

What is Torque?

Torque, a Catalyst program for people involved in the justice system, is a new six week structured non-residential program offered by UnitingCare ReGen. The period following withdrawal is a vulnerable time in which the potential for relapse is significant. The program provides intensive post-withdrawal support.

The program is for people who have completed a withdrawal program (or who can confirm a recent period of abstinence) and who have made a decision to stop or reduce their substance use.

Torque incorporates a range of activities, including group work, individual counselling, recreation and social activities. The aim is to help people develop coping skills and maintain motivation to change their substance use. We do not impose sanctions on people who lapse; however, people cannot attend the program if substance intoxicated. Prescribed medication and pharmacotherapies for any drug are recognised as acceptable treatment interventions.

The Torque Program operates from Monday to Friday. Most activities are scheduled between 9.30am and 3.30pm, however there are also a few evening activities. For those individuals that are on a community work order in the North West region, hours can be accredited for attendance. We recommend having a conversation between the participant and their Community Corrections Officer to confirm the agreement prior to commencement.

What's involved?

Torque is delivered over six weeks and consists of individual Motivational Enhancement Therapy, structured psychosocial groups, as well as a range of social and recreational activities. The core (compulsory) components of the program utilise evidence based practise, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and relapse prevention strategies to help participants identify and change unhelpful thinking, deal with high risk situations and manage unhelpful or negative mood states such as frustration, depression and anxiety. The program model has been guided by relevant state and national policies, AOD treatment principles, rigorous research and clinical experience. The program is evidence based and employs strategies that have been demonstrated to maximise therapeutic outcomes.

The core content is supported by optional sessions (non compulsory) which address other needs and also help participants rediscover life affirming and pleasurable activities. These sessions include: family relationships, nutrition, financial management, art therapy, exercise, relaxation, employment support, pharmacotherapy education, liver health, AOD use and the brain and mindful practice.

Because Torque participants leave at the end of each day, they have the opportunity to practise their new skills on a daily basis and discuss their outcomes and reflections within a supportive context. Time and time again, this component has been identified as a key point of success within the program.

Below is a breakdown of the sessions detailing the learning goals and focus of each session:

Core Compulsory Session

Individual Motivational Enhancement: There are four motivational enhancement counselling sessions within the program. These sessions are designed to develop and review individual treatment goals, explore and enhance motivation for change and identify the functions of the alcohol and other drug (AOD) use. With new awareness and insights more helpful coping skills and behaviours can be developed to replace the less helpful and problematic ones.

Cognitive Behavioural Coping Skills Training: Cognitive Behavioural Coping Skills training refers to a group of theoretically related treatment approaches for substance dependence. It utilises a blend of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and relapse prevention. The aim of these sessions is to challenge problematic thinking patterns and increase the participants' repertoire of coping skills in order to prevent relapse. There are 10 of these sessions in the program.

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Introduction CBT	Managing Cravings and Urges	Foundations of CBT	High Risk Situations	Seemingly Irrelevant Decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key concepts of program • Stages of change • Relationship between thought, feeling and emotion • The ABCDE tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are cravings • Triggers • Neurological explanation for cravings • Strategies for managing cravings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive distortions • Common thinking errors and irrational beliefs • Identifying and challenging cognitive distortions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying High Risk Situations • Strategies for managing High Risk Situations • Lapse Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing SIDs as a chain of small decisions • "Red Flag Thoughts" • Strategies to stop SIDs

Session 6	Session 7	Session 8	Session 9	Session 10
Assertive communication	More communication	Problem Solving	Goal Setting	Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different communication styles and their impact • Benefits of assertive communication • "I Statements" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink refusal skills • Barriers to effective communication • Listening skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving as a skill • Problem solving techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Long and short term goals • SMART goals • Potential barriers to achieve goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of content • Anticipating future challenges • Acknowledging changes made

Mood Management: There are four Mood Management sessions covering anxiety, depression and managing anger and frustration. This component of the program recognises that mood problems are often linked to substance use and can be a trigger for lapse and relapse. They take a CBT approach consistent with the Coping Skills Training, specifically targeting mood.

Anger & Frustration Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How anger and frustration contribute to AOD use •Difference between anger and aggression •Common myths about anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cues, signs and symptoms of anger •Using the ABCDE model to manage anger and frustration
Anger & Frustration Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cognitive distortions which underpin anger •Strategies for developing self control over one's thought and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strategies for managing anger and frustration •Anger control plans
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The relationship between alcohol use, negative mood states and relapse •How anxiety affects one's thoughts, body and behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thinking patterns relating to anxiety •Using the ABCDE model to help manage anxiety •Other strategies to manage anxiety
Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Different forms of depression •How depression affects thoughts, body and behavior •Thinking patterns relating to depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Using the ABCDE model to help manage depression •Activity scheduling •Other strategies to help manage depression

Skills Practice: There are four two hours sessions within the program dedicated to practicing and developing CBT, mood management and relapse prevention skills. These sessions invite participant to explore real experiences that impact their current circumstances, utilising the interventions explored elsewhere in the program.

Check In / Out: Check In and Check Out sessions utilise a group therapeutic process that provide an opportunity for participants to talk about their strengths, successes and challenges in managing their AOD use during the program. They are often scheduled prior to weekends or community days to help participants plan for these and after breaks in the program to reflect on how participants met any challenges. These sessions also provide an opportunity to further practice and develop CBT skills, mood management and relapse prevention skills. There are 19 of these one hour sessions within the program.

Non Compulsory Sessions

Art Therapy: Art therapy is a therapeutic option that can enhance alcohol and other drug treatment. It uses the creative process of art-making to improve and develop the physical, mental and emotional well-being of recovering individuals. Research demonstrates that art therapy is an effective strategy when used with people suffering from the effects of trauma, depression, anxiety, AOD issues and psychotic disorders. Art therapy can enhance mood, raise self awareness and improve self esteem. There are four sessions within the program.

Gym & Pool: Exercise is an incredibly important part of a healthy person's life. When addressing behavior change exercise is identified as a significant intervention that allows the participant to improve mental and psychical health while also providing structure to the day and opportunity to connect to the community. Participants will be able to attend the Coburg Leisure Centre as part of the timetable on four occasions; they will also be able to attend outside of program times for the duration of the program.

Yoga: A gentle yoga class incorporating stretch therapy, breathing and relaxation techniques can instantly change the participant's state of mind and wellbeing. The scientific understandings are discussed as the effects and benefits are experienced. There are four sessions within the program, however if participants complete the program they can continue to engage after they have finished.

Financial Counselling: The two financial education sessions provide information in regard to client's options with unmanageable debts as well as financial rights and responsibilities and budgeting. The sessions are an opportunity to discuss the stress caused by money worries and then identify ways in which to address financial issues. One to one financial counselling sessions are available to all participants of Torque to identify and implement plans to address client's financial difficulties.

Deep Relaxation: There are many physical, biological and psychological benefits to be gained from using relaxation techniques. These benefits have been widely documented, with immediate effects including lowered heart rate and blood pressure. In the longer term, relaxation practice can assist you to sleep better and to strengthen your immune system, making you less susceptible to sickness and disease. On the psychological side, relaxation can increase your sense of general well-being and improve your capacity to think clearly, focus and sustain your attention, manage stress, regulate emotions and increase awareness. Within the program there are opportunities from participants to practice and develop a range of deep relaxation experiences, some of these include progressive muscle relaxation, visualizations, deep breathing and mindfulness techniques.

Strengthening Relationships: Problematic AOD use can lead to significant relationship problems. Torque therefore includes two opportunities to involve family members and friends, as well as the participants themselves, and focuses on enhancing communication, strengthening ties and rebuilding trust. The aim is to also to help family members and friends make sense of the recovery process, while also learning how they can best provide support. The two sessions are facilitated by a relationship counsellor and a Torque staff member, they are held mid program in weeks 3 and 4. These two sessions are evening sessions.

Mindful Practise: The Mindful Practise session, facilitated by John Williams, introduces the skill of mindfulness and how to practise and train the mind to be more aware of thoughts and feelings that could lead back to a relapse of drug and alcohol dependence. It is an essential tool in the early stages of recovery that if developed can assist clients in becoming more aware of their thought patterns as well as assisting them in making positive choices that can lead them out of the cycle of addiction.

Job Network Agencies: Engaging in employment or being provided opportunities to improve professional skills is an important aspect for individuals who may be attempting to reconnect with the community. Employment or other meaningful occupations of time provide structure to the day, while contributing to a positive sense of self and improving mental health. The Torque Program offers two information sessions. The first is with Job: Co; a disability job network agency. The second is with a mainstream job network agency; CVGT. Both offer different opportunities in recognition of different support needs.

Pharmacotherapies: There is a significant amount of research that suggests that pharmacotherapies assist some people with stabilisation and craving management. This session facilitated by a withdrawal nurse provides psycho education on the pharmacotherapies that are available to assist in managing alcohol abuse, withdrawal and treatment and opioid dependence.

Liver Health: This session provides psycho education on the role of the liver, disease progression and clarifies the difference between viral hepatitis A, B and C. It also explores the risks and impact that AOD use, diet and viral hepatitis may have on its ability to function at a healthy level. A main focus of the session is discussing how to care for your liver. This session is facilitated by a Hepatitis C Clinical Nurse who also provides up to date information and treatment options for individuals who are living with Hepatitis C.

Drumming: This involves introducing the concept of group drumming as a meditative and relaxing exercise. The participants are given a brief overview of the techniques involved but the emphasis is placed on the group, not the individual process. There are a few exercises that aim to build on 'listening'. Once again the emphasis is placed on what the group can achieve but also what an individual can bring to the group. Common feedback is that people find it calming, energising and just plain fun.

AOD Use and the Brain: Some clients have concern or have been diagnosed with cognitive difficulties or deficits that have resulted from, or are partly contributed by AOD use. This session, facilitated by an ABI/AOD consultant, identifies some of the signs and symptoms that may alert clients to access support or assessment. The session focuses on prevention, interventions and protective factors that contribute to hope and wellbeing.

Nutrition: Nutrition is the foundation on which we can build a long and healthy life and is a basic key in drug and alcohol recovery. The nutrition sessions are designed to create a safe environment in which participants can learn about and discuss issues relating to their diet. The workshops consist of a number of learning modalities including a theory and group based discussion, food preparation sessions, how to read food labels, food budgeting and shopping. These sessions give the participants valuable new skills enabling them to prepare their own nutritious meals thereby improving their overall health and leading to a greater level of self-esteem.

Momentum: Momentum is a voluntary group for those participants who complete the program. Participants can access the Momentum group as they need to and there is not a requirement to attend weekly. This group focuses on peer network support, skills development and socialisation. It's held every Wednesday night at 6pm to 8pm.