

## Screening and Brief Interventions for Alcoholism

### SCREENING:

At each visit, ask about alcohol use:

- How many drinks per week?
- Maximum drinks per occasion in past month?

### Use CAGE questions to probe for alcohol problems:

- Have you ever tried to **C**ut down on your drinking?
- Do you get **A**nnoyed when people talk about your drinking?
- Do you feel **G**uilty about your drinking?
- Have you ever had an **E**ye-opener? (A drink first thing in the morning)

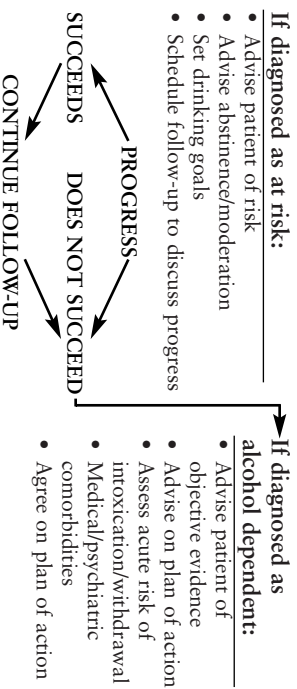
### SCREEN IS POSITIVE IF:

- Consumption is > 14 drinks/week or > 4 drinks/occasion (men)
- Consumption is > 7 drinks/week or > 3 drinks/occasion (women)
- CAGE score > 1

### THEN ASSESS FOR:

- *Medical problems:* e.g., blackouts; depression; hypertension; trauma; abdominal pain; liver dysfunction; sexual problems; sleep disorders
- *Laboratory:* elevated GGTP or other LFTs; elevated MCV; +BAC
- *Behavioral problems:* work; family; school; accidents
- *Alcohol dependence:* 3+ on CAGE or one or more of: compulsion to drink; impaired control; withdrawal symptoms; increased tolerance; relief drinking

## GIVE SPECIFIC FEEDBACK TO PATIENT, THEN ADVISE — FIRM BUT EMPATHIC:



### PLAN OF ACTION:

- Refer the patient to an addiction medicine specialist for formal assessment and development of a treatment plan.
- Educate the patient, significant other/s, and family about the nature of addiction, the effectiveness of treatment, and the prospects for recovery.
- Remain engaged in care of the patient by addressing medical issues as needed and supporting the patient's commitment to the treatment process.

*For more information, see Principles of Addiction Medicine,  
Third Edition. (AW Graham, TK Schultz, M Mayo-Smith & RK  
Ries), published by ASAM, 2002.*

## American Society of Addiction Medicine



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