



UNSW
AUSTRALIA

The link between anxiety and alcohol use over the transition to adulthood: Implications for early intervention

Lexine Stapinski, Jon Heron, Andrew Baillie, Nicola Newton, Matthew Hickman, Alexis Edwards, Gemma Hammerton, Liam Mahedy, Kenneth Kendler, & Maree Teesson

Medicine

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre

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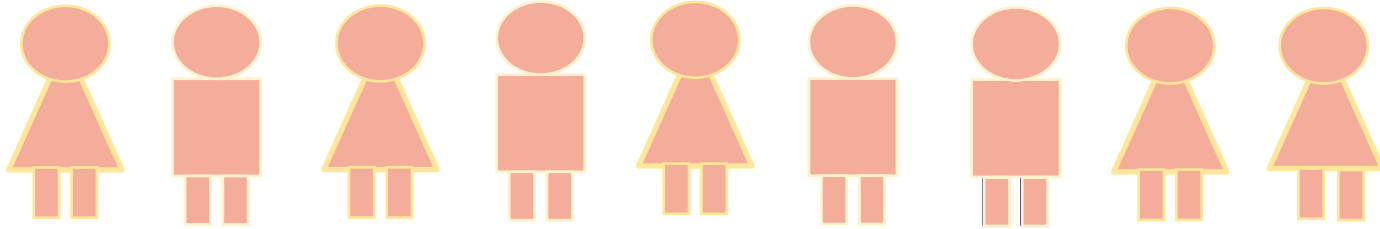


Outline

1. How does anxiety and drinking to cope affect risk of alcohol-related harm across the transition to adulthood?
2. How can we intervene to prevent escalation of anxiety and alcohol use problems?

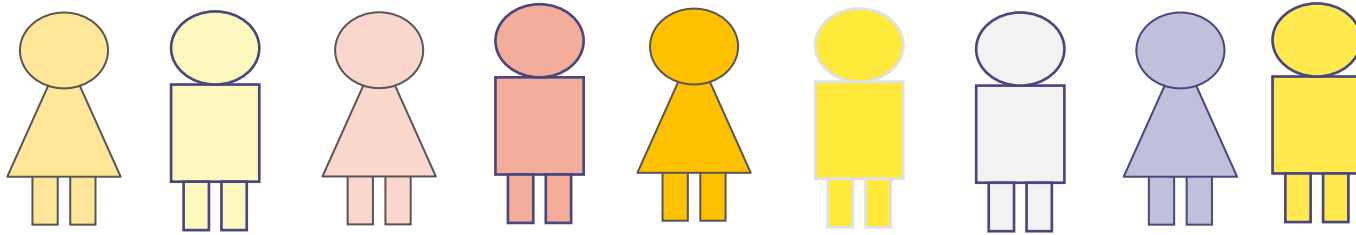
Background: What is known?

- Alcohol is among the leading contributors to global burden of disease
- Alcohol use is widespread, but there is variation in motivations for drinking alcohol



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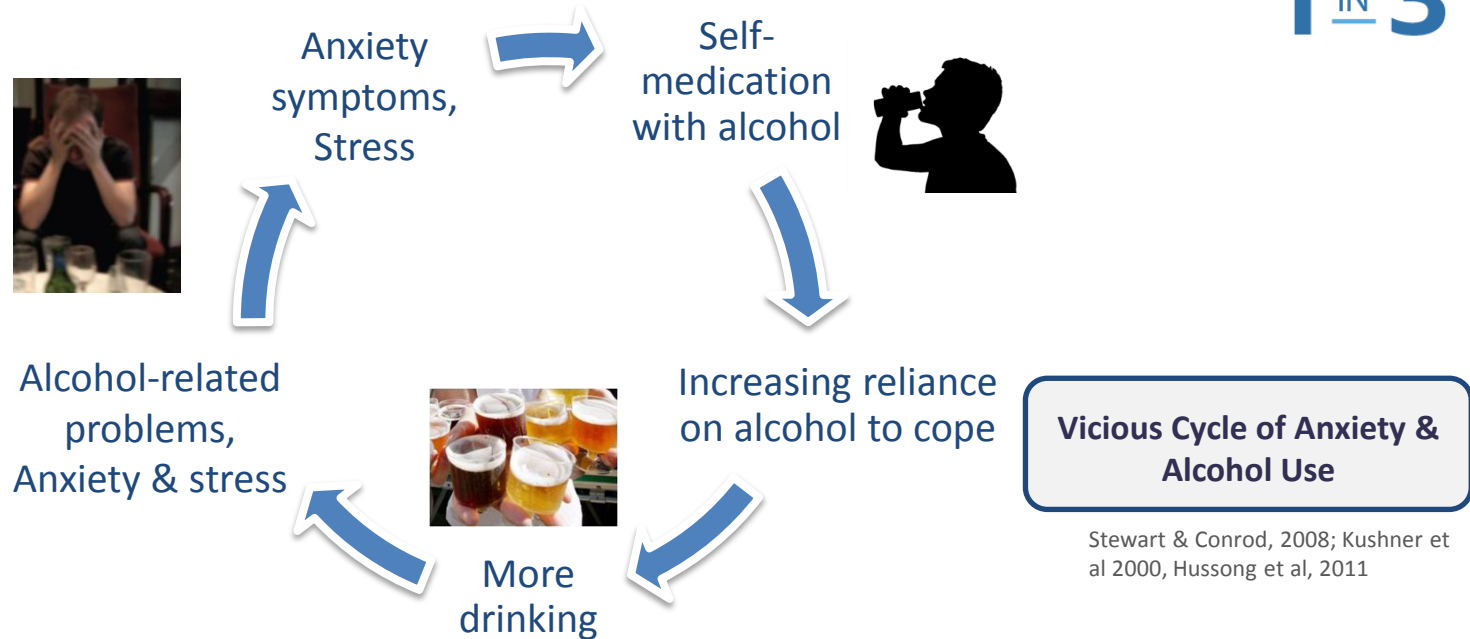
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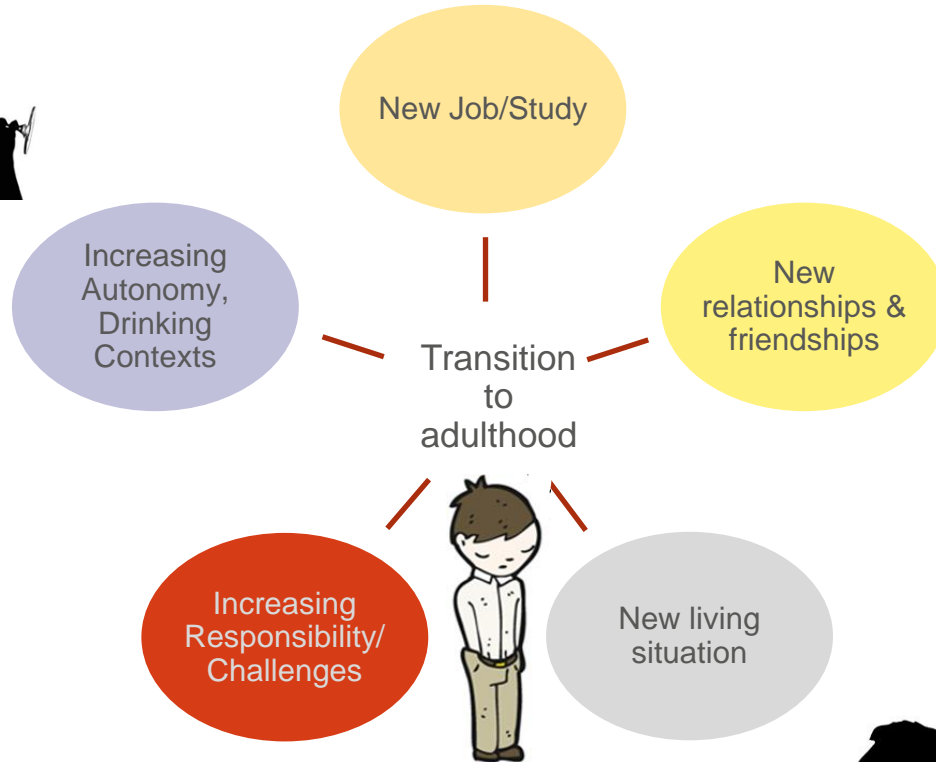
- Motives for drinking fall in 4 key domains: drinking for enhancement, social, conformity or coping (Cooper et al. 1994)
- Coping-motivated drinking has been identified as risk factor for alcohol-related harms and development of disorder (Stapinski et al 2006, Beseler et al. 2008; Kuntsche et al. 2005; Merrill et al 2014).

Background: What is known?

- Anxiety is associated with higher risk of alcohol problems & dependence
- In Australia, 1 in 3 people with a substance use disorder also has an anxiety disorder (Teesson et al, 2009)



Transition to Adulthood: Key Risk Period



- Over 12 months, almost **1 in 3** young adults consume alcohol at very high risk levels
- Harms associated with alcohol **peak in early adulthood**

Impact of **Anxiety** and **Coping Styles** (ie Drinking to cope) may become even more pronounced across this transition to adulthood...



Study Aims & Method

- **Developmental approach:** examine opportunities for intervention over the **transition to adulthood**
- UK birth cohort study: Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), AKA “Children of the Nineties”
- **Latent Transition Analysis** – to address theoretically driven Research Questions:

Anxiety Disorders

Coping-motivated Drinking

? risky drinking and associated harms

Our study focussed on assessments at **age 18 and 21** (n = 2,147; 56% female)



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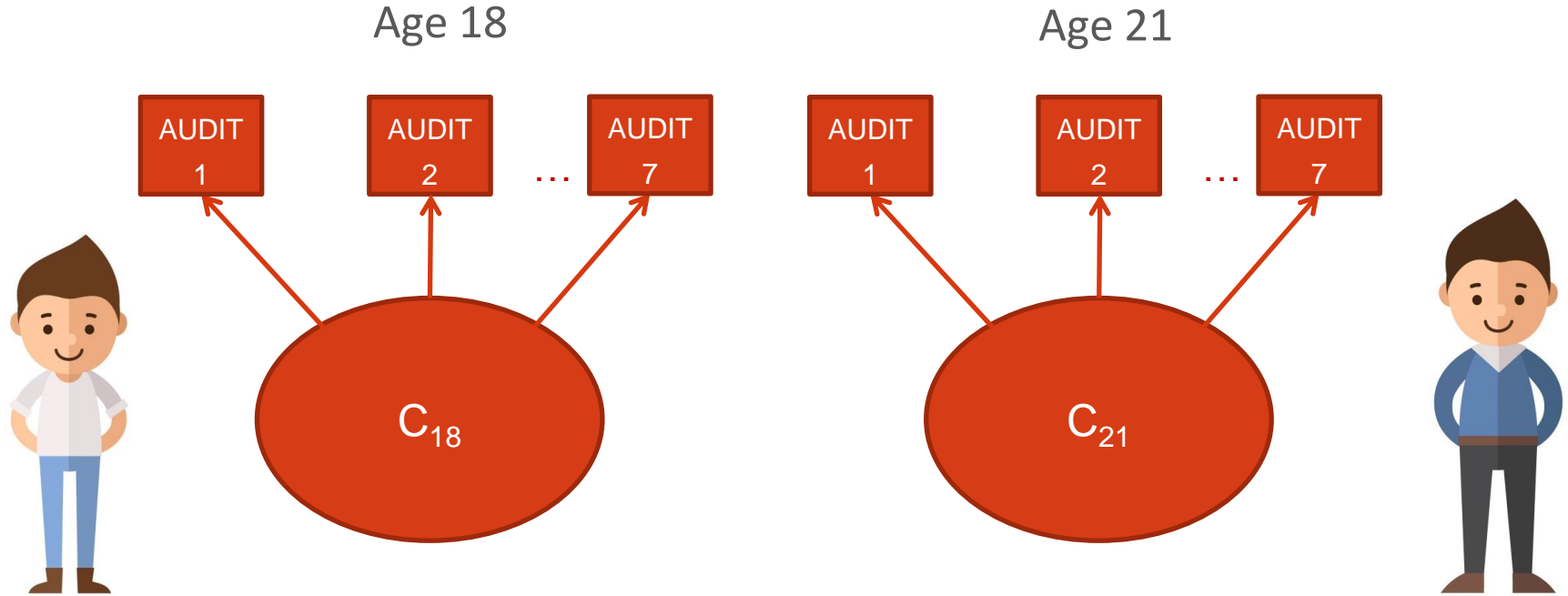
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Our study focussed on assessments at **age 18 and 21** (n = 2,147; 56% female)



At age 18	Outcome: At age 18 and 21
Anxiety Disorders: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinical Interview Schedule- Revised (Lewis, 1997) Drinking to Cope: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coping Items of Drinking Motives Questionnaire (Cooper, 1992)	Harmful Alcohol Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harm (incl. binge) and dependence items from AUDIT (Babor et al 2001)

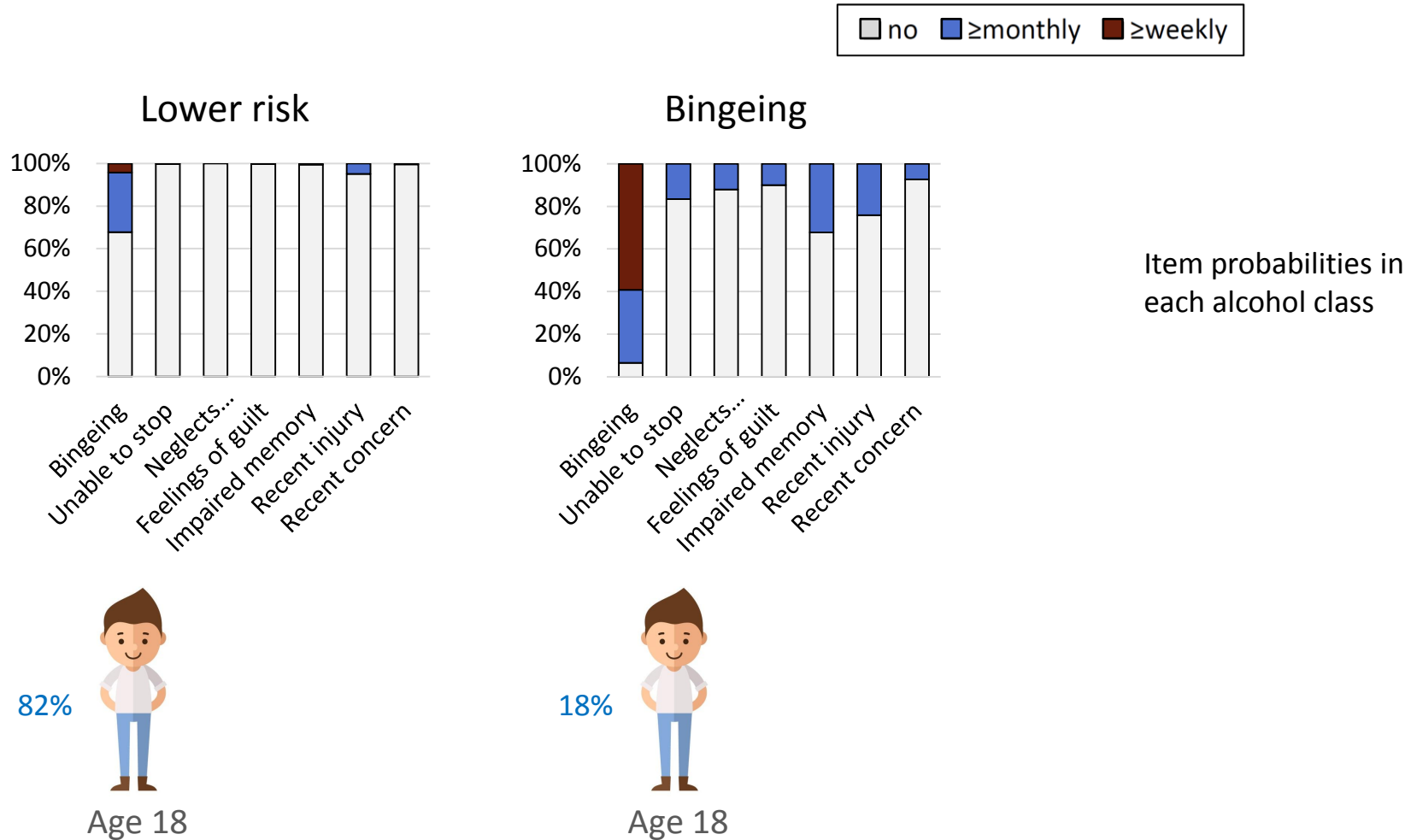
2-Wave Latent Class Analysis



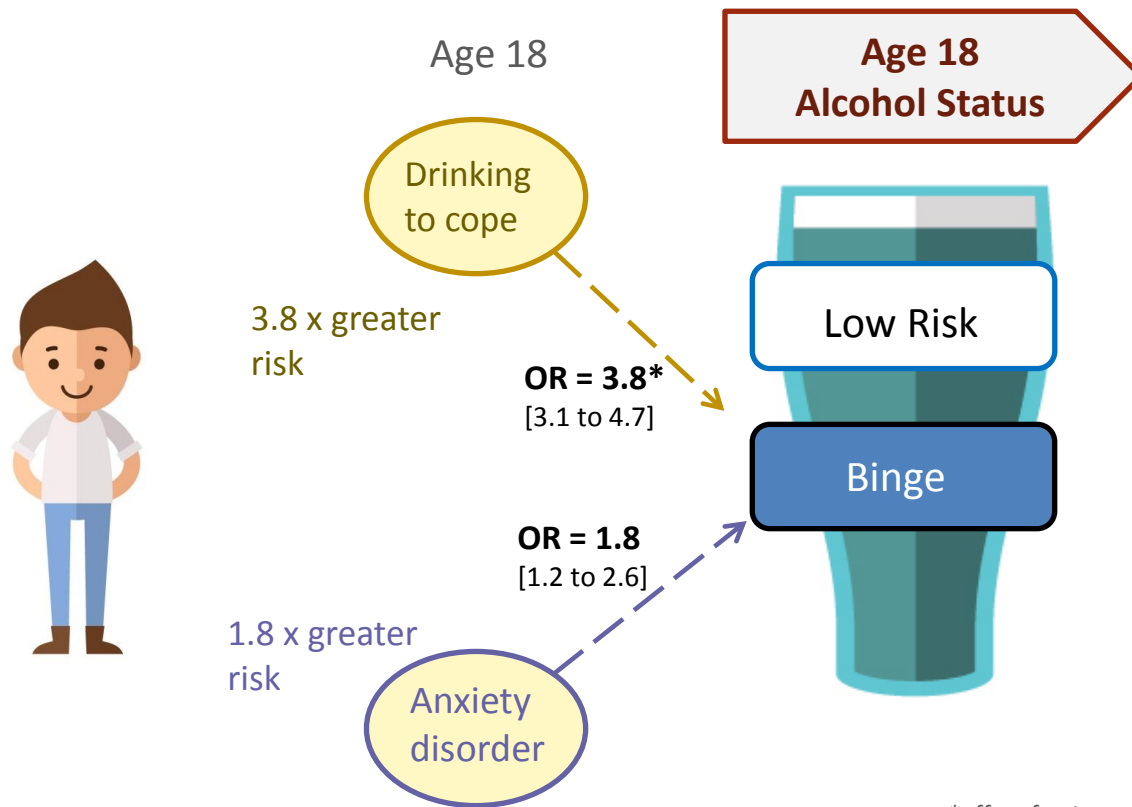
Latent Class Analysis

- To explore underlying subgroups or typologies based on AUDIT items
- Model fit statistics used to identify the best-fitting model to the data
- Model is **longitudinally invariant** so classes maintain the same interpretation

Results: Alcohol Use Classes at age 18



Results: Effect of Anxiety and Drinking to Cope on Risk Status



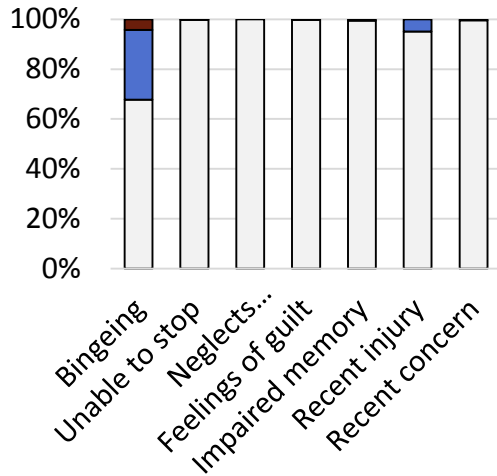
*effect for 1 standard deviation increase in DTC scores

Results: Alcohol Use Classes at age 18 & 21

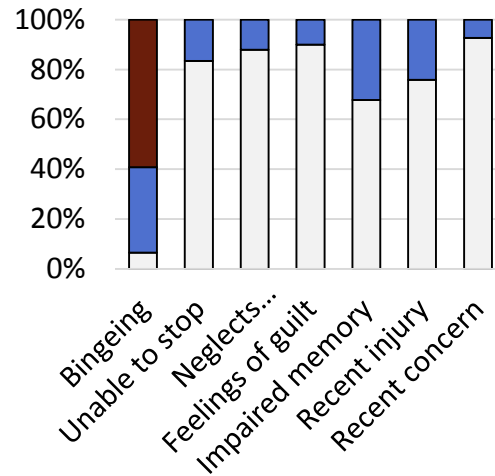
Item probabilities in each alcohol class

no ≥monthly ≥weekly

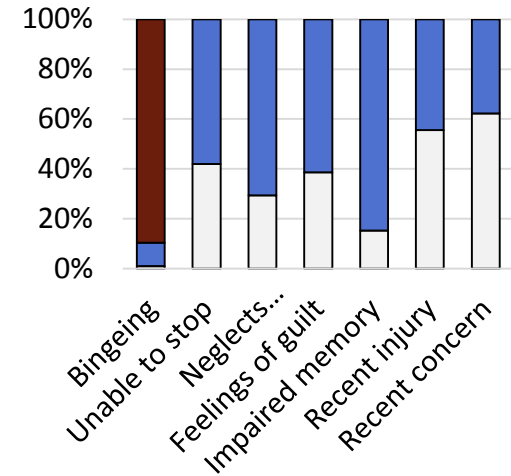
Lower risk



Bingeing



High-risk use



82%



Age 18

57%



Age 21

18%



Age 18

35%



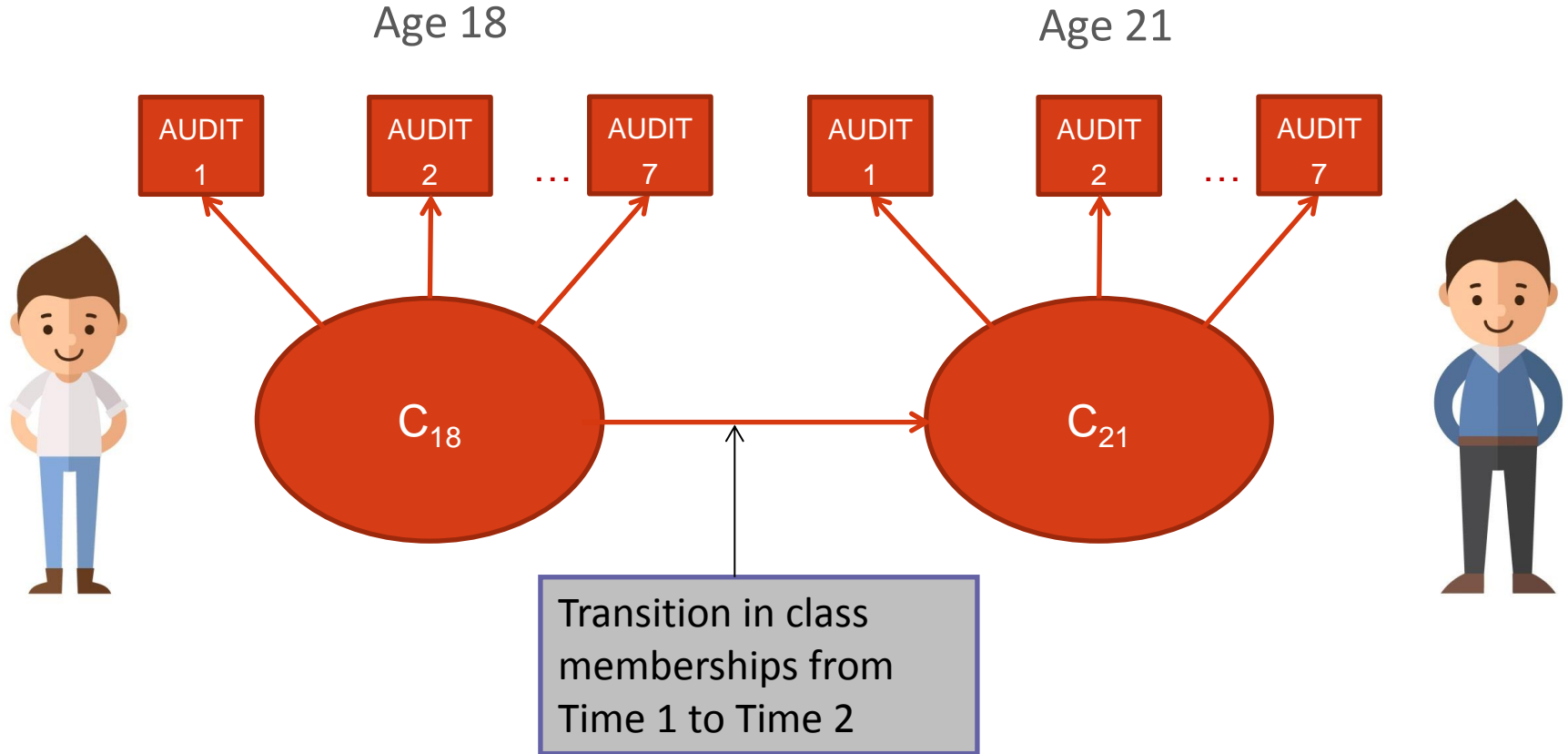
Age 21

8%

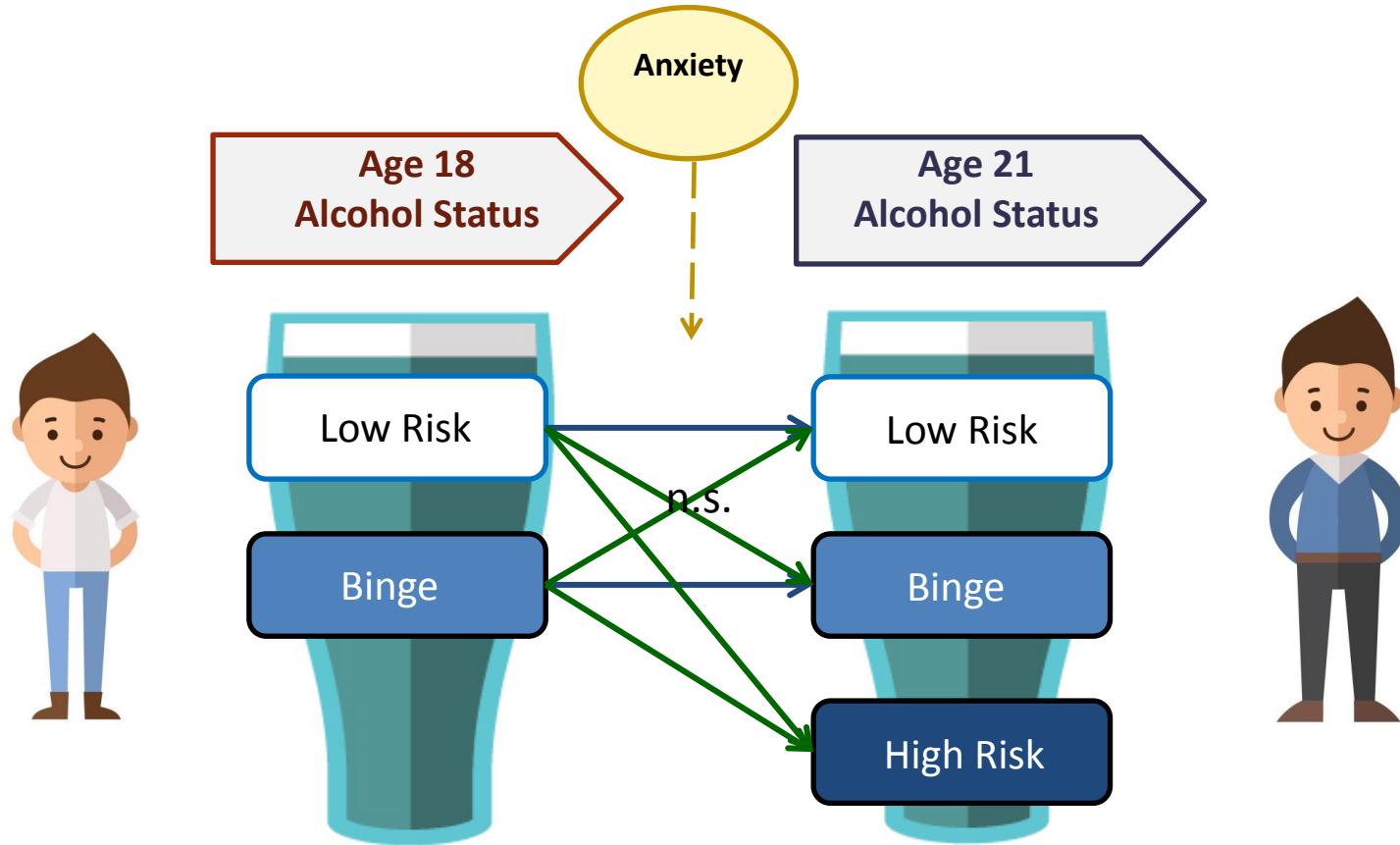


Age 21

2-Wave Latent Transition Analysis

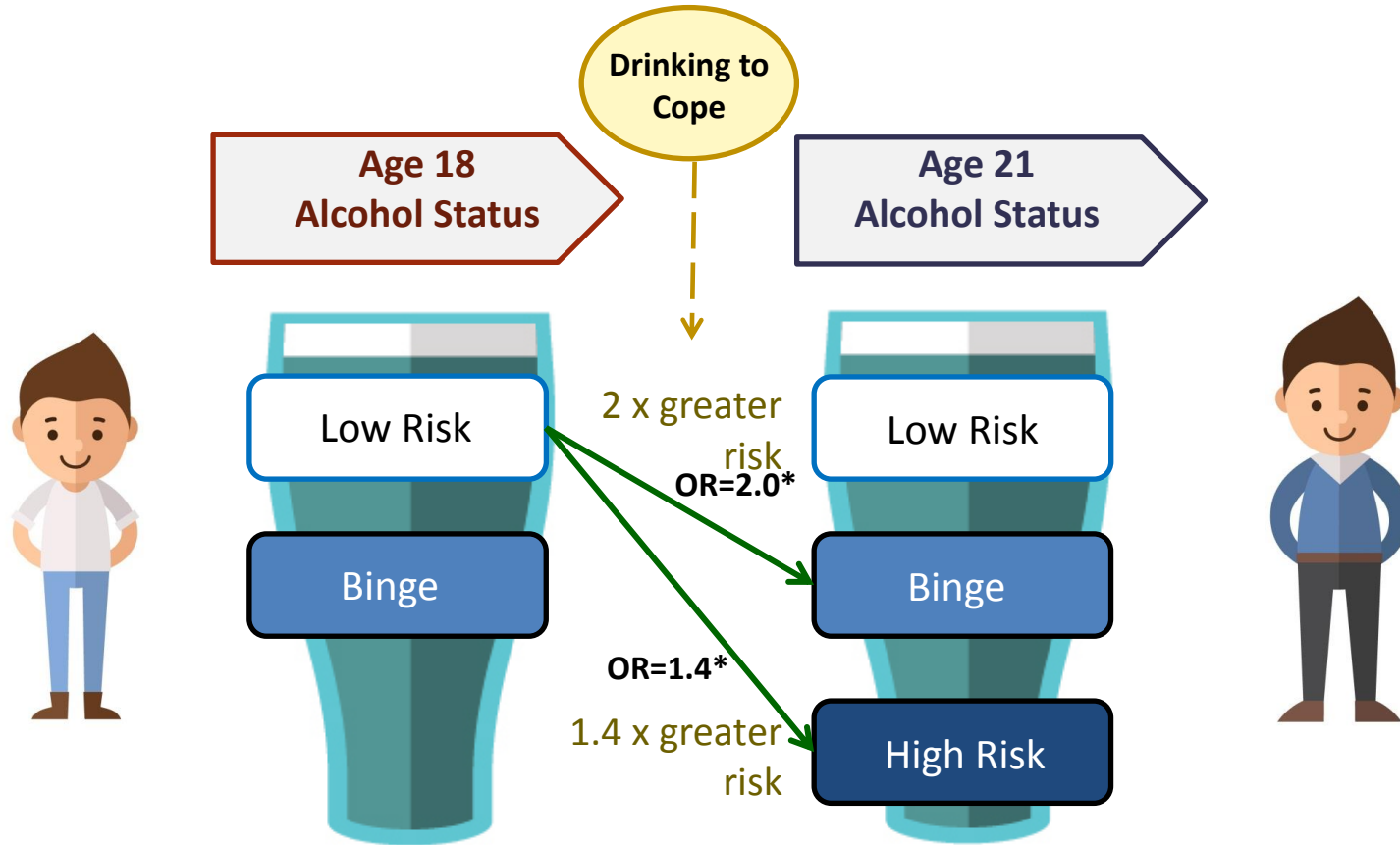


Results: Effect of Drinking to Cope on Transitions



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Results: Summary

1. How does anxiety and coping-motivated drinking affect risk of alcohol-related harm across the transition to adulthood?

Young people with **anxiety disorders** at age 18 were

- **1.8 x** more likely to binge-drink at age 18
- However, no evidence of an effect on transition between classes from 18 to 21

Drinking to cope at age 18 was linked to:

- **Three-fold risk** of binge-drinking class at 18
- **Greater risk of transitioning from low-risk use at 18 to high-risk use at age 21**

Next steps:

- **Replicate analysis in Australian sample**



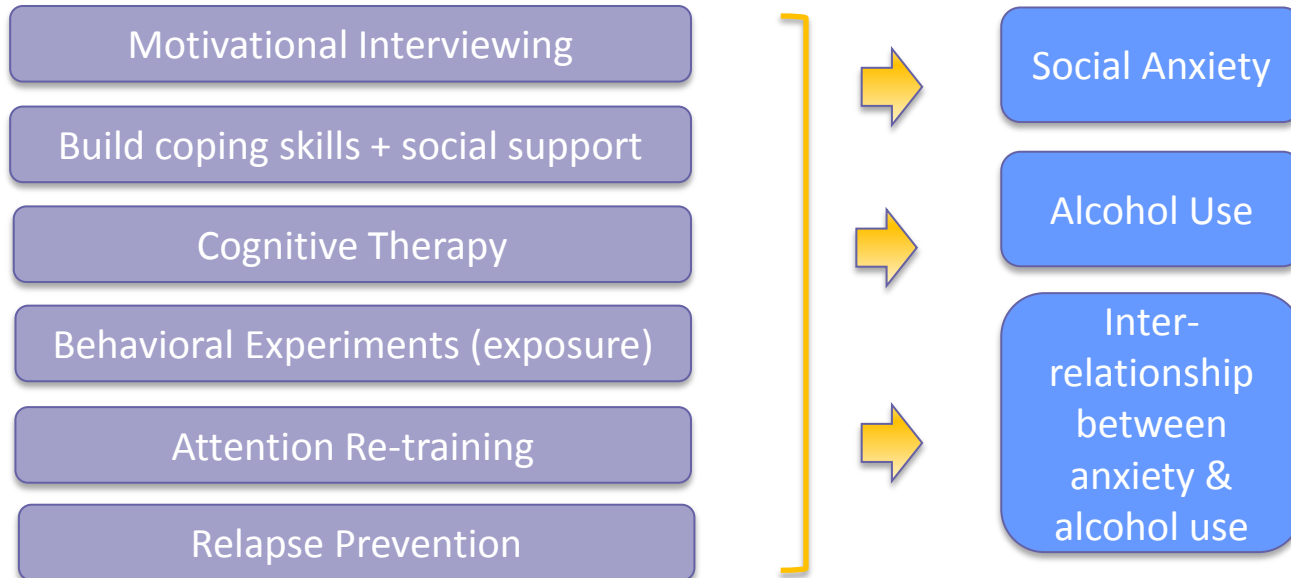
PREVENTING SUBSTANCE USE AND
RELATED HARMS IN ADOLESCENTS

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So what can we do about it?

- Opportunity for early intervention
- Previous work with adults shows promise for approaches that target anxiety and alcohol together

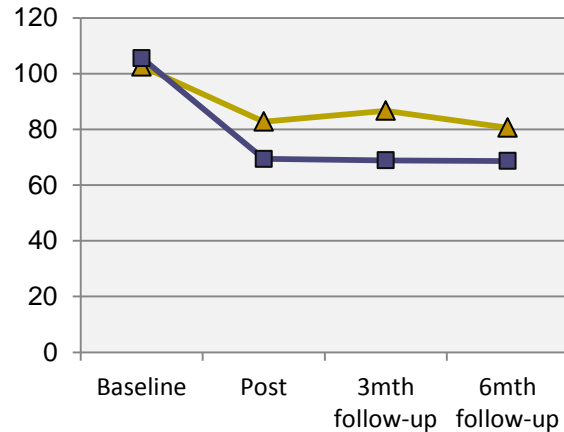


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(Stapinski et al 2015; Baillie et al 2013)



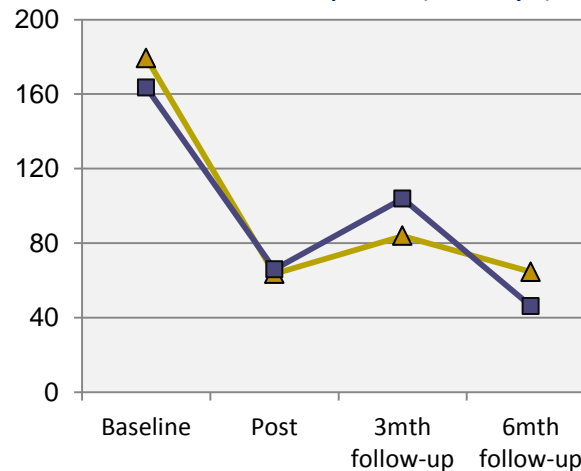
Social Anxiety Symptoms*



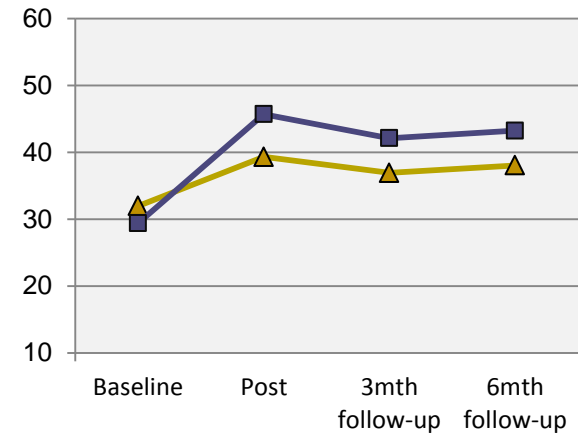
Alcohol focussed CBT

Integrated CBT

Alcohol consumption (30 days)



Overall functioning & quality of life*

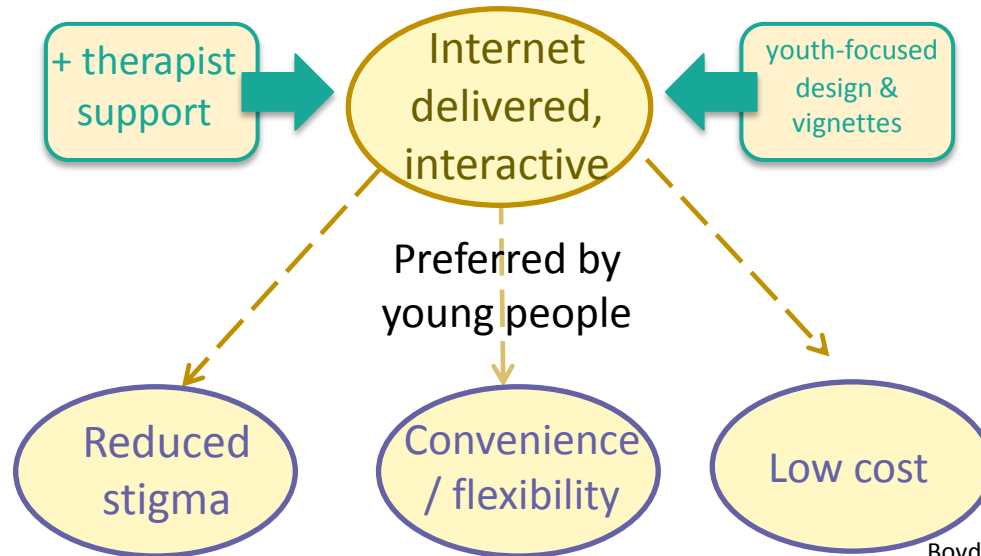


*Integrated Tx – significantly greater improvements in anxiety symptoms & overall functioning

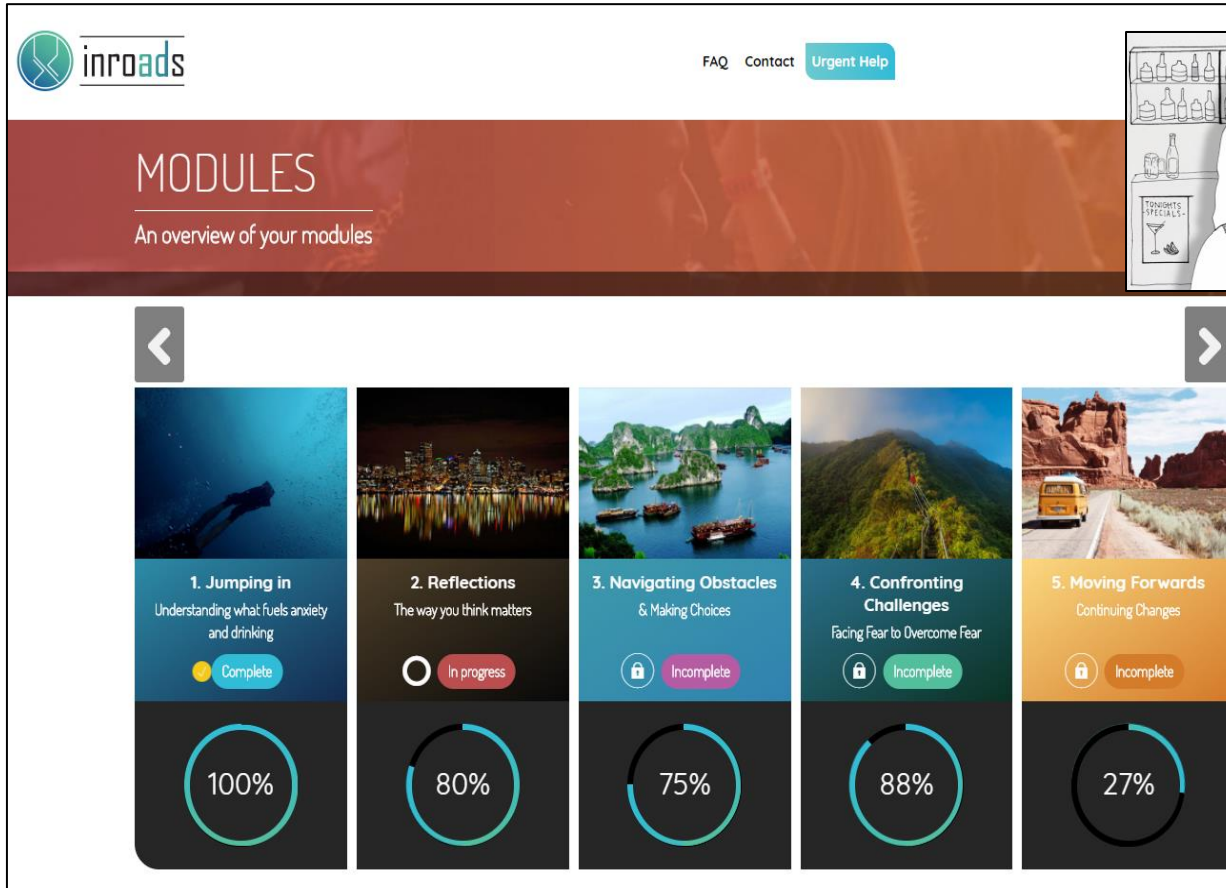
Baillie, A., **Stapinski, L. A.**, Sannibale, C., Teesson, M., Rapee, R. M. & Haber, P. (2013). ACER.

Inroads: Early intervention tailored for young adults

- Early intervention to enhance anxiety coping skills, & address coping-motivated drinking
- Drawing from existing alcohol and anxiety programs
- Adapted to unique challenges & drinking contexts relevant to young adults
- Delivery format to address barriers to help seeking among people:



Inroads: A youth focussed early intervention



Inroads trial launch: 26th October



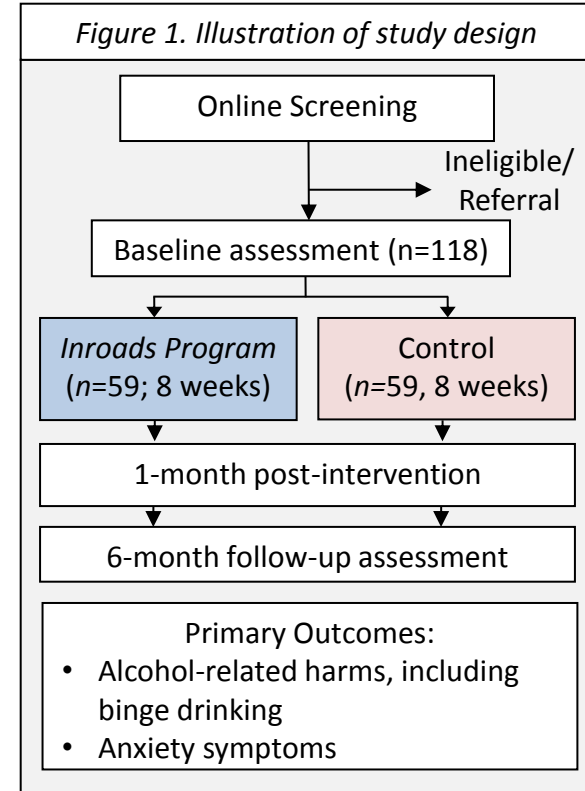
Recruitment: 26th October 2017 to 2018

- Aged between 17 and 24, living in Australia
- Experiencing anxiety symptoms & drinking alcohol above recommended guidelines



www.inroads.org.au

Figure 1. Illustration of study design



Thank you

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Inroads development team: Erin Kelly, Katrina Prior, Briana Lees, Rachel Visontay, & Mark Deady

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Please email me with any questions or feedback:

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