Alcohol Awareness for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) Effects:

- About 16 million people in the US live with AUD
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 6% of deaths worldwide are attributable to alcohol consumption
- Individuals with Serious Mental Illness are 4 times as likely than the general population to have Alcohol Use Disorder
- Twice as many men than women
- Estimated 623,000 adolescents aged 12-17

Many medications used by people with mental illness can be dangerous, and even lethal when mixed with alcohol.

- **Anticonvulsants:**
  - Phenytoin (Dilantin)
  - Increased dizziness

- **Antidepressants:**
  - SSRIs
  - Increased sedation, intensifies depressive symptoms
  - Sertraline (Zoloft)

- **Antipsychotics:**
  - Olanzapine (Zyprexa)
  - Lowers blood pressure

- **Cholesterol Statins:**
  - Atorvastatin (Lipitor)
  - Increased risk for liver damage

- **Blood pressure:**
  - ACE inhibitors
  - Lowers blood pressure, dizziness, fainting

- **Diabetic medications:**
  - Metformin (Glucaphage)
  - Lowers blood pressure

- **Mood Stabilizers:**
  - Depakote, Lithium, etc.
  - Dizziness, drowsiness, impaired motor skills, increased risk for liver damage, increased risk for depression

- **Antianxiety:**
  - Alprazolam, Benzodiazepines (Xanax)
  - Dizziness, drowsiness, impaired motor skills, memory trouble, overdose

- **Pain Medications:**
  - Over the Counter
    - Ibuprofen (Advil), Naproxen (Aleve), Aspirin, Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - Upset stomach, bleeding and ulcers, increased risk for liver damage (acetaminophen), rapid heartbeat

If you are worried about the side effects of your medicines, please talk to your doctor.

Of the 22,000 deaths involving prescription medications, 30% involved benzodiazepines, such as Xanax.
Not All Alcohol Serving Sizes are the Same. Alcohol Volume Varies by type of Beverage.

Why Use the CAGE?

The CAGE is a tool used internationally to assess alcohol use in adults. The CAGE questions can be used in most clinical settings, and are generally more informative when asked in conversations about overall health and wellness, rather than in talking directly about alcohol use. They are not intended to diagnose alcohol use disorders, but to examine whether there are alcohol risk behaviors. CAGE questions focus the discussion toward the behavioral impact of the drinking rather than toward the number of drinks or frequency of drinking.


CAGE Questionnaire

1. Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No

2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No

3. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No

4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover (eye-opener)?
   ___ Yes
   ___ No

Scoring:
Item responses on the CAGE are scored 0 or 1, with a higher score an indication of alcohol problems. A total score of 2 or greater is considered clinically significant.

Total: ____

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