

Title: *“Alcohol perceptions during 1960s till now - Learning to Sail”*

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Growing up in Tonga during the 1960s, alcohol was forbidden to be bought and consumed in public places such as the beach or the waterfront without having a license from the Government. You had to be 21 years of age before you could apply for a permit to buy alcohol and because it was expensive it was rarely seen in people’s homes. Upon reflection, the only people I witnessed consuming alcohol then were people with money and status. I then formulated a belief that people who could afford alcohol have the respect of others, it gives you higher status and you can use alcohol to buy whatever you want.

Making homebrew for personal use and/or to sell underground was also against the law and if caught, you could go to prison for a long time. Questions I often asked. Why can’t people with low socioeconomic status make something affordable such as homebrew so they can enjoy themselves like people with money? Why do poor people be punished for being poor?

Drinking Kava during the day and at night until all hours of the morning was allowed, but why I asked? Perceptions – Kava is the real poor man’s drink. You can drink as much as you like for as long as you like and no one would tell you to stop unlike alcohol consumption and its effects.

Key points to discuss: What is/was seen as Good versus Bad drinking – Then & Now

What help is/was available – Then & Now

What sort of help works in today’s environment?

Ned Cook has 14 years experience in working with people with alcohol and other drugs problems including other related issues and/or co-existing disorders.