

STEP 2: A BRIEF ASSESSMENT

The single question has provided a **“Positive Screen.”** The **“CAGE”** Screening Instrument will assist in further assessing the patient.

“CAGE” Screening Instrument

C Do you drink alcohol? (Refer to Brief Screen)

C1 Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking? Yes/No

C2 Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking? Yes/No

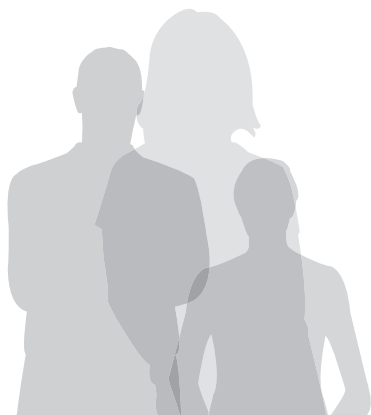
C3 Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking? Yes/No

C4 Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover? Yes/No

Positive + “yes” to one or more of C1 – C4: Ask C5

C5 Has this occurred during the past year? Yes/No

Please turn over. (more information on the back)



Assess to determine the appropriate action

- Look for **red flags** and **possible red flags** indicating that you should advise abstaining today.

IF YOUR PATIENT . . .

- Gave **3 or 4 yes** answers to CAGE questions, which indicates **probable alcohol dependence**,* or
- Is **pregnant or trying to conceive**, or
- Has a **contraindicated medication or medical condition**, such as liver dysfunction, or
- Has reported
 - **blackouts**
 - **repeated, failed attempts to cut down**

- Gave **1 or 2 yes** answers to the CAGE questions,* or
- Has a **family history** of alcohol problems, or
- Has reported **injuries related to drinking**, motor vehicle crashes, or driving while intoxicated, or
- Has possible **medical history indicators**, such as hypertension, trauma, depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, headaches, or sexual dysfunction, or
- Has possible **behavioral indicators**, such as problems with work, school, or family

- Answered **NO to all CAGE questions** and
- Shows **no evidence of dependence** or red flags other than exceeding screening drinking limits

THEN

Advise to **abstain**
go to **“Advise and Assist”**

Advise to **abstain or cut down** (according to professional judgment) go to **“Advise and Assist”**

Advise to **cut down**
Go to step 3 **“Advise and Assist”**

* This is a brief assessment; if you have the time and wish to pursue a more thorough assessment for alcohol abuse or dependence, see the diagnostic criteria and related questions in HELPING PATIENTS WITH ALCOHOL PROBLEMS available from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) (310) 443-3860 or www.niaaa.nih.gov