

Drug & Alcohol Awareness Level 1 & 2

Learning Objectives, Agenda & Capability Framework Alignment

A two-session online course exploring drug and alcohol awareness, harm reduction, engagement with treatment and brief interventions for workers supporting clients to access services

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Company: TD Consultancy

Delivery: Online — 2 x 3-hour sessions

Edition: 2026

Aims & Objectives of the Course

- Recall what commonly used substances look like, their effects and routes of use
- Describe how various drugs and alcohol affect the body
- Increase knowledge of how drugs and alcohol are used
- Describe a range of services available for alcohol and drug users
- Understand the possible effects on health and how to respond
- Address reasons why people may not want to engage with drug & alcohol treatment services
- Introduce drugs & alcohol as topics with their clients
- Structure brief advice sessions with their clients
- Be able to use screening and treatment tools
- Describe basic harm reduction techniques
- Support a client to access appropriate services

Session Agendas

Session One: Awareness, Substances & Effects

10:00am Start — Welcome & Course Overview

10:10am UK drug & alcohol landscape — prevalence, trends and context

10:30am Commonly used substances — types, appearance and effects

11:00am Alcohol — units, effects, dependence and health risks

11:15am Break (15 minutes)

11:30am How drugs affect the body — pharmacology & neuroscience

12:00pm Health & psychiatric information — signs &

Session Two: Engagement, Brief Interventions & Harm Reduction

10:00am Start — Welcome & Session Overview

10:10am Why people resist treatment — barriers to engagement

10:35am Introducing drugs & alcohol as topics with clients

11:00am Brief advice sessions — structure, tools and techniques

11:15am Break (15 minutes)

11:30am Screening & treatment tools — AUDIT C, etc

12:00pm Harm reduction — key principles and practical

symptoms

12:30pm Support and treatment services — what is available?

1:00pm Close & Q&A

techniques

12:30pm Referral pathways — supporting clients to access services

1:00pm Close & Q&A

Capability Framework Alignment

This course aligns with the Capability Framework for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce (NHS England/OHID, 2024), which underpins the 10-Year Strategic Plan for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce 2024–2034.

Capability Domain (NHS England / OHID, 2024)	Framework Section
Knowledge of the harm associated with the physical and psychological effects of commonly used substances, including alcohol, cannabis, stimulants, opioids and novel psychoactive substances	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the nature, prevalence and patterns of drug and alcohol use in the UK, including health inequalities and the social determinants of substance use	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Ability to recognise signs and symptoms of substance misuse and respond appropriately, including signposting and referral to specialist services	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Ability to use screening and brief intervention tools (e.g. AUDIT, DAST, FAST) to identify risk levels and structure brief advice sessions	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Ability to provide evidence-based harm reduction information and advice to reduce risk to individuals and those around them	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Recovery-oriented approach — working with individuals to build personal, social and community recovery capital	<i>Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Ability to support individuals to access appropriate drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services, including referral pathways	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>

Underpinning Principles Embedded in This Course

Trauma-informed care • Recovery-oriented approach • Evidence-based practice • Person-centred working • Forming a working alliance • Therapeutic optimism • Challenging stigma • Co-occurring needs and multidisciplinary working

Note: National Occupational Standards (DANOS/NOS) are retained within the National Occupational Standards library but are no longer the primary workforce development reference for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery sector. This course uses the NHS England / OHID Capability Framework (2024) as its primary alignment standard.