

What does online alcohol and other drug counselling do? An analysis of policy and practice perspectives



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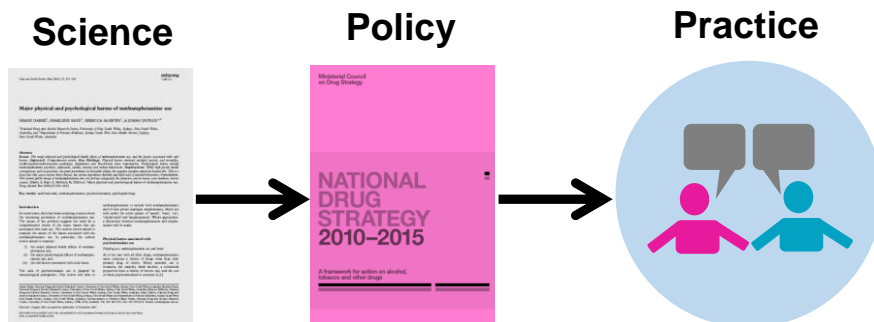


MONASH
University
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But what does online AOD counselling do?

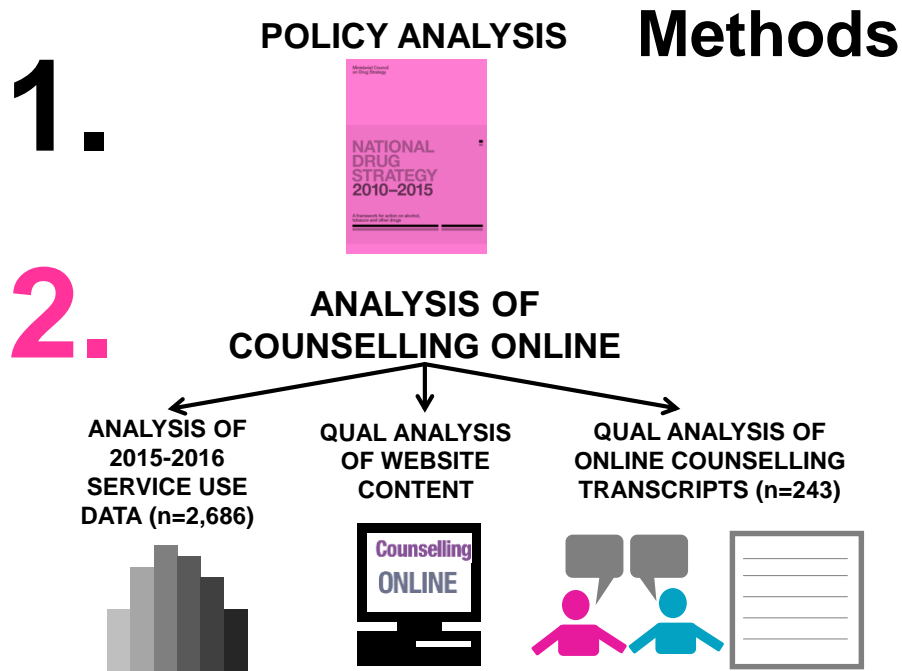
Policy into practice?





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1.** ■ How is the role of online AOD counselling framed in AOD policy?
- 2.** ■ How does online AOD counselling act in practice?



Online counselling in policy

1. ■ Online counselling as an early and brief intervention to target AOD use

2. ■ Online counselling as a tool to facilitate referral to face-to-face AOD treatment

1. Brief interventions like online counselling...

“

...range from five minutes of brief advice to 30 minutes of brief counselling...aim to identify current or potential problems with drug use and motivate those at risk to change their behaviour (NDS, p. 10)

”

2. Online counselling as a tool to get people to face-to-face treatment




“

...develop and implement internet-based approaches to target individuals with problematic drug use who do not think they have a problem and encourage them into treatment and/or other services supports (NDS, p. 19)

”

What does online AOD counselling do in practice?

Counselling Online


Free drug & alcohol counselling 24/7 News & Articles Online Forum  Call  Emergency Assistance 

Counselling ONLINE Search

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Every moment counts

We support people affected by alcohol & other drugs. The smallest step can make a difference so let us help you today.



- Free
- Talk with real people
- Private & confidential
- Safe & secure
- Available 24/7

How we can help

Speak with a Counsellor [>](#)

About you

To provide a high level and relevant service, we'd like to ask you a number of questions about yourself. This information will remain secure and confidential.

* - indicates required fields

Gender *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Age Group *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Country of Birth *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Cultural Identity *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Preferred Language *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
<small>Counselling is provided in English. We may include other languages in the future.</small>	
Postcode *	<input type="text"/>
Drug of concern *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Sexual Orientation *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
<small>To help us tailor services in the future</small>	
Relationship to the person using alcohol and other drugs *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
How did you find out about the service Counselling Online provides? *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>
Have you ever received any previous help? *	<input type="text" value="Please select"/>

Counselling session

SESSION WINDOW:

Status: Active

[Counsellor] Hello you are talking to an online drug and alcohol counsellor, how may I be of assistance? (We value your feedback. At the end of this session, you will be provided a link to a short feedback survey about your counselling session today. Please take a couple of minutes to fill in the survey. Thank you.)

[client] Hello, I just wanted to discuss my alcohol use and whether it's a problem?

[Counsellor] Hi. I will be pleased to discuss that with you. Please tell me more about your concerns.

ENTER YOUR MESSAGE:

[client] Yeah basically I went to this conference dinner thing & got wasted & made a complete fool of myself in front of all my colleagues ☹

Online counselling in practice

- 1.** Online counselling as attempting to attend to AOD use and interconnected psychosocial concerns
- 2.** Online counselling as a potential form of treatment
- 3.** Online counselling as supplementing face-to-face treatment

1. Online counselling as a holistic intervention

Julie

Hello. I hope you can assist. I am looking for assistance with my alcohol problem. I have never been a heavy drinker but I lost my son [...] in a road accident, and now find it difficult to get through a day without some alcohol to take the edge off the pain. I am in full time employment, but sometimes I feel I am not as efficient as I could be as I often feel tired or a little hungover. I would like to be able to function without the alcohol, but I find it very difficult to do so.

Counsellor

I am really sorry to hear about the loss of your son. Coping with grief can take many forms and it appears that alcohol is your way of coping. Have you considered grief counselling?

Julie

I don't feel I can talk to anyone who hasn't experienced the loss of their own child.

Counsellor

Who is supporting you?

Julie

I have a caring daughter and a loving partner. Neither of them live with me.

Counsellor

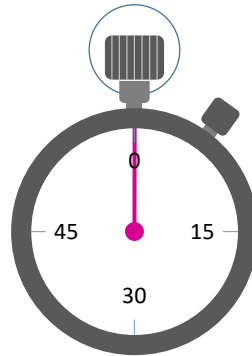
You have a wonderful daughter who I'm sure are also going through the grieving process. And great to have a loving partner. However, it is important for you to get support to work through the grieving process. Grief counselling staff are trained to support you. Until you start addressing your grief, it will be near impossible to address the alcohol use

2. Online counselling as a potential form of treatment intervention

“

Counselling Online services are provided by counselling staff with professional qualifications and experience in alcohol and drug counselling and treatment...Our counselling and support services are provided with reference to current clinical practice standards and guidelines for alcohol and drug service delivery.
(Counselling Online website)

”



30+
minutes

3. Online counselling as supplementing face-to-face treatment

“

We aim to provide services for people at all stages of help seeking:

- for first time help seekers
- for people waiting for treatment
- people in treatment that require additional support, particularly after hours
- people who have completed treatment and want to stay on track
- for people in recovery wanting to connect with others or prevent relapse
- for people supporting a significant other with a drug and alcohol problem.

(Counselling Online website)

”

Service use data tells us that:

27% accessed face-to-face treatment before accessing Counselling Online

8% heard about Counselling Online from a service provider

66% accessed Counselling Online outside of standard business hours

Concluding thoughts

- The linear notion of policy being adopted in practice is overly simplistic & doesn't account for the complexities of implementation & practice
- Friction between the way online AOD counselling is framed in policy & experienced in practice.
 - Is online AOD counselling a brief intervention or a treatment intervention or both?
 - Is online AOD counselling solely focussed on AOD or is it a more holistic wellbeing focussed intervention or both?
- Need to appreciate the multiple things online AOD counselling does if it is to be flexible enough to meet client' needs in their complexity

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**THA
NKS
FOR**

LISTENING

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