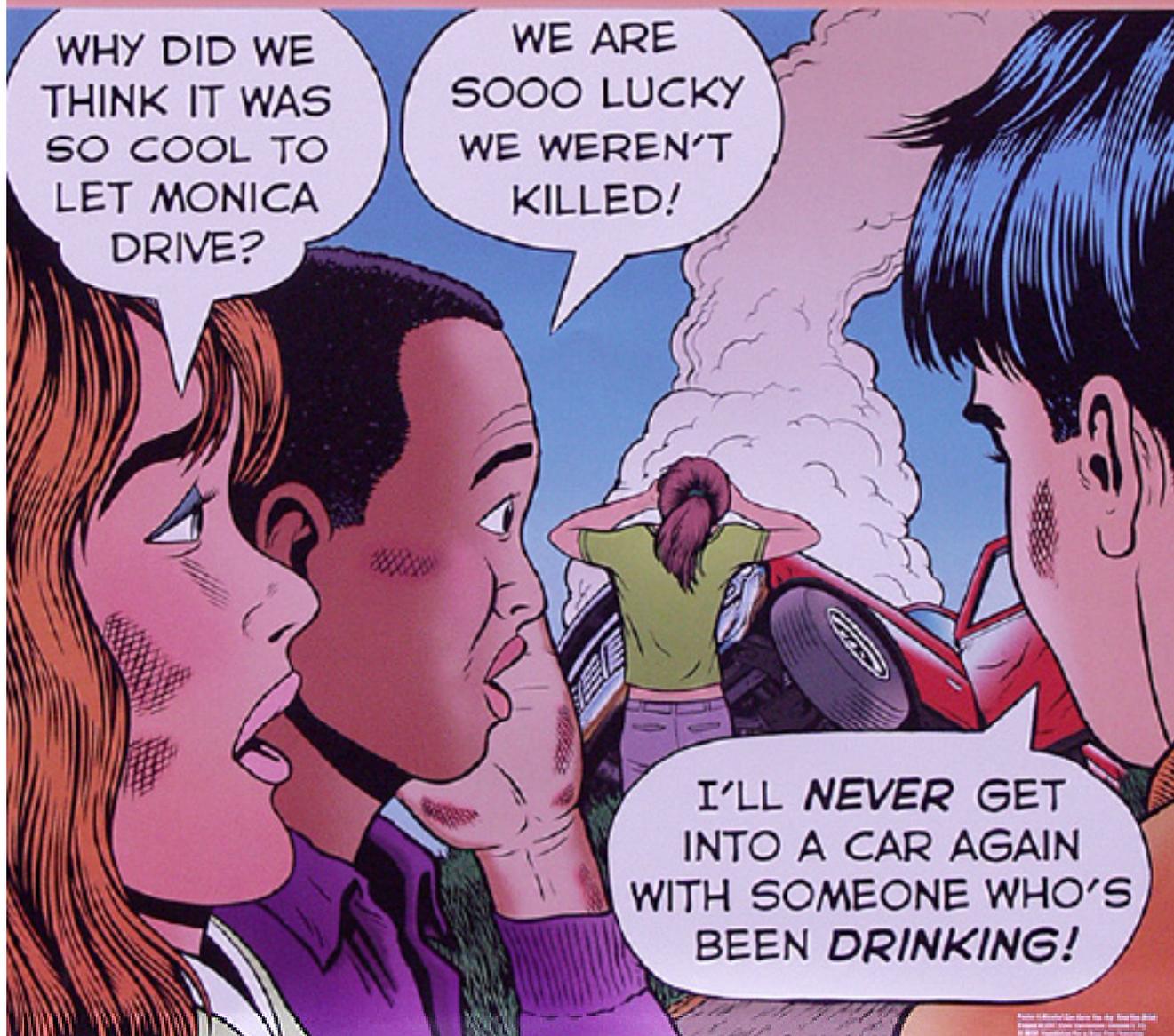
### Alcohol abuse is one of our most serious social and health problems

- The cost of alcohol abuse to the nation is estimated at over \$220 billion a year.
- The total cost of alcohol use by youth - including traffic crashes, violent crimes, burns, drownings, suicide attempts, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisonings, and treatment - is more than \$53 billion per year.
- Use of alcohol at an early age is an indicator of future alcohol or drug problems.
- When a pregnant woman drinks, her fetus drinks, too. Many babies born to mothers who drink frequently or heavily have lower birth weights. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is one of the top three causes of birth defects and a major cause of mental retardation.
- Children in families with alcoholic parents are three to five times more likely to become alcoholics themselves. However, most children with alcoholic parents do not become alcoholics themselves.

# ALCOHOL

## Can Harm You Any Time You Drink

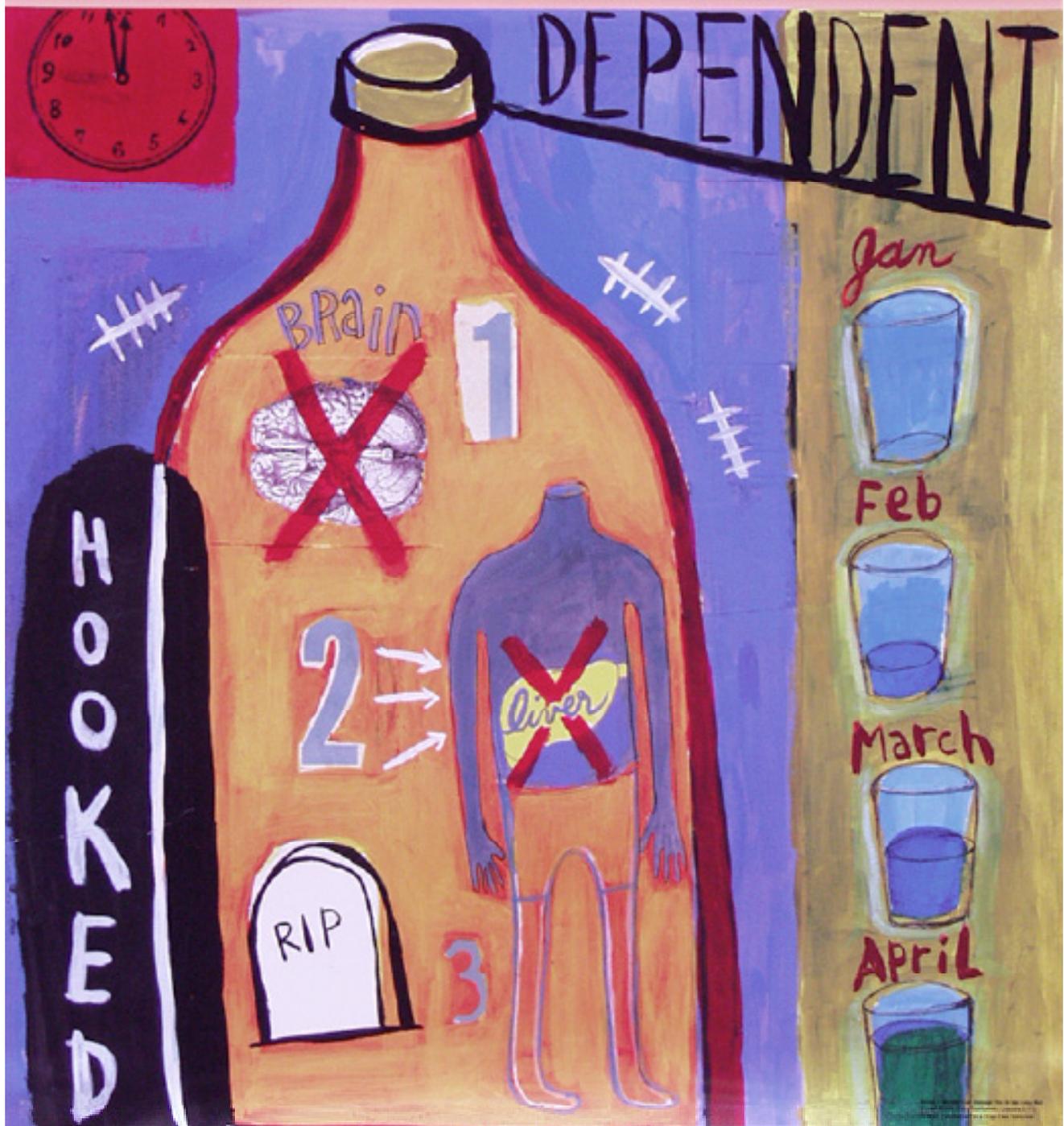
- Get into a car crash
- Lose control
- Pass out, throw up
- Do something you might regret
- Alcohol poisoning



# ALCOHOL

Can Damage You in the Long Run

- Regular drinking can cause dependency
- Heavy drinking can cause brain damage, liver damage, death



# **DRINKING** to Cover Feelings Doesn't Solve Your Problems

- Loneliness
- Sadness
- Shyness
- Boredom
- Anger
- Stress
- Nervousness

