

Alcohol Abuse: Sample Questions for Assessment Based on Diagnostic Criteria*

A diagnosis of alcohol **abuse** requires that the patient meet **one** or more of the following criteria, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period, and **not** meet the criteria for alcohol dependence.

All questions are prefaced by “In the past 12 months...”

■ **Recurrent drinking in hazardous situations:**

- Have you more than once driven a car or other vehicle while you were drinking? Or after having had too much to drink?
- Have you gotten into situations while drinking or after drinking that increased your chances of getting hurt—like swimming, using machinery, or walking in a dangerous area or around heavy traffic?

■ **Continued use despite recurrent interpersonal or social problems:**

- Have you continued to drink even though you knew it was causing you trouble with your family or friends?
- Have you gotten into physical fights while drinking or right after drinking?

■ **Failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home because of recurrent drinking:**

Have you had a period when your drinking—or being sick from drinking—often interfered with taking care of your home or family? Caused job troubles? School problems?

■ **Recurrent legal problems related to alcohol:**

Have you gotten arrested, been held at a police station, or had any other legal problems because of your drinking?

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Alcohol Dependence: Sample Questions for Assessment Based on Diagnostic Criteria*

A diagnosis of alcohol **dependence** requires that the patient meet **three** or more of the following criteria, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period.

All questions are prefaced by “In the past 12 months...”

■ **Drinking more or longer than intended:**

Have you had times when you ended up drinking more than you meant to?
Or kept on drinking for longer than you intended?

■ **Impaired control:**

Have you more than once wanted to stop or cut down on your drinking? Or tried more than once to stop or cut down but found you couldn't?

■ **Tolerance:**

Have you found that you have to drink much more than you once did to get the effect you want? Or that your usual number of drinks has much less effect on you than it once did?

■ **Withdrawal syndrome or drinking to relieve withdrawal:**

- When the effects of alcohol are wearing off, have you had trouble sleeping? Found yourself shaking? Nervous? Nauseous? Restless? Sweating or with your heart beating fast? Have you sensed things that aren't really there? Had seizures?
- Have you taken a drink or used any drug or medicine (other than over-the-counter pain relievers) to keep from having bad aftereffects of drinking? Or to get over them?

■ **Continued use despite recurrent psychological or physical problems:**

Have you continued to drink even though you knew it was making you feel depressed or anxious? Or causing a health problem or making one worse?
Or after having had a blackout?

■ **Time spent related to drinking or recovering:**

Have you had a period when you spent a lot of time drinking?
Or being sick or getting over the bad aftereffects of drinking?

■ **Neglect of activities:**

In order to drink, have you given up or cut down on activities that were important or interesting to you or gave you pleasure?

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