



ALCOHOL AND DRUG MISUSE

Meeting Segment Guide

Produced by the Policy and Advocacy Team
as part of the *Social Justice Stocktake*



Today we will be taking some time to look at the way alcohol and other drugs affect our community, and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected.

The following resources have been created to assist you to run a 5-8 minute segment in your Corps' or mission expression Meeting, Team Meeting, ALT Meeting or any space where you gather with other people.

These resources are ready to print and use in your Meeting. Below you'll find:



TALKING POINTS



A PRAYER TIME GUIDE
(INCLUDING THREE WRITTEN PRAYERS)



EXTENDED SEGMENT OPTIONS



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

For further support in connecting with issues in your local community, contact us at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au



Talking Points



INTRODUCTION

- » **It is well known that The Salvation Army encourages an alcohol-free lifestyle as a way of enhancing the wellbeing and health of all people.**

As a witness to this, Salvation Army soldiers choose to live a life that is free of alcohol, and the non-medical use of addictive drugs. Many of us here today will have signed the Soldiers' Covenant, and that part of the Covenant exists for many reasons.

- » **Today we will be taking some time to look at the way alcohol and other drugs affect our community,** and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected. There may be sensitive themes discussed today, so if you feel that it would be helpful for you to talk to someone afterwards, please feel free to come and chat to us.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN SOCIETY

- » **We at The Salvation Army recognise the harm that alcohol and illicit drugs cause in individuals, families and communities.**

The health, social and economic effects are diverse and substantial, and can include disease and injury, mental health conditions, road accidents, family and domestic violence and other crime.ⁱ

- » **Unfortunately, these are fairly common issues in society.** Recent research shows that 43% of Australians aged 14 and over had illicitly used a drug at some point in their life and 16.4% of adults had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months.ⁱⁱ
- » **While not all drugs are addictive and not all drug usage leads to addiction,** when a person does experience dependency on a drug or on alcohol, it can have serious consequences. The impact of this use is very concerning. Harm caused by alcohol and other drugs is a driver of, and can result in, disadvantage. It is often just one of the multiple disadvantages faced by a person. These can include mental ill-health, financial disadvantage and family violence.

- » **The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) estimated** that, in 2015, 6,355 deaths were attributable to alcohol, and in 2018, 1,740 deaths were directly attributable to drug use.ⁱⁱⁱ

- » **We know that these outcomes are not what God wants for people.** Scripture teaches the human life and the body should be respected in every possible way. In his letter to the Corinthian Church, the Apostle Paul states: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NIV).

- » **In John 10:10 (CEV), Jesus says, "I came so that everyone would have life,** and have it in its fullest." In reference to this powerful statement by Jesus, we often use the phrase "fullness of life" in The Salvation Army. We want to see every person experience that fullness of life – with joy, hope, love, freedom and everything else that life with God can bring. "Fullness of life" encompasses the idea that God wants people not just to survive life's circumstances, but to participate fully and thrive.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- » **We believe The Salvation Army has been prophetically called by God to a lifestyle** that is a radical alternative to the world as it is, and that abstinence from alcohol and illicit drugs is one part of our response to this call. When considering what the Bible says, it is good to remember that most of the writing is directed at shaping communities of faith differently to the rest of the world. The lives of people of faith are meant to be "light to the nations so that [God's] salvation may reach to the end of the Earth" (Isaiah 49:6, CEB). This is one of the reasons that Salvationists make specific commitments to refrain from the use of alcohol and harmful drugs. However, Salvationists



Talking Points



do not expect the whole world to become abstinent, just because they are. It's important to note that while abstinence is a requirement for Salvation Army soldiers, people who do drink alcohol are welcome to participate in worship and share in the fellowship at The Salvation Army.

- » **As individuals, we can each be aware of the harm that is caused by Australia's often relaxed view of alcohol and harmful drugs.** By being prepared to live our own lives differently, we challenge the status quo, and make a step towards a world where issues with alcohol and drugs don't exist.
- » **For those who have found that the use of alcohol or illicit drugs disrupts their lives,** The Salvation Army provides a safe and supportive environment within our corps and social programs. This work has seen The Salvation Army become one of Australia's largest providers of alcohol and other drug treatment services, offering a range of programs including withdrawal management, residential rehabilitation, non-residential rehabilitation, community programs and harm reduction interventions. We have a long and recognised history in this space. Over the last 140 years, The Salvation Army has consistently demonstrated the ability to work effectively with a diverse range of people who are experiencing substance use disorders. Government and their departments partner with The Salvation Army because of our expertise and commitment to deliver on outcomes that improve the lives of Australians.
- » **The Salvation Army has a unique position in this space in the public debate as a result of our extensive services,** and we use this position to take part in advocacy in this area. We encourage national, state and local governments to provide appropriate legislation around the sale, marketing and production of alcohol.

- » **It is our belief that God desires for people to thrive in life.** That is the very reason The Salvation Army operates these Alcohol & Other Drug Rehabilitation Services. Our services work to prevent and reduce harm for both individuals and the wider community and to support the reduction and cessation of use. This approach is known as 'harm reduction'. It is both national health policy and the overarching framework of our alcohol and other drug services. While addressing problematic substance use is key, the aim of our services is also for people to have a sense of belonging to their families, friends and communities. Our core belief is that all people are worthy and deserving of love, respect and dignity. As a result of this, anyone is welcome in our services, and we operate several programs designed for specific populations including young people, indigenous people, women (including those with children), and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
- » **Our theology plays out in practice through our Alcohol & Other Drug Services,** as people are given opportunities to build their lives in ways that are meaningful and purposeful.



Video

Show The Salvation Army Australia's 'Salvos Dooralong Transformation Centre' video. You can access this at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5qU8Yk_OPo



Prayer Time



Play one of the following songs, and ask people to spend some time in silent, individual prayer while the song plays. Ask them to pray for survivors of family and domestic violence, perpetrators of violence and the families that are impacted by it.

.....
The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught The Vision Splendid ([lyrics](#))
.....

[Amazing Grace \(My Chains Are Gone\)](#) – Chris Tomlin
.....

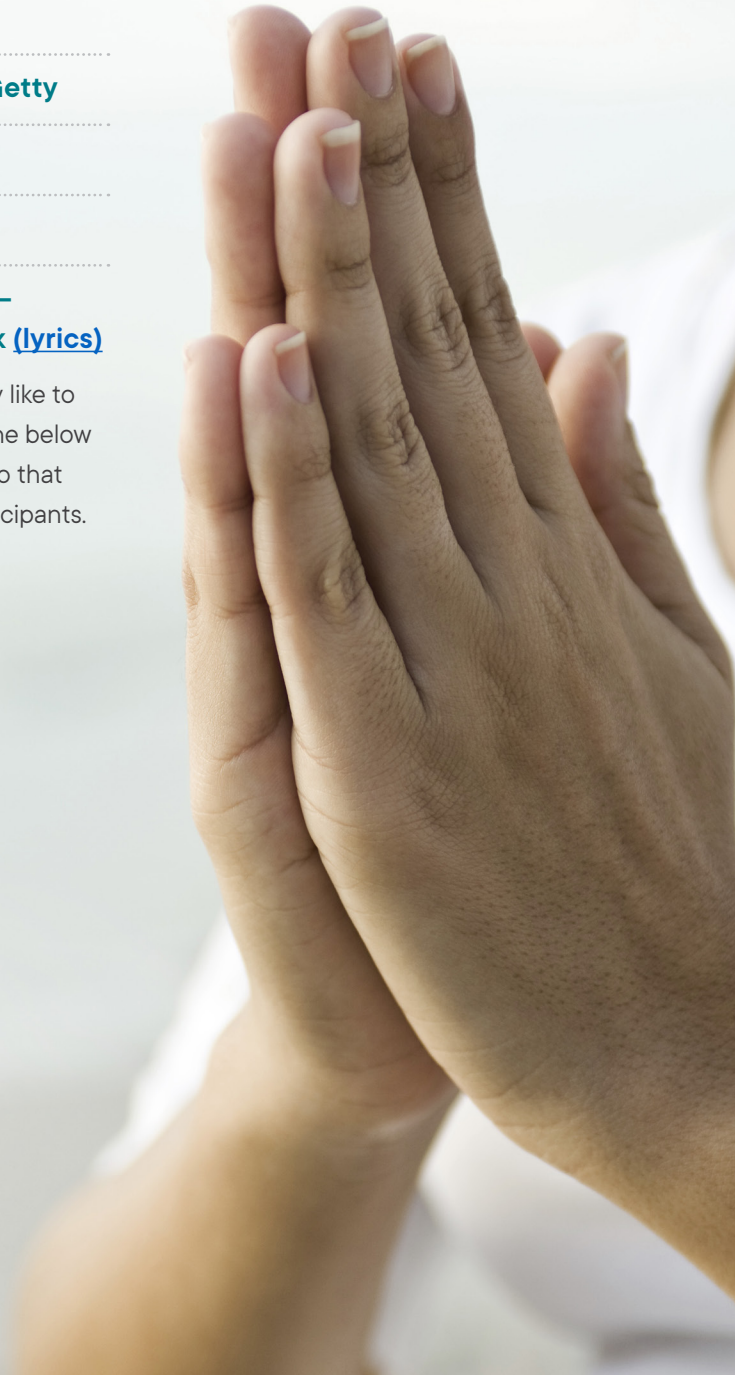
[Compassion Hymn](#) – Keith and Kristyn Getty
.....

[Way Maker](#) – Sinach
.....

[Chain Breaker](#) – Zach Williams
.....

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – O Lord, whose Human Hands were quick ([lyrics](#))
.....

Following this time of individual prayer, you may like to have three different people lead the group in the below prayers. These prayers are on separate pages so that you can easily print and distribute them to participants.





Prayer Time



Prayer for our community

Dear Lord,

We come together today and remember that for many people in our communities, abuse of alcohol and drugs is a very real part of their daily experience. We bring these people before you and ask that you would be all that they need. Bring your hope, your love, your grace and your power to their situations, we pray.

We pray for those experiencing addiction. We ask that you would bring freedom to those hearts that need it. May they experience your power, your victory and your deep love.

We pray for the families of those who are affected. We ask that you would give them the words that are needed, and access to the tools they need to support their loved ones, while protecting themselves. Lord, bring healing where it is needed.

May we, as Salvationists, help to create safe places where people can come and be heard. And may we be a shining light in our communities, for all those hurting, to see and experience your love.

We ask you to help us to be like Jesus, recognising and cherishing your image within each person, and supporting them to the fullness of life, free from addiction.

We pray this in your name,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Dear God,

As we take time to reflect on the damage being caused in our nation by excessive use of alcohol and drugs, we pause to ask for help, transformation and forgiveness. We ask for help for those who, day after day, are living in addiction – Lord, bring transformation in their lives.

Lord God, as a nation may we continually strive to do more to help those caught in addiction. We pray for all those in our country who are trying to make a difference – from government officials, elders, community groups and policy makers, to first responders and support workers – grant them peace and strength for this challenging work.

Lord, may we mourn for what makes you mourn, and work to make a difference together with unity and compassion, recognising that this issue is affecting so many peoples of this land we call Australia.

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

Loving God,

We come before you today, recognising that we are part of a global community. We know that your desire is that every person on this earth experiences your goodness, and the fullness of life that only you can bring.

With this in mind, we bring before you all peoples who are affected by an excessive use of alcohol, and illicit drug use. Lord, create and place them in safe spaces where they are able to get the help they need.

We pray for governments as they examine the impact of excessive alcohol and drug use on their nations. Lord, give them eyes to see and hearts that yearn for change.

Help us to work together as a global community to make this world more like you want it to be. Help us, as citizens of the world, to think globally and speak up for the oppressed wherever they may be, recognising that every individual is important to you.

In the name of the One who was sent to minister to all nations,

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

- » If you have someone in your congregation who has been through Recovery, ask them to share their testimony or be interviewed. It is important to remember that not every person who has had this experience wants this to be public knowledge, so you must seek their permission before sharing their story with others.
- » Share The Salvation Army Australia's 'Recovering from Addiction – Jason's Story' video. You can access this at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgHz-5qCmb0>

USEFUL SONGS:

[The World for God](#) – Phil Laeger, Marty Mikles and Evangeline Booth

[The Salvation Army Hallelujah Chorus No. 43 – Just One \(Lyrics\)](#)

[Amazing Grace \(My Chains Are Gone\)](#) – Chris Tomlin

[Compassion Hymn](#) – Keith and Kristyn Getty

[Cornerstone](#) – Reuben Morgan, Hillsong Worship

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – O Lord, Whose Human Hands Were Quick \(lyrics\)](#)

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught the Vision Splendid \(lyrics\)](#)

[Chain Breaker](#) – Zach Williams

[Way Maker](#) – Sinach

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 451 – Would You Be Free From Your Burden Of Sin \(Power in the Blood\) \(lyrics\)](#)



Further Resources



For more information on this issue, and for further resources:

Read The Salvation Army's [International Positional Statement on Alcohol in Society](#).

Read The Salvation Army Australia's [Guideline on 'Abstinence from Alcohol'](#).

To find Alcohol and Other Drug Services in your state or territory, visit The Salvation Army's ['Find help now'](#) page.

The [Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#) has a range of resources and information on this issue, including assistance for how to talk to people about drugs and alcohol.

If you'd like any further information on this resource please contact the Policy and Advocacy Team at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.



