

Alcohol and Substance Use Inventory

This exploratory questionnaire describes a person's relationship with alcohol and other psychoactive substances: patterns of use, loss of control and craving, consequences, motives for use (managing emotions, pleasure and social connection), and ambivalence and readiness to change. In addiction treatment as in psychological care, it helps understand the function the substance serves, which guides the work, and identify where the person stands in their readiness to change, to adapt the motivational approach.

Number of questions	24 questions
Estimated duration	6 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Alcohol and Substance Use Inventory
Target audience	Adults
Category	Addictions

Preview of the 24 questions

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I drink or use other substances several days in a row.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I drink or use other substances in larger amounts than I planned.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I feel physically unwell because of my drinking or substance use (tiredness, nausea, feeling faint).

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

I drink or use a substance to calm down when I'm stressed or anxious.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Over the past three months, how often has this been true for you?

With people I don't know well, I drink or use a substance to feel at ease.

Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Very often

Administer your questionnaires online

Send your patient a link: they answer from their phone or computer, and you receive the scored results by email.

View the questionnaire on mentaal.org ›

Scoring & interpretation

Scoring

Each statement is scored from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) based on its frequency over the past three months. Each domain combines 4 statements spread throughout the questionnaire, giving a score from 0 to 16.

Reading the profile

There is no total score. Domains are ranked from most to least elevated, each with a description of what it covers and points to explore in the interview. The profile distinguishes what substance use costs (loss of control, consequences) from the function it serves: using to manage emotions is more often associated with substance-related problems than using for pleasure or social connection, and calls for different work. The "Ambivalence and readiness to change" domain is read alongside the others: when it is low while loss of control or consequences are elevated, it suggests use that the person does not yet see as a problem and points toward motivational interviewing.

Clinical cautions

The questionnaire asks neither which substances are used nor in what amounts: these are established in the interview, in standard drinks for alcohol. Signs of physical withdrawal (shaking, sweating, feeling unwell on waking) call for a medical opinion before any reduction: stopping alcohol or certain medications abruptly can be dangerous. The questionnaire contains no question about thoughts of suicide, which are more common with problematic use: they should be explored in the interview, especially when the "Using to manage emotions" domain is elevated. Tobacco, not explored here, is assessed with the FTND.

Limitations

This exploratory questionnaire has not undergone psychometric validation and has no cutoffs. It supports the clinical interview and does not provide a diagnosis.

Scoring example

Scoring

Consequences 10 / 16

The impact of use on health, work or school, and relationships, and risk-taking under the influence.

Areas to explore: health problems, difficulties at work or school, tension with loved ones, dangerous situations (driving, sex, violence), any legal consequences.

See also: AUDIT, DAST.

Patterns of use 8 / 16

The pace and intensity of use: consecutive days of use, large amounts on a single occasion, mixing substances, needing large amounts to feel the effect.

Areas to explore: the substances used, a typical week, the occasions for heavy use, the contexts of use.

See also: AUDIT, ASSIST, CUDIT.

Loss of control and craving 8 / 16

Difficulty limiting use, cravings that are hard to contain, breaks that do not hold, and discomfort when the substance is unavailable.

Areas to explore: attempts to cut down or quit and what made them fail, the situations that trigger cravings, signs of withdrawal.

See also: SDS.

Using for pleasure and social connection 6 / 16

Use linked to seeking intoxication or euphoria, going out, feeling at ease with others, and the influence of the people around the person.

Areas to explore: party settings, friends and family who use, what the person would be afraid of losing by cutting back (going out, friends, feeling at ease), other ways of having these moments.

Ambivalence and readiness to change 6 / 16

Concern about one's use, weighing what it brings and what it costs, hesitation between changing and continuing, doubt about one's ability to succeed.

Areas to explore: what the person gains and loses by using and by changing, their goal (cutting down or quitting), past attempts, what would help them move forward.

See also: URICA.

Using to manage emotions 4 / 16

Use that serves to soothe stress, sadness, or loneliness, to get to sleep, or to keep painful thoughts and memories at bay.

Areas to explore: what the person feels before using, what the substance gives them in the moment, underlying anxiety, depressed mood, sleep problems, or trauma.

See also: GAD-7, PHQ-9, PCL-5.

No validated clinical or psychometric cutoffs have been established for this test yet. The results should therefore be considered exploratory indicators, meant to support the clinical interview, not diagnostic findings.

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 Emily T. - Online CBT Psychologist