

Alcohol Use and Relationship Impact Checklist

A clinical conversation guide for individuals and couples

Purpose: This checklist helps organize a conversation about alcohol use and its effects on a couple relationship. It is not a validated diagnostic instrument and does not establish an alcohol-related diagnosis.

Instructions

Complete the checklist independently, based on the past three months. If both partners participate, each may complete a separate copy and then compare patterns rather than argue about a single total score.

	0	1	2	3	4					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always					
#	Statement					0	1	2	3	4
1	I drink more alcohol, or drink for longer, than I originally intended.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I have tried to reduce my drinking but have had difficulty maintaining the change.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I use alcohol to manage stress, loneliness, anger, boredom, anxiety, or sleep.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Drinking has interfered with responsibilities, plans, health, or activities that matter to me.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I have needed more alcohol than before to obtain the effect I want.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I have continued drinking despite recognizing unwanted consequences.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	My partner and I disagree about how much, how often, or under what circumstances I drink.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I have minimized, hidden, or been less than fully honest about my alcohol use.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	Alcohol has contributed to emotional distance, reduced affection, or diminished sexual intimacy.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Discussions about alcohol tend to become circular, defensive, hostile, or avoidant.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	My partner has taken on additional responsibilities or monitored my behavior because of my drinking.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	Alcohol-related incidents have weakened trust, reliability, or emotional safety in our relationship.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Alcohol has been involved in frightening arguments, threats, aggression, unsafe driving, or other unsafe behavior.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Children, relatives, friends, employers, or professionals have expressed concern about my drinking.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	I feel ambivalent: part of me wants change, while another part wants drinking to remain as it is.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	I am willing to discuss one specific change or next step with my partner or a qualified professional.					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Clinical Review

Use the responses to locate patterns, differences in perspective, and the next clinically appropriate conversation.

1. Review by domain

Domain	Items	Clinical focus
Alcohol-use pattern	Items 1-6	Look for escalation, loss of control, coping functions, interference, tolerance, and continued use despite consequences.
Relationship impact	Items 7-12	Look for conflict, secrecy, emotional distance, unequal responsibility, monitoring, and damage to trust or safety.
Change and safety	Items 13-16	Address immediate safety first; then explore outside concern, ambivalence, and readiness for one concrete next step.

2. Interpretation

This checklist intentionally has no diagnostic cutoff. A total score can obscure the most important information. Review which individual items were marked Often or Almost always, where partners differ, and whether the pattern indicates impairment, concealment, coercion, aggression, unsafe driving, withdrawal risk, or a need for specialized assessment.

Safety note: Any endorsement of Item 13 warrants direct assessment of immediate danger. If there is violence, threat of violence, impaired driving, severe intoxication, possible withdrawal, or risk to children, prioritize safety planning and appropriate emergency, medical, or protective resources over routine couple discussion.

3. Discussion prompts

- Which response concerns you most, and why?
- What function does alcohol serve when its use is most difficult to change?
- Which effects are experienced primarily by the person drinking, and which are carried by the partner or family?
- Where do the partners' ratings differ most? What might each perspective be noticing?
- What has already helped, even briefly, to reduce use or relational harm?
- What is one observable change that would begin to restore reliability or safety?

4. Notes and next step

Primary concern:

Difference in partners' perspectives:

Immediate safety consideration:

Agreed next step:

Follow-up date: