Using a socio-ecological approach to inform health interventions

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Aims of the session:

• Understand use of socio-ecological framework to map out influences on a public health problem (alcohol)

• Understand use of the socio-ecological approach to target health promotion activities

• Be able to consider your own work from an ecological perspective
'The whole concept of public health is founded on the insight that health and illness have causes or conditions that go beyond biology and behaviour of the individual human being' Midgely, 2006
Potential applications of the socio-ecological approach

1. To understand influences on behaviour

2. To target activities/interventions and define outcomes

3. To understand level of impact of an intervention
Influences on alcohol use

a. Intrapersonal level – beliefs, norms and values, motivation etc.

b. Interpersonal level – social relationships with family, peers, colleagues

c. Institutional/organisational level – formal and informal rules in operations.

d. Community level – structures and services present

e. Policy level – local and national guidance and legislation
Intrapersonal level:

Transition to university as cause of anxiety – ‘drink to bond’

Heavy drinkers often report higher levels of satisfaction with social integration

Positive drinking experiences more influential than negative

Willingness to accept negative consequences
**Interpersonal level:**

Drinking together - ‘social lubricant’ (Seaman & Ikegwuonu, 2011).

Parental drinking – complex picture?

Peers - heavy drinkers like heavy drinkers!

Help-seeking behaviour
Organisation/structural:

Residence halls are a key setting for heavy drinking

Pre-loading is the norm among students

Frequency of alcohol promotions and advertising is correlated with heavy drinking

Freshers – student expectations and local benefits
Community:

More alcohol retail outlets = consumption

Lack of data on student access to specialist services

Real economic benefit of student drinking in the local area

National policy:

Pricing – cheap off-sales

MUP?

Healthy FE/HE Framework
2. What are you aiming to do?
3. Targeting alcohol interventions - examples

Intrapersonal – ‘drink responsibly’. Motivational approaches.

Interpersonal – designated driver campaigns, ‘take care of your mates’.

Organisational – no below cost selling or promotions

Community – enforcement of licensing conditions, Night-time economy initiatives

National/policy – bans on below cost selling, minimum pricing?
Barriers to effectiveness:

Intrapersonal – different beliefs to you

Interpersonal - peer group bonding aided by alcohol use

Organisational – are your practices data driven? Timing and ‘noise’ of Freshers.

Community – marketing by local retailers, joined up working

National – challenging cultural norms is very difficult
Any questions?

References:
