

Screening and Brief Intervention

Joan is a 36-year-old single mom with two children, ages 10 and 14. Joan works two jobs. One is full time one is part time. She shares custody of the children and their father has regular visitation with them every other weekend.

Joan presents at the neighborhood health clinic for a regular health exam. She is complaining of headaches, sleep difficulty. She has trouble falling asleep and wakes up frequently, particularly on the weekends. She says she feels tired all the time.

Joan admits that a couple of times a month, usually on the weekends when the kids are with their father, she goes out to the club with friends. She usually has 3-4 mixed drinks over the course of the evening. Once in a while she says she goes over her limit and comes home intoxicated. She said this has happened maybe twice in the last 6 months. She feels bad when this happens but says the drinking and socializing help her to “relax” once in a while and stop worrying about all her responsibilities.

She is proud to say she never misses work and she does not ever keep alcohol in the house since she does not want to get in the habit of drinking to relieve tension at home. Her Mom initially expressed some concern that she might be developing a bad routine drinking every other weekend and feared this might be the start of what could become a problem, but in the past year she has not said anything again because Joan’s pattern of drinking as remained fairly steady.

Some Concerns for the Advice/BI Session:

- ◆ Present the test results – discuss the score and what it means in relationship to the continuum of alcohol use. You can use the scoring grid or just describe the test scores; you can also use the drinking pyramid. Ask what she thinks about the score.
- ◆ Drinking to handle anxiety and stress – what else is she doing to stress reduce?
- ◆ Discuss how alcohol can interfere with sleep issues.
- ◆ What is in the mixed drinks? Discuss a standard drink so she can accurately know what she is consuming. (Use the standard drink chart)
- ◆ Operating a vehicle when drinking – who is driving? Could mention times when it is not safe to drink at all
- ◆ Talk about the binge pattern – 4 or more for females
- ◆ Affirm her caution about not developing a routine of drinking at home to stress reduce and her decision to contain drinking to when her children are not with her.