

Stigmatization

Women are judged more by others when they consume alcohol.

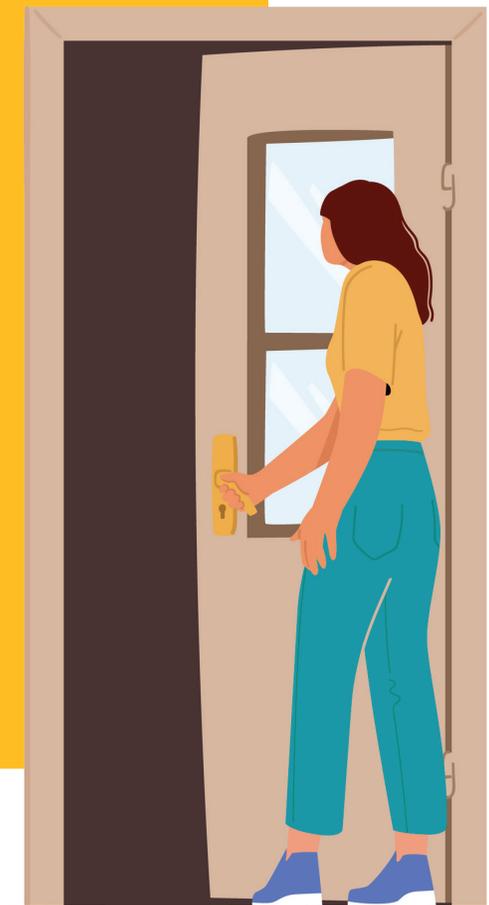
- According to 70% of respondents, women are **judged more negatively** than men when they are intoxicated.
- The stigma is even more pronounced in the case of **mothers, pregnant women** and those living with an **alcohol use disorder**.
- The stigmatization of women who use alcohol is a significant barrier to their **seeking help** and **accessing services**.

According to a 2023 ASPQ (Quebec Public Health Association) survey conducted by Léger, nearly three out of four women agree that women are judged more harshly than men when they are intoxicated.¹ This stigma reflects social norms and is particularly compounded for women who are already subject to other forms of discrimination.²

When comparing parenting roles, nearly eight in ten mothers feel that they are judged differently than fathers when they drink alcohol.¹ They may be judged more harshly due to societal expectations or representations related to the traditional role of motherhood, thus creating additional pressure on these women.³ Since the cessation of alcohol consumption is recommended by many health authorities during pregnancy and the consequences are preventable, alcohol consumption among pregnant women is socially repressed.⁴

Finally, women living with alcohol use disorder face significant stigma, not only because of their use, but also because of the stigma surrounding substance use disorders.³ These women may be subject to harsh judgments, thus discouraging them from seeking help and accessing resources.³

Stigmatization therefore operates on several levels: women are stigmatized when they abuse alcohol, when they use it during pregnancy, or when they have an alcohol-related use disorder. Regardless of the context, this same stigmatization is yet another barrier to getting help.



1 ASPQ-Léger (2023) L'alcool au féminin : sondage auprès des Québécoises.

2 Greaves L (2020) Missing in Action: Sex and Gender in Substance Use Research. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 17: 2352.

3 Becker JB, McClellan ML, Reed BG (2017) Sex differences, gender and addiction. *J Neurosci Res* 95: 136-147.

4 Weber A, Miskle B, Lynch A, et al. (2021) Substance Use in Pregnancy: Identifying Stigma and Improving Care. *Subst Abuse Rehabil* 12: 105-121.