



atdc

Alcohol, Tobacco and other
Drugs Council Tasmania



Brother
Farmer
Father
Musician
Sports fan
Thinker
Supporter
Student
Friend
Volunteer

ATDC Image guidelines
How we can choose
imagery which minimises
stigma against people
who use alcohol and
other drugs

atdc.org.au



Father
Joker
Football fan
Scouser
Peer Worker
Ex-drinker
Prankster
Creative



Introduction

These guidelines have been created with the aim of depicting people engaged with alcohol and other drugs as whole people who are respected and loved members of our communities. This creates an environment where those wishing to seek help feel it is supported as a positive step towards their personal wellbeing, leading to a range of beneficial outcomes for individuals and the broader Tasmanian community.

These guidelines aim to reduce use of imagery (including both stills and video) which may increase or perpetuate stigma against those with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use, and provide a framework for professionals to select better imagery.

Cover Photo: David, Lived Experience Advocate.



Tasmanian Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Communications Charter

All aspects of communication, including images, have the power to reduce stigma for people who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and their families, and encourage people to seek help when they need it.

The Tasmanian Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Communications Charter is a shared commitment to non-stigmatising language, audio and visuals when reporting, communicating or publishing materials in relation to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The Charter is our commitment to changing behaviours and norms in our industries and organisations, to achieve positive outcomes for people in our community who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and the Tasmanian community as a whole.

**Will you join us?
Add your name to the list of signatories.**

atdc.org.au/charter



Sister
Mother
Friend
Helper
Encourager
Dreamer
Animal lover
Reader
Explorer





Daughter
Pianist
Writer
Florist
Survivor
Feminist
Collector
Sister
Friend



Kerrie, Lived Experience Advocate.

Golden Rules

1.

Consider whether the person's lived experience of alcohol and other drug use is relevant to the story at all.

This is the primary consideration if alcohol and other drug use is going to be referred to in the communications piece. If the alcohol and other drug use is not relevant, or is only being used to insinuate poor character or weak morals, it should not be included.

2.

Only use images of real people with their full knowledge and informed consent.

Consent of all parties is essential to respectful depictions of people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use. The act of asking for consent shows that the subject of the story or communications piece is being respected.

This is particularly important for people who may be considered vulnerable or unable to give informed consent, due to age, intoxication or other factors which may inhibit decision-making.

Using images only of actors or models ignores the value of people who have lived experience.

3.

Show the full spectrum of people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use by avoiding stereotypes and showing balance.

Not all people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use will have the same opinions or experiences. It is important to ask and listen to the individual, and show a range of perspectives.

Many people with lived experience, and even those currently in active addiction, may not look any different to anyone else in the community. There are no visual characteristics which are common to all people with lived experience, there are only stereotypes which lead to stigma. These stereotypes should be replaced with representation of real people.

4.

Remember that people with lived experience of alcohol and other drug use are real whole people with friends and families, and that stigma limits help-seeking behaviours and rehabilitation.

Whether it is the choice of words or imagery, how stories are told has impact not only on individuals, but also their families and their communities.

These impacts can be significant and long-lasting, and care should be taken to ensure people are treated respectfully and in ways which will support safety, connection, and help-seeking behaviours.

How you can help – practical guide

1.

Use images of people with lived experience, without sensationalising.

Take care with before and after comparisons and avoid celebrating only those people who no longer use drugs.

Avoid sensationalised communications such as ‘name and shame’ articles.

Why it’s important

People with lived experience are valued members of our community who are deserving of respect. Everybody’s lived experience is unique, regardless of whether they are choosing to abstain, or reduce their use.

2.

Use images of people living their normal lives, not just focused on their alcohol and other drug use.

Take images of the person that show what’s important to them, such as their work or community, or engaging in activities like playing sport or creating art.

Avoid perpetuating stereotypes by pairing a substance with certain demographics or character traits (e.g. mums with alcohol, festival attendees with MDMA or corporate men with cocaine).

Why it’s important

People are not defined by their alcohol and other drug use, and reducing people to stereotypes can cause harm and reduce help-seeking behaviours.

3.

Show images of alcohol and other drug workers helping people, balanced with people with lived experience.

Contact communication@atdc.org.au if you are looking for alcohol and other drug sector professionals, people with lived experience, or academics to interview.

Why it’s important

Encourages people to seek support if they need it by showing that treatment is available and is a positive experience. Including people with lived experience alongside professionals provides a balanced perspective.



Lived Experience Advocate Jonathan in interview with ATDC staff member.



*
Parent
Writer
Free Thinker
Philosopher
Musician

Rhyan. Lived Experience Advocate.

4.

Avoid using negative filters or editing.

Take care when applying colour corrections, filters, frames and other creative elements.

Why it’s important

Making an image artificially dark, gritty or negative can reinforce inaccurate and harmful stereotypes.

5.

Choose stock images carefully, if no photos of people with lived experience are available.

Search terms like *drug user*, *drug rehab*, or *drug treatment* often return images depicting angry, unwell or violent people, reinforcing inaccurate and damaging stereotypes.

Always expand your search terms to include keywords like *counselling* or *support*.

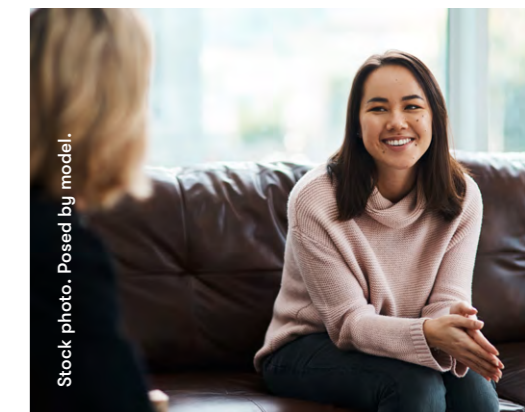
Why it’s important

Tasmanians from all walks of life use alcohol and other drugs, so it’s important to go beyond the stereotypes often found in stock image keywords.

“

That was literally a nine-day period. It’s not my whole life. And that one label is going to impact and have weight in not just my life for the rest of my life, but for my daughter’s whole life.”

Tasmanian with lived experience of alcohol or other drug use.



Stock photo. Posed by model.



Matthew and Jeffrey, Lived Experience Advocates.

6.

Use images that are relevant and accurate.

Only use images of substances or related equipment to educate and always ensure accuracy, for example don't use images that involve syringes if the story is about smoking cannabis.

If an image is required of drug-taking equipment, always use images that promote harm reduction, for example avoiding images of homemade improvised equipment or discarded needles, in favour of clean, sterile equipment and safe disposal.

Why it's important

Relevant and accurate imagery increases awareness and understanding. It also encourages use of clean and sterile equipment, reducing the risk of injury and other harm.

7.

Never use images without a person's consent.

Take care when using images of people engaging in or affected by alcohol and other drugs as they may not be able to give informed consent.

If the person in the image has passed away, consent can be given by next of kin or family.

Children cannot give informed consent, but adults may give consent to photos of themselves when they were children.

Why it's important

Informed consent from adults is respectful and encourages people to seek support if and when they are ready.

8.

Take care not to identify people without their permission.

Always confirm with the people featured in images what name (if any) they would like associated with their image.

Consider if the image could inadvertently identify a person or a particular neighbourhood or building.

Why it's important

Images that identify people or reveal their place of residence or work without their consent may lead to harm.



Stock photo. Posed by model.

If at any time you are unsure, refer in the first instance to the Golden Rules in this document and the Tasmanian Communications Charter for Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs. Please contact the ATDC by email communication@atdc.org.au or visit atdc.org.au/image-guide if additional support or advice is required, or you are seeking interviewees or photography subjects.



- Daughter
- Sister
- Aunt
- Granddaughter
- Community Worker
- Friend
- Advocate
- Feminist
- Film Lover
- Optimist



Jo, Lived Experience Advocate.

“

This situation and circumstances around what happened to me don't define who I am... Everyone makes mistakes. And it doesn't negate everything else I've ever done in my life.”

Tasmanian with lived experience of alcohol or other drug use.

“

It doesn't actually do anything to add anything to the story. I mean, a picture of a bag of sugar? It was just a stock image, you know, it's not real drugs. What's the point?”

Tasmanian with lived experience of alcohol or other drug use.

“

It's kicking people while they are down... They stood outside the courtroom waiting for me with a long lens camera for an hour. I just didn't go out. I waited until they left.”

Tasmanian with lived experience of alcohol or other drug use.

“

Putting my name in the paper with those kinds of headlines and detail actually opens me up to being in danger. Me and my daughter. There are bad people in the world.”

Tasmanian with lived experience of alcohol or other drug use.

The ATDC gives thanks to everyone involved in the development of these Guidelines. This project was made possible through funding from Primary Health Tasmania (Tasmania PHN) under the Australian Government's Primary Health Networks Program. It was guided through the generosity of input and expertise from across a range of individuals and organisations. This includes media and communications professionals, alcohol and other drug harm prevention experts, and treatment and education front-line workers.

Most importantly, the ATDC acknowledges the contribution and authentic vulnerability of a dedicated group of Tasmanians with a lived experience of alcohol and other drug use. These Guidelines have been developed with their experiences at the forefront, with the aim of reducing the stigma and harm they have all personally experienced through the portrayal of drug use in our community.