

CASE 1 – ALICE

Alice is a 25-year-old, single woman. She has had difficulty with depression but has been stable on her medication for the past 2 years. She is here for a medication refill. Otherwise, she is in excellent health.

Alice has had trouble with depression off and on, but for the past two years she has been fine on a steady dose of medication. She has been working as a receptionist at a local doctor's office since graduating from high school, and she is a highly valued employee.

It's difficult for Alice to make friends. She has always lived with her single mom, who is your best friend. For the past 2 months, she has been in a relationship for the first time – with a co-worker, Jim. She and Jim enjoy experimenting with drink recipes. She typically has 2 or 3 cocktails twice a week at his place. Each cocktail contains 2 or 3 shots, so she has at least 4 to 6 shots per night.

James has been very nice to pick up Alice and drive her home. Alice realizes that James probably shouldn't have driven a few times. But lately that's no longer a problem, as she is starting to stay overnight at his place.

Alice enjoys the buzz and the romance around drinking. However, she has felt guilty, because when she has been intoxicated, she hasn't taken the precautions she and her mom discussed to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Alice believes that James is too nice of a guy to have an infection, but she would be very distraught if she got pregnant. She is certainly not ready to have a child.

CASE 2 – BETTY

Betty is a 35-year-old woman. The police brought her to detox last night because she was very intoxicated and belligerent.

Betty and her husband, Bill, are construction workers. Betty and Bill like to work hard and party hard, and they have intentionally not had children. Their work is seasonal, and they enjoy taking extended vacations camping, hunting and fishing in the mountains.

Betty has enjoyed beer and whiskey since she was 16. She tried a variety of drugs but hasn't used any for at least 10 years. Typically, she and Bill drink on Friday and Saturday nights with friends at bars. Betty usually has 4 to 6 beers and 2 to 4 shots of whiskey. And she has 2 to 3 12-ounce beers during the week, but more on "thirsty Thursdays."

Betty has gotten into a few fights in bars with minor injuries requiring stitches. She was arrested only once. She had 2 DWIs when Bill was too drunk to drive home. She is much more worried about Bill's drinking than her own. He increasingly is unable to work on Mondays and Fridays, whereas Betty misses work only once a month or so. Occasionally Betty feels a bit shaky on Sunday mornings after wild Saturday nights. She has tried to set limits for herself of no more than 6 drinks but she tends to forget once she is partying. Occasionally she'll have a Bloody Mary on weekend mornings to help herself over a hangover. Quite a few of Betty's family members have had alcoholism, but Betty doesn't drink nearly as much as they did.

While Betty enjoys her party life, she has been thinking for a few months that things are getting out of hand. The hangovers – sometimes with vomiting – are awful. She doesn't have the energy she used to have, and she feels she's getting too old to keep her party lifestyle. Betty and Bill have been spending more, working less, and burning through a lot of savings.

CASE 3 – CARLA

Carla is a 35-year-old artist seeking help today for possible depression. She has been in a committed relationship with George for 2 years. George owns an art supply store. Carla has a studio in the back, helps with the store, and sells her art there.

Carla just got by in high school. She has held many odd jobs (waitressing, cleaning, store clerk) over the years, trying to make ends meet as she worked on doing and selling her paintings.

Last year, Carla's younger sister, Lacy, died in a motorcycle crash. Carla hasn't been the same since.

Carla started smoking pot at age 14. Since age 18, she has usually smoked a couple of joints 3 to 5 nights a week. Since Lacy died, she has been smoking up to 6 joints every day from morning to night. She hardly paints or helps in the store anymore.

For months, George has been expressing concern about her pot smoking. Lately he has been saying that something has to change. A month ago, when George first brought up his concerns, Carla tried to cut down but found she couldn't.

CASE 4 – ELANA

Elana is a 44-year-old, single, married mother with 3 daughters (ages 24, 22, and 17) and a long-time assistant chef at various restaurants. She is seeking help for anxiety. She has been extremely stressed for a year, when her oldest daughter, Maria, was diagnosed with lymphoma. Maria moved back in with Elana while Maria was getting chemo, and Elana has been caring ever since for Maria's two children – Allie, age 4, and Bonita, age 3. Maria died 6 months ago. Elana has been treated for depression with medication and counseling, but she is still more down than up. Nevertheless, she has been able to juggle work and the kids pretty well.

A few months ago, when Elana couldn't sleep, she took one of Maria's leftover pain pills – Vicodin. Since then Elana has taken Vicodin regularly for sleep and stress – usually 2 tablets after work and 2 tablets before bedtime. There was only one down side – Elana slept so soundly one night that she didn't hear when Bonita was sick until Allie woke her. Elana never drinks alcohol or use any other drugs.

In the past, Elana has had very little alcohol, because she doesn't like the taste, and because she was repulsed by her father and some of his brothers, who were alcoholics. She has never tried any illicit drugs.

CASE 5 – FRAN

Fran is a 30-year-old factory worker and single mother of two children, ages 5 and 2. She is here today for follow-up for her diabetes, which has been well controlled for several years.

Fran works on a factory line from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. She drops her kids off at school and daycare before work and picks them up after. Fran finds being a single, working mom is very stressful. Finances are very tight, as she lives in a nicer neighborhood than she can really afford. Her mom helps with the kids off and on, depending on how she and Fran are getting along. She occasionally helps when Fran is short on cash, as she insisted that Fran lives in a safer, more expensive neighborhood. Fran trades babysitting with friends and goes on occasional dates with men – mainly dancing – but avoids getting serious.

To unwind, Fran enjoys drinking and smoking pot – mainly with her girlfriends, but sometimes on dates. She enjoys wine coolers and cocktails. She usually has 4 to 6 standard drinks on Friday and Saturday nights, 2 to 3 Monday through Thursday, and none on Sundays. Once or twice a week, after the kids are in bed or when she's out, she will enjoy a joint or two.

Fran enjoys drinking and smoking pot for the relaxation, friendship, and laughter. One downside has been arguments with her mom over spending too much on alcohol and pot or being too hung over to get her kids breakfast or make it to work on time. Another downside has been that Fran's judgment has been clouded when she's been out with men. She went home with a man who turned out to be very scary, and she is not as careful as she knows she should be with condoms.

CASE 6 – JOE

Joe, a 36-year-old married man with two children, is here today for help with anxiety and trouble sleeping.

Joe quit school and left home at age 15, because he couldn't tolerate the mistreatment and occasional violence by his mother's boyfriends. For several years, he lived with older siblings and friends and had various odd jobs. For the past 8 years, he has worked for a man who owns several fast-food restaurants. For the past 5 years, he has been a store manager.

Joe was convicted several times for misdemeanors between ages 15 and 25. Usual offenses were for stealing and for alcohol-fueled violence. Ten years ago, Joe had court-mandated alcohol treatment. After that, he got very involved with his neighborhood church, and he remained sober for ten years. He married Joanne 8 years ago, and they have 2 children, ages 6 and 4. Last month, Joe caught Joanne in bed with another man. She has apologized profusely and wishes to work things out. Joe is not sure whether he can be with Joanne any more. He is living separately and remains extremely angry.

The night Joe found Joanne with another man, he immediately went to a bar and got drunk. Since then, Joe has been having 6 to 8 shots of whiskey after work, and up to 12 shots on days off. Three nights ago at a bar, he got into a fight and was arrested for disorderly conduct. He is out on bail. He has been very agitated, unable to sleep and unable to work.

CASE 7 – OPAL

Opal is an 19-year-old, pregnant woman is seeking help because of difficulty sleeping after a recent break-up.

Opal had been in a relationship with Decker for a full year. They both recently graduated from high school, and they are both living in apartments with friends. They always had lots of fun, but their relationship became strained after Opal realized 2 weeks ago that she was 6 weeks pregnant, and a doctor confirmed this.

Since then, Opal has had lots of ups and downs. After she told Decker about being pregnant, he initially clammed up and seemed to avoid her for several days. Meanwhile she alternated between happiness at the prospect of having her own baby, fear that she could not possibly be a good mother, and sadness that she might have to give up a lot of fun and freedom. A few days later, Decker came around and said he would support her in whatever decision she'd make about keeping the baby, putting the baby up for adoption or abortion. To Opal, that seemed like Decker really didn't care. After several days of non-stop arguments, Decker said he couldn't deal with her, and broke up with her. Opal is still not sure what she'll do about her pregnancy.

Opal did fairly well in school, usually getting Bs or Cs. She is a competent waitress and made good money this summer. She planned to work for a year and then consider college or trade school, but with a possible baby coming, now she's not sure. She has a close-knit group of girlfriends who have enjoyed drinking and smoking pot together, and they have been a good support for her.

Before knowing she was pregnant, she typically drank 4 or 5 times a week between 3 and 6 twelve-ounce wine coolers per evening, and she smoked a joint or two once or twice a week. She believes she got pregnant one night when she was drunk and forget to insist that Decker use condoms. Initially after learning of her pregnancy, she quit all drinking and drug use, knowing it might be bad for the baby. Since Decker broke up with her a week ago, she has been very sad and agitated. On each of 3 nights since then, she needed 3 wine coolers to help her fall asleep. She rationalizes that she has to get decent sleep or it can't possibly be healthy for the baby.

Opal is not in contact with her father. Her mother, who raised her and lives nearby, has great difficulty with bipolar disease and alcoholism. Opal has decided for now not to tell her mother about her pregnancy, as her mother would not be supportive, and the news might make her unstable.

CASE 8 – Peppy

Peppy is a fun-loving, vivacious 60-year-old single woman who requests to have her sutures removed from a facial laceration.

Five days ago, Peppy was in a bar fight. At the bar, she was “making out” with Tom, a man she met there an hour before. She did not realize that Tom was married. Someone at the bar apparently called Tom’s wife, who immediately came to the bar and started beating up Peppy. Peppy had a facial laceration stitched up in the emergency room. Her alcohol level was .24. She did not seem safe to go home alone, so she was brought to detox. She was released from detox 3 days ago and has been fine since then.

Peppy works as an office manager and dispatcher for a small short-haul trucking company. She lives alone. She has 3 adult children and 4 grandchildren who live within 15 minutes. Her children’s father, LaMont, and Peppy never married. When the children were young, LaMont died in a construction work-related accident. Peppy told him he shouldn’t work that day because he was too hung over, but LaMont didn’t listen.

Peppy is very social and has lots of friends. She has had lots of boyfriends off and on who have proposed to her, but none of them have ever measured up to LaMont, and she sees no reason to marry.

Peppy has always enjoyed her booze, usually Jack Daniels. She usually goes out on Friday and Saturday nights. When she has a boyfriend, she enjoys dancing. When she is unattached, she hangs out with her woman friends. At home twice a week she enjoys a shot or two while watching her favorite TV shows. When she is out on Friday and Saturday nights, she typically has 4 to 6 shots per night. Last night she had more than usual, because someone at the bar won \$1000 in the lottery and was buying rounds. She’s not sure exactly how much she had.

Peppy is healthy and full of energy. Her blood pressure is under good control with a single daily pill – her only medicine. She has not had other injuries. She has never been in trouble with the law.

CASE 9 – Quinn

Quinn is a 36-year-old, married farmer whose wife, Marie, is concerned about his increasing drinking and moodiness.

He and Marie have been married for 15 years. They have 3 children, ages 12, 10 and 7. They live and work on a farm that Léon's family has owned since the 1600s.

For many years, Quinn has enjoyed 2 five-ounce glasses of wine or 2 twelve-ounce glasses of beer with dinner most nights and maybe 4 glasses on Saturday nights. A few months ago, Quinn started getting moody and experiencing difficulty sleeping for unclear reasons. He has difficulty falling asleep, and he frequently wakes up between 2am and 3am for no apparent reason, leaving him very tired and grumpy. He has increased his drinking to 3 to 4 glasses per night, which helps him fall asleep more easily, but he still tends to wake up early. He has not had any stresses or negative consequences of his drinking. He has withdrawn from social activities among his extended family and long-time family friends, saying that he's just too tired. His appetite is lower than usual, and he has lost ten pounds without trying. He has also been extremely frustrated that various projects are taking him much longer than they should.

Otherwise, work stresses have been no worse than usual. Crop yields and revenue have been okay. His relationships with Marie and their children had been fine until a few months ago but have since become more strained. Although Quinn has been much quicker to lose his temper and yell a lot, there has never been any violence.

Quinn is otherwise in excellent health.