

2015

A Helpful Guide to Alcohol & Drug Evaluation

The purpose of this Guide is to be a reliable resource and provide answers to those who may be concerned that they, or someone they love, have a problem with alcohol or drug use



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A Helpful Guide to Alcohol and Drug Evaluation

1. Introduction

It is our goal to be a reliable resource and provide answers to those who may be concerned that they have (or someone they know has) a problem with alcohol or drug use. In this guide, you will find useful information to help you better understand:

- what exactly is a drug or alcohol evaluation
- who needs this type of assessment
- the reasons someone may seek an evaluation
- the differences between an alcohol and drug assessment
- where to find sources that provide the evaluations
- and what comes after a drug or alcohol evaluation

Many people who have an alcohol or drug use disorder do not seek help, often because they do not realize they have a problem. So how do you know if YOU do? One alcoholic answered this question for himself when he realized it wasn't about how much he was actually drinking, **but about how much he constantly thought about drinking.**

It was at that point he decided to ask for an alcohol evaluation and acknowledged he couldn't stop drinking without help.



2. What is an alcohol or drug evaluation?

Simply stated, an [evaluation for drugs or alcohol](#) is an assessment to determine if your use of alcohol or drugs is presenting a problem in your life, and if so, what kind of assistance would be the most beneficial. If it is concluded that an addiction or substance dependence is present, it is necessary to understand the extent of the problem, and develop an appropriate plan of action.

You may request an evaluation from a trained professional – in person, or may find one online as a self-test. Typically, assessments given in an authorized facility last between one and two hours.

The purpose is for the clinician to gather information and determine the impact alcohol and/or drugs have on your life.

You will usually be asked to fill out a questionnaire about your current substance use, any history of treatment, possible symptoms of substance abuse you may have, and the effects drug or alcohol use has played on your behavior and decision making. During the interview process, you may also be asked about your: family background, social history, employment history, medical history, and mental health history.



Besides the information collected from you, the clinician may also contact your family members and or those people close to you in order to pull together any additional relevant details that can help him/her make a diagnosis. Finally, the clinician may decide to conduct a physical exam and lab work, such as a urine analysis to test the current presence of alcohol, or any other illicit drugs.

If you would prefer to do a self-evaluation in a setting you are most comfortable, there are several sources you can find online. Some self-assessment tests are lengthy and require submitting your contact information in order to get results. Some can actually evaluate for both drugs and alcohol within the same test, and some are written with questions relating to alcoholism or drug abuse specifically.

3. Who needs an alcohol or drug evaluation?

Some people may be concerned that their use of alcohol or drugs has grown out of control and decide they want an assessment in order to find answers. Others may seek a professional assessment for alcohol or drugs if they have had a violation of the law, or an incident in the workplace, at school, or at home that involved the presence of drugs or alcohol.

Even though a violation by itself may not be a sign of an actual substance abuse problem, the court, an employer, or school administration will often want a professional alcohol evaluation or a drug and alcohol assessment as part of their investigation process. [Follow this link](#) for a more specific list of reasons someone may be referred for an evaluation and an explanation of possible outcomes.

4. What other signs/symptoms of alcohol & drug abuse can indicate a need for an evaluation?

There are various common signs and symptoms of alcohol or drug abuse. If you are aware of some of these signs and symptoms, it may help you to recognize the problem within yourself or someone you care about. That in turn, could be fundamental in getting help before the abuse becomes a full-blown addiction. Even though alcohol or drug abuse means that someone is not yet addicted, their substance use is still self-destructive, can have a huge, negative impact on their lives and those close to them, and they can be dangerous to themselves and others.

Signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Repeatedly neglecting responsibilities at home, work, or school because of drinking or drug use.
- Using alcohol or drugs in situations where it is physically dangerous; such as drinking and driving while operating machinery or mixing it with prescription medications.
- Experiencing repeated legal problems on account of substance abuse.
- Continuing alcohol or drug use even when it is causing problems within personal relationships.
- Drinking or taking drugs to relax, de-stress, or be intimate.
- Changes in personality or behavior and complaints from peers, family, co-workers because of it.

If you or a loved one exhibits any of these signs, a drug and/or alcohol evaluation can be extremely useful in discovering the severity of the problem, and finding a recommendation for treatment.

5. Why does someone receive a court-ordered drug or alcohol evaluation?

If you are arrested for an alcohol related offense (such as Driving under the influence - DUI), or on drug related charges (such as illegal drug possession), you will likely be ordered by a judge to participate in a comprehensive drug and alcohol evaluation. In this scenario, the legal officials will use the information to determine the outcome of your criminal case, and what requirements the court will place on you during and at the end of your case.

If the court orders an alcohol and drug assessment, you will be told by the court, or the Corrections department (or perhaps your attorney) where you need to go for the assessment. Bear in mind, evaluation professionals will need:

1. A copy of your driving record
2. A copy of your criminal history
3. A copy of the arresting officer's report.

Upon completing the evaluation, the clinician will produce a written report which will give you a clear picture of your history of alcohol or drug use, identify the underlying issues (such as physical or mental health issues which may have initiated the reliance on alcohol or drugs), and then, why it persists. For a list of potential disorders that may be present with substance abuse, and how the court-ordered report may be used, [follow this link](#).

If you have a co-occurring disorder, and receive treatment for the addiction only, recovery may not be the most effective, as the disorder can hinder the process and aggravate health issues related to the addiction. One way to avoid this is to be forthcoming in the interview process of the drug and alcohol assessment.



6. What is the difference between drug & alcohol evaluations?

How is an evaluation for drug use different from an alcohol evaluation?

While both are used to help assess the existence and/or severity of a problem with controlled substances, the assessment for drug use is more complex.

Why might that be? Alcohol, if obtained and consumed over the age of 21, is legal in the U.S., and widely accepted as an enhancement to social settings. It is also easily available. A majority of the population actually expects that most young adults will at least try alcohol upon turning the legal drinking age. How much you consume, how much control you demonstrate while consuming, and whether you decide to abide by the rules of alcohol consumption, will determine whether or not you may eventually have a problem with it.

Drug use is different.

Possession and use of illicit drugs is not socially accepted, and is illegal. We educate children in schools about the harmful effects of drug abuse and try to prevent them from ever getting involved with drugs. We have “Just Say No” campaigns, and a “war on drugs” all to minimize the numbers of people who may become dependent upon them or become involved in criminal activity involving drugs. Therefore, the test questions vary somewhat as well.

To be clear, “**drug abuse**” refers to: (1) the use of prescribed or “over-the-counter” drugs in excess of the directions, and (2) the consumption of any non-medical use of drugs.

The various classes of drugs may include: cannabis (also known as marijuana, hash), solvents, tranquilizers (such as Valium), barbiturates, cocaine, stimulants (as in Speed), hallucinogens (such as LSD), or narcotics, like heroin. Remember that the questions in this test do not include alcoholic beverages.



7. What are some of the different evaluations or screenings for drugs or alcohol?

The **Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST)** consists of 20 questions you or a loved one could ask. The top five are listed here. For a complete list, [please follow this link](#).

1. Have you used drugs other than those required for medicinal reasons?
2. Have you abused prescription drugs?
3. Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?
4. Can you get through the week without using drugs?
5. Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?

If you [take the entire test](#) you can submit your answers and receive test results. If you find that you hardly answered YES, remember that you obviously had some concern in order to take the time to answer the questions in the first place. Heed that inner guide, the warning you are giving yourself, to find help from those with the knowledge and experience who can provide you with important information about drug abuse and suggest how to keep you on a positive path.

There are also other more simplified self-assessments you can find online. One of them is called the **CAGE Test for Alcohol Addiction**. It is short and simple, yet surprisingly accurate if you answer the questions truthfully. It is a set of 4 YES/NO questions:

CAGE Test Questions:

1. Have you ever thought you should **C**ut down on your drinking?
2. Have you ever felt **A**nnoyed when people have commented on your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt **G**uilty or badly about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had an **E**ye opener first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

To score the CAGE test:

Record 1 point for each YES answer.

- If you scored 1, there is an 80% chance you're addicted to alcohol.
- If you scored 2, there is an 89% chance you're addicted to alcohol.
- If you scored 3, there is a 99% chance you're addicted to alcohol.
- If you scored 4, there is a 100% chance you're addicted to alcohol.

Two other common tests are the **Modified CAGE Test** for All Addictions, and the **AUDIT** (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test). You will find more information about these various types of assessments [here](#).

8. What comes after a drug or alcohol evaluation?

After the professional drug and alcohol evaluation, you have a better understanding where you or your loved one fits on the scale of use, abuse, or addiction. Based on the results, the clinician may recommend treatment (in-patient or out-patient), support groups, or individual groups.

Take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions of the professionals administering the assessment. They are trained and knowledgeable in the field of substance abuse and addiction, and will have useful contacts, resources, or education materials to help in determining your next course of action.

9. Author

Roy Moffitt is the Founder and Life Coach at Moffitt Wellness Retreat, a luxury addiction treatment center in beautiful Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Based on his own experience, he converted his Puerto Vallarta vacation home, Casa Patricia, into a powerful wellness haven, (proof of the power of total transformation). He was given a second chance, restoring his health, marriage, relationships and happiness and wanted to help others do the same.



Roy's calling is to dedicate his experience and resources to helping others accomplish what he has. He wants to help those that are troubled by addiction and want to find the way to a productive, healthy, and content life.

He frequently says: "It's as simple as this, do what I did and you too will get the same positive results!"

If you or a loved one is struggling with addiction or in need of a life-changing experience, please contact Roy personally at 1.713.907.5632 (U.S. phone) or visit [Moffitt Wellness Retreat](#) online.

10. Resources

To learn more about drug and alcohol evaluation, please follow the links to read these blogs:

1. [Drug and Alcohol Evaluation](#)

Learn the most common reasons for a drug and alcohol evaluation and what to do with the results of your evaluation.

2. [What is a Drug and Alcohol Evaluation?](#)

A drug and alcohol evaluation, also referred to as a substance abuse evaluation, is a complete review of your drug and/or alcohol usage and determines the appropriate treatment or intervention to be administered.

3. [Court Ordered Drug and Alcohol Evaluation](#)

This blog discuss what happens when you receive a Court Ordered Drug and Alcohol Evaluation and why they also assess for co-occurring disorders.

4. [Drug and Alcohol Test Answers](#)

When you are using and wondering if you should get help use this substance abuse self-test to determine if you need help.