



# Partners Toolkit: IARD messaging

**Promoting a culture of  
moderation and responsibility**

January 2026



# Overview



**This toolkit is** a central catalogue of the most recent, relevant IARD communications resources.

**We put this together** so our partners can easily find information to support consistent, cohesive communications efforts.

## **What is in this Toolkit:**

1. Consumer Sentiment Survey findings (U.S./U.K.)
2. Message Testing (U.S./U.K.)
3. Key Messages
4. Reactive Q&A
5. Comms Recommendations
6. Appendix: GEO Recommendations
7. Appendix: Assets for Social Media





# Survey findings and Message testing

**Note:**

Survey and Testing was conducted in U.S. and U.K. markets only, October 2025





# Consumer sentiment survey findings



## Overall consumer sentiment baseline:

People want practical moderation guidance – not “no safe level” messaging.

### WHAT THE RESULTS SHOWED:

- People typically have a positive attitude towards alcohol, but are increasingly health-aware, most understand alcohol is harmful.
- While most adults know the laws around drinking (for example, legal drinking age), they are less familiar with national health guidelines.
- People have widely heard of “No Safe Level” but do not necessarily agree with it.
- Moderation consistently lands as the most effective message, it is seen as responsible, realistic, and compatible with a balanced lifestyle and socially positive.
- Audiences want balanced information and trust doctors/scientists far more than institutions like industry or politicians.

**Note:** Survey was conducted in U.S. and U.K. markets only, October 2025

To access the survey findings, click [HERE](#)





# What messages to lead with and which to rethink

**“Moderation is at an all-time high”**  
the strongest and most consistent performer across markets, reinforcing moderation as a social norm.

**“Science supports”**  
particularly effective in the US and among Gen Z but requires simplification to avoid feeling technical or inaccessible.

**“Prohibition fails”**  
perceived as complex, controlling, and insufficiently credible.



**“Freedom to choose”**  
delivers high appeal and trust by emphasizing autonomy and informed decision-making.

**“Collaborative action”**  
likeable, especially among non-drinkers, but less directly motivating for moderation behaviors.

**Overtly cultural or hospitality-led framing**  
effective in the UK but polarizing in the US if not carefully balanced.



# Key lessons from Message testing

**Moderation** is  
at an all-time high

**Social and  
cultural** value

## WHAT STOOD OUT

Freedom  
to **choose**

**Collaborative**  
action

To access the  
**Message testing**,  
click [HERE](#)



**Note:** Survey was conducted in U.S. and U.K. markets only, October 2025



# Key lessons from Message testing



**Moderation is the strongest universal anchor**, consistently resonating because it feels balanced, realistic, non-judgmental, and reflects how people manage alcohol in everyday life.



**Freedom-to-choose messaging delivers the highest appeal and trust**, with autonomy and informed decision-making boosting relevance and motivation to moderate across both markets.



**Positive, forward-looking framing performs significantly better than guilt-based or prescriptive tones**, with messages highlighting real societal progress on harmful drinking particularly compelling.



**Simple evidence strengthens credibility.** Evidence-backed statements increase trust when they are clear, concise, and easy to digest. Overly technical or dense scientific language limits engagement, even when the underlying evidence is strong.

**Note:** Survey was conducted in U.S. and U.K. markets only, October 2025



# Messaging and recommendations





# Key messages



These are the central messages to be conveyed clearly and consistently.



To access the **key messages**, click [\*\*HERE\*\*](#)

**1.**

**Moderation is working**, and scientific research confirms the **distinction between moderate and harmful drinking**



**2.**

Adults want the **freedom to choose, informed by facts**



**3.**

Drinking in moderation has **important social and cultural value**



**4.**

Collaborative action is **helping to reduce harmful drinking**





# Reactive question and answer (Q&A)



## The Reactive Q&A is:

- To be used as guidance to address difficult questions in media
- Constantly evolving
- Structured in a way that allows pivoting back to our key messages
- Primarily IARD-focused – however answers are suitable for general use



To access the reactive Q&A, click [HERE](#)





# Recommendations: DOs and DON'Ts



When communicating about science, health and risks:

## DO:

- Differentiate clearly between the risks of heavy and moderate drinking.
- Be transparent. Encourage sound science, not a specific outcome.
- Use phrases like “some studies show” or “Report X concludes.”
- Use direct quotes whenever possible.
- Include important context to avoid any perception of mischaracterizing the findings or significance of a study.
- Acknowledge that other studies have found risks related to consumption.
- Acknowledge that some people should not drink at all.
- Encourage individuals to consult with their physicians.

*Please contact IARD if you require specific advice to adapt your messaging to your own regional and national context.*



# Recommendations: DOs and DON'Ts



When communicating about science, health and risks:

## DO NOT:

- Don't say "the science proves" or "scientific fact X is true."
- Don't say "Alcohol consumption is safe."
- Don't say "Alcohol is good for your health."
- Don't say "You should drink alcohol for health benefits."
- Don't use any message that encourages underage drinking.
- Don't use any message that encourages people to drink who should not (for personal or medical reasons).
- Don't use health risk statements that don't cite an approved scientific source.

*Please contact IARD if you require specific advice to adapt your messaging to your own regional and national context.*

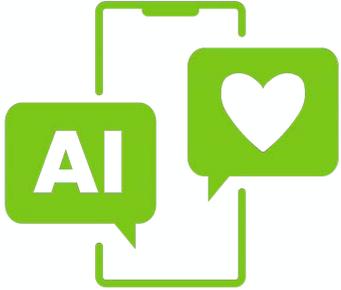


# Appendix





# GEO Report



**Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) is the practice of shaping how brands appear in AI-generated responses.**

We produced a *GEO report* with detailed analysis and recommendations. Below are some key observations, see next slide for recommendations.

## OBSERVATIONS

- **Health authorities lead the conversation.** The World Health Organization (or WHO) holds over half of all visibility, setting the tone for the discourse.
- **Trusted medical and academic sources follow closely.** The CDC, NHS, and The Lancet are frequently referenced, reinforcing a strong focus on scientific evidence and public health guidance.
- **Education-focused platforms maintain presence.** Sources like Drinkaware and Mayo Clinic perform well by providing practical, easy-to-understand information on moderation and safe consumption.

To access the **GEO report**, click [HERE](#)

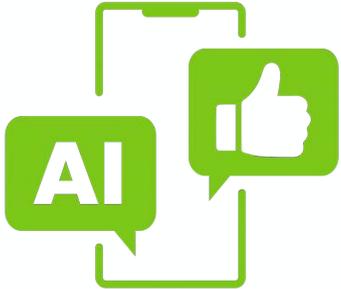


Rank	Entity	Visibility
1	World Health Organization	55%
2	CDC	10%
3	NHS	9%
4	WHO	8%
5	American Heart Association	7%
6	The Lancet	7%
7	Drinkaware	5%
8	Mayo Clinic	5%
9	Stanford Medicine	4%
10	Reframe	3%

Visibility across key topics on moderation & health, for more details see *GEO report*.



# GEO recommendations



AI prioritizes authority, structure, and clarity. Tone also matters, with AI favoring balanced, health-led guidance over opinion pieces. For IARD and its members, this means using neutral, evidence-led statements that make scientific research understandable to the general public.

Recommendations	Actions
Enhance AI Visibility	Optimize web pages with question-led headings, bullet summaries, and credible citations. Strengthen internal linking and metadata to reinforce topic depth and consistency.
Build Public Trust	Partner with healthcare professionals, scientists, and policy experts for co-authored materials.
Engage Younger Audiences (LPA+)	Create short, expert-led YouTube explainers on moderation, health risk, and behavior change. Partner with Reddit wellness and recovery communities through expert AMAs and resources.
Promote Behavior Change	Publish step-based guides, tips, and tools on moderation and social drinking.

*Further recommendations can be found in the GEO Report.*



# Examples:

## Citation Pages – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



### READABLE LIST FORMAT AND GUIDANCE

It uses short, scannable bullet lists like “You shouldn’t drink at all, even in moderation, if you...” which improves accessibility and makes the content easy for LLMs to extract structured data from.



### CLEAN, DESCRIPTIVE URL

The URL [cdc.gov/alcohol/about-alcohol-use/moderate-alcohol-use.html](https://cdc.gov/alcohol/about-alcohol-use/moderate-alcohol-use.html) clearly signals the topic, hierarchy, and context. This structure supports SEO ranking and helps AI models identify the page as an authoritative, topic-specific resource.



### INTERNAL LINKING AND CONTENT FLOW

The “Read Next” prompt at the end encourages users (and crawlers) to continue to related pages like “Lower Your Risk of Alcohol-Related Harms.” This internal linking helps the CDC maintain topical depth and interconnectivity, which improves discoverability.

### About Moderate Alcohol Use

For Everyone  
JANUARY 14, 2025

#### KEY POINTS

- Drinking excessively increases your risk of getting sick, injured, or dying sooner.
- You can choose not to drink alcohol, drink less, or drink in moderation to lower these risks, compared to drinking excessively.
- However, even moderate drinking may increase your risk of death and other alcohol-related harms, compared to not drinking.



You shouldn't drink at all, even in moderation, if you:<sup>[1]</sup>

- Are [pregnant or might be pregnant](#).
- Are [younger than 21](#).
- Have certain medical conditions—like some liver diseases.

READ NEXT

[Lower Your Risk of Alcohol-Related Harms](#)





# Social Resources & Useful Links

## SOCIAL MEDIA

These are examples from both IARD's account and our CEO's, to give an idea of the type of language we use on pertinent issues.

- [Implementation of Best Buys](#)
- [Response on alcohol taxes](#)
- [Response on sin taxes](#)
- [No Safe Level Response](#)
- [NASEM and its approach \(US\)](#)
- [Explaining IARD's meta-analyses on all-cause mortality \(see link below\)](#)

## IARD PUBLIC RESOURCES:

- [Meta-analyses on alcohol consumption and all-cause mortality 2000-2025](#)
- [Progress Report: Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol-Related Harm](#)

## DOWNLOADABLE GRAPHICS

[Moderation trends Social Media Carousel \(US & UK\)](#)

New research shows most adults value moderation and balance.

89% UK

81% US

say moderation is a responsible way to enjoy alcohol

[Gen Z Social Media Carousel](#)

Gen Z adults are being selective and making intentional choices when it comes to alcohol consumption.

When they do drink:

60% see it as part of **culture and tradition**, valuing context and connection over volume





# SUMMARY:

## Documents contained in this toolkit

### Links to Key Documents:

- 1.**  
Consumer Sentiment Survey Findings  

- 2.**  
Message Testing Findings  

- 3.**  
Key Messages Document  

- 4.**  
Reactive Q&A  

- 5.**  
GEO Analysis & Recommendations  


*For specific questions on messaging, or guidance please contact IARD Communications Director.  
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**Thank you**