

Trans mental health and access to inclusive recovery services

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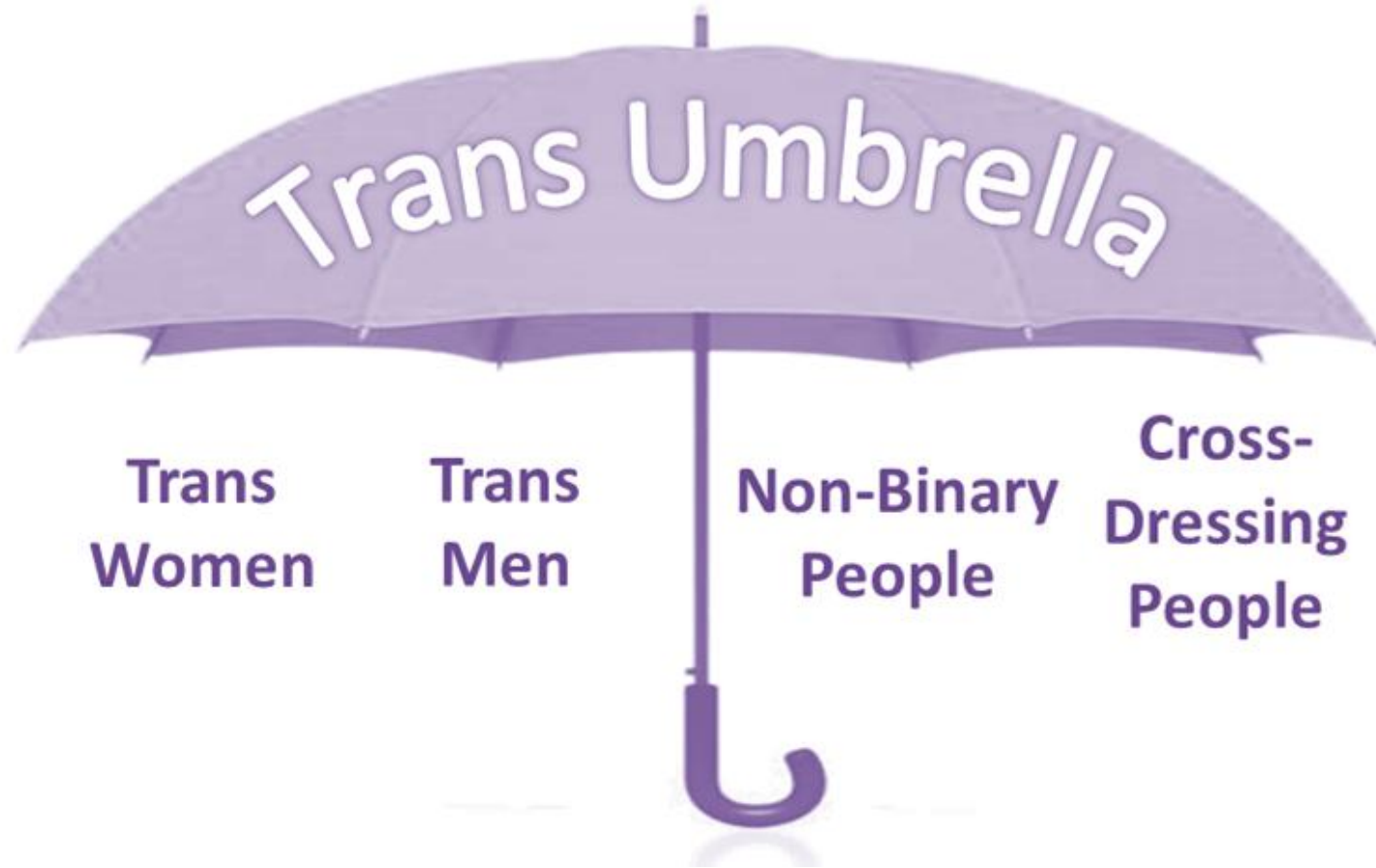
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Scottish Trans

- Established in 2007
- Funded by Scottish Government Equality Unit
- National project within the Equality Network
- Work to improve the equality and human rights of all trans people

Trans Umbrella



Transgender People

- Umbrella' terms: Trans = Transgender
- Gender identity and/or gender expression differs from gender assigned at birth
- Although not everyone “under” the umbrella may personally identify as trans, we need a way to define who we’re talking about

Non-binary people

- About gender identity rather than physical sex
- Don't identify simply as a man or a woman
- Gender-neutral title: Mx
- Gender-neutral pronouns: they, ey, per, zie...
- Might take hormones or have surgeries
- Various terms: genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, third gender, non-gendered...

Equality Act 2010

- Gender reassignment protected characteristic defined as:
 - Proposing / undergoing / undergone
 - Any part of a process for reassigning sex
 - Changing physiological (biological functioning) or other attributes of sex (social functioning)
- Also perception and association protection
- Not just traditional 'transsexual' people protected:
 - No medical supervision
 - Propose to undertake any part of transition
 - Social aspects count, such as pronouns

Scottish Social Attitudes Research

How would you feel if a family member married...	% unhappy 2010	% unhappy 2015
...a person who cross-dresses in public	55%	39%
...a person who has undergone gender reassignment surgery	49%	32%
...a person of the same sex	30%	16%
...a person who is Black / Asian	9%	5%

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2010 & 2015

<http://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/scottish-social-attitudes/>

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UK Trans Mental Health Study 2012

- 73% had been hate crime victims due to being trans (20% physically assaulted, 14% sexually assaulted)
- 81% avoid variety of social situations out of fear
- 80% worry about sexual relationships due to being trans
- 67% feel need to 'pass' as non-trans to be accepted
- 52% experienced employment discrimination
- 46% of those medically transitioning experienced difficulty accessing hormones and surgeries

Trans people's experiences of abuse

- A study we did in 2010 found that 80% of respondents had experienced some kind of emotionally, sexually or physically abusive behaviour by a partner or ex-partner
- Trans people can experience abuse specifically linked to their trans identity

How did we do it?



Trans?

Concerns about alcohol or other drugs?
We want to hear from you!

The Scottish Transgender Alliance are conducting research in partnership with North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership to inform work on projects relating to transgender inclusion within recovery and addiction services. The survey is open to all transgender people in Scotland (including trans men, trans women, non-binary people and cross-dressing people).

For more information about the survey, or to request it in a paper format, please get in touch with the Scottish Transgender Alliance by calling 0131 467 6039 or email vic@equality-network.org

surveymonkey.co.uk/r/trans_alcohol_drugs_inclusion

www.scottishtrans.org

Logos for Scottish Trans, North Ayrshire Alcohol & Drug Partnership, and North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership.



Trans?

Drink alcohol or use other drugs?
Live in Scotland?
We want to hear from you!

surveymonkey.co.uk/r/trans_alcohol_drugs_inclusion

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How did we do it?

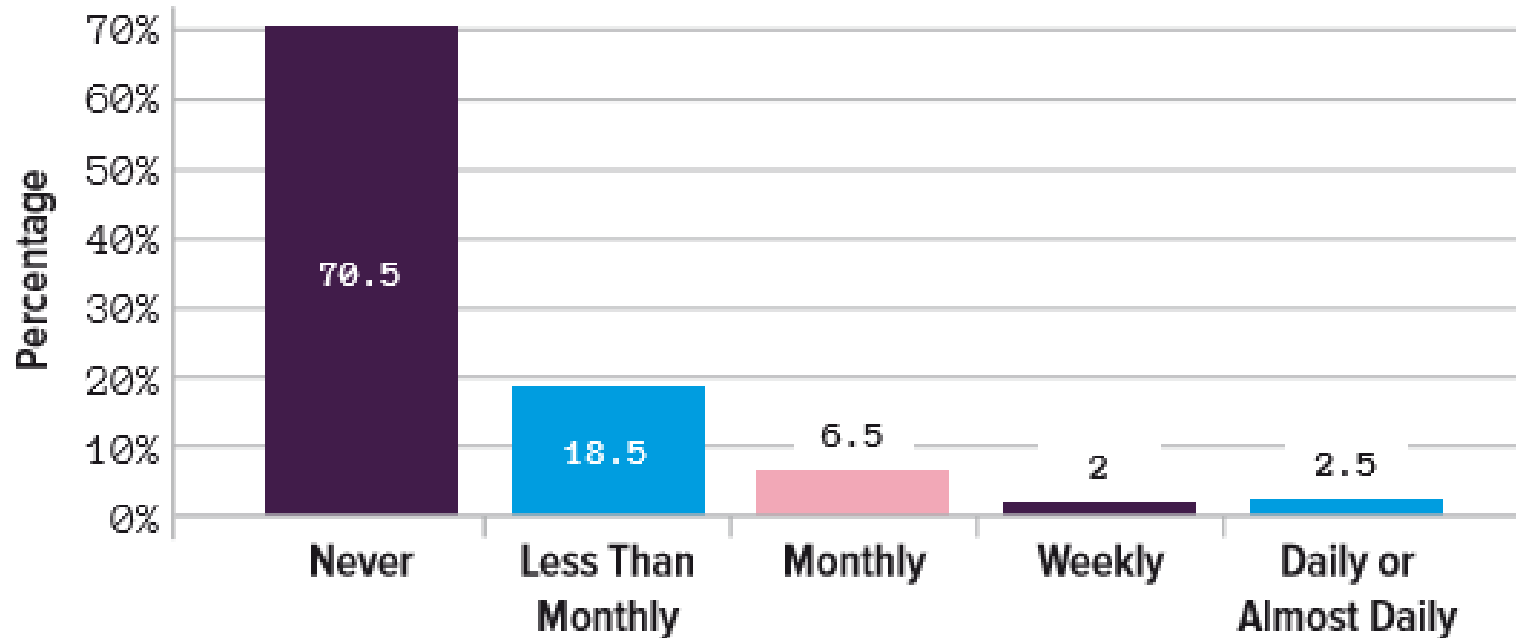
- Survey open for 12 weeks between November 2015 and February 2016.
- Promoted widely to diverse online trans communities.
- Advertised in offline settings in two main ways:
 - Had some promotional materials made that were distributed in community settings, particularly in North Ayrshire
 - Sent a poster about the research to each GP surgery in Scotland, as well as a letter to the Nurse Practitioner for each surgery explaining the aims of the research

Audit Questions

- This section used AUDIT questions to try and provide data which we could compare with the general population.
- However, in almost all of the questions we asked about people's use of alcohol or other drugs, so they were slightly broader than the standard AUDIT test.

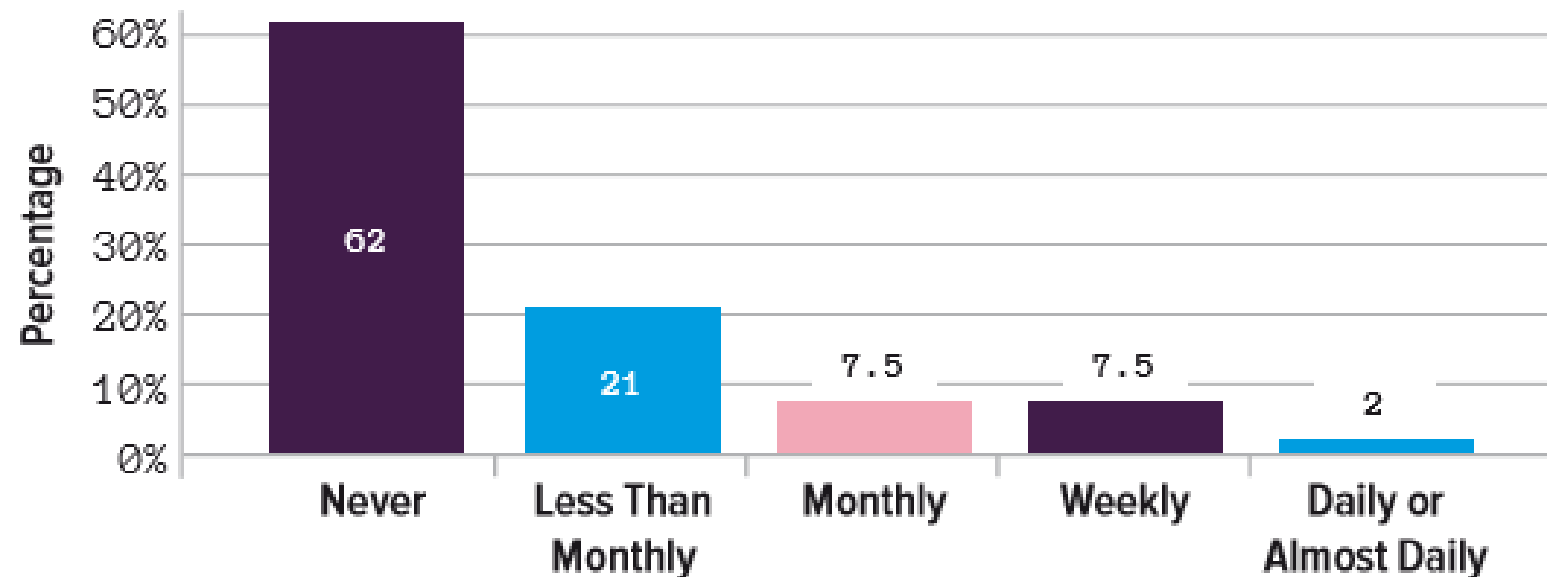
Audit Qs

Q18. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was expected due to alcohol or other drug use (n 199)?



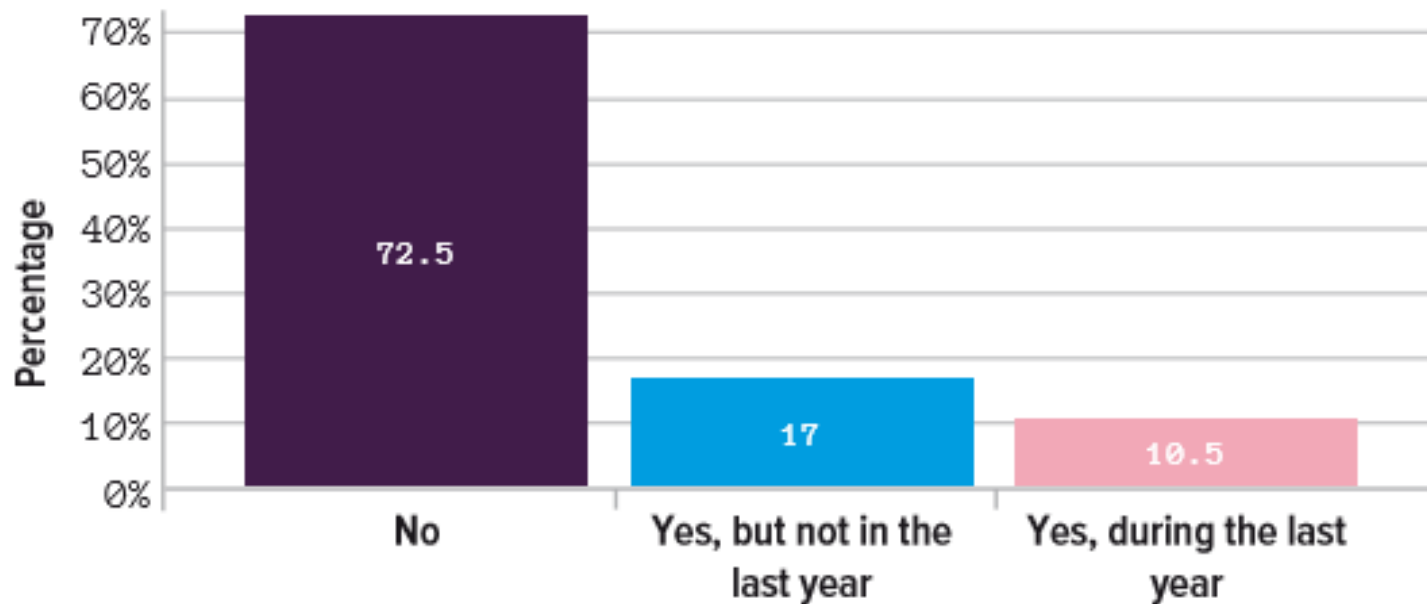
Audit Qs

Q19. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after alcohol or other drug use (n 200)?



Audit Qs

Q20. Have you or someone else been harmed because of your alcohol or other drug use (n 199)?



Has your alcohol or other drug use been affected by being trans?

Using alcohol or other drugs to cope with depression/mental health problems related to their trans status and experiences of transphobia.

- Respondents talked about how mental health and wellbeing problems related to their gender identity could affect their use of alcohol or other drugs:

“I feel I smoke weed more since becoming depressed due to being trans. I feel I use it to escape from the day to day situation and just unwind at the end of a stressful day especially before I was on hormones and had had top surgery.”

Has your alcohol or other drug use been affected by being trans?

Using alcohol or other drugs to cope with anxiety around relationships and sex due to being trans.

- Respondents also specifically mentioned worries about dating and sex due to being trans, and how they may use alcohol or other drugs to cope with these worries:

“it impacts on my sexual health as when I am sober I do not feel attractive as I am trans but when I drink I feel more attractive due to feeling less inclined to talk about my trans status.”

Has your alcohol or other drug use been affected by being trans?

Using alcohol or other drugs to cope with gender dysphoria.

- Some respondents said that alcohol or other drugs had helped alleviate distress around their bodies – known as gender dysphoria:

“I sought alcohol as a way of escaping the reality of my physical being”

“I feel that for long periods of time I was using alcohol to try and cope with feelings around body dysphoria and being trans. When I was struggling a lot with dysphoria, drinking made me feel sort of 'fuzzy', like the issues I was having with my body weren't so acute or that I cared about them less.”

Has your alcohol or other drug use been affected by being trans?

Using alcohol or other drugs to cope with difficulties accessing the help they need as a trans person (such as long waiting times for Gender Identity Clinics).

- Another theme that emerged from this question was respondents who said they used alcohol or other drugs to cope with the poor treatment, or lack of treatment, they felt they received from services generally due to being trans:

“I feel as though the fact that I can't get any help from any medical services to continue my transitioning progressing in less than a year has affected it massively as I'm stuck living in a body, getting misgendered, constantly feeling insecure, worthless and trapped has led to depression and the only thing that numbs that pain is drink.”

Top tip: Education, training and awareness

- Trans people don't want to feel as though they need to educate their service provider when seeking support
- If services don't provide trans awareness training for their staff, trans people are much more likely to experience misunderstanding and discrimination
- A demonstrable understanding of who trans people are and the visible promotion of your service as trans inclusive will remove one of the major barriers to service access

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