

## **Assignment Scenarios: Treatment Approach**

### **Scenario #1**

Amy is a 53-year-old married Caucasian female with two children, ages 15 and 17. Amy is being assessed for her alcoholism. She reports drinking socially since college where she met her husband. She has a solid career as a top agent in her field, and she and her husband have provided a financially secure home for their family. She has not had quality time with her husband due to their rotating work schedules and numerous kids' activities.

Amy reports drinking with co-workers several times a week. She says that it is "part of the job." She is finding it increasingly difficult to keep up her schedule at work, parenting, domestic chores, and having time for life outside of work and parenting.

Amy continues to drink each evening after work and often wakes up on the couch in the middle of the night after passing out. She finds herself frequently bickering with her husband and believes her children do not want to spend time with her anymore. Each morning it is more difficult to get up and get ready for work.

Amy also reports struggling with friendships, especially with women. She reports not having anyone to confide in or feel supported by. Her mother frequently tells her to "pray" and it makes her angry and more resentful. Her childhood was challenging and has left her angry at the concept of a "God." Wine has become her best friend and way to cope with the struggles at work, home, and within. She reports feeling trapped and believes it will not get better.

### **Scenario #2**

Bill is a 25-year-old single African American male presenting for an assessment for driving under the influence and possession of cocaine. He was pulled over while speeding and the police officer smelled alcohol on his breath. The client was defensive and was subsequently arrested for attempting to flee from the scene. Cocaine was later found in his car. He was booked in the county jail for driving under the influence, possession of cocaine, and fleeing the scene of a crime.

Bill's father left when he was a child. Bill was the oldest of four children and was given much of the responsibility to care for his siblings while his mother worked. He was also a witness to domestic abuse by his father. He was often scared for his life when his parents fought. Bill reports being unable to trust adult men since his father left.

Bill began to drink and smoke marijuana in high school. Consequently, he was arrested as a minor for possession of marijuana during high school. Bill had been enrolled in firefighter school until he tested positive for cocaine and was kicked out of the program. He reports having over ten jobs in the last seven months, always having a story for why his boss "did not like him." He was offered a chance to sell cocaine and make "quick and easy" money. Because he hadn't been successful finding a job, he agreed to do it, but only for a month to make some money and then he would quit. That was two years ago.

Bill feels obligated to support his mother and siblings and gives his mother most of his money from dealing drugs. He is angry he has to support his family and he partially blames his mother for feeling forced to sell drugs and now being addicted to cocaine. "I did not expect to also get addicted to cocaine. I was just gonna sell it for money. I usually only drink and smoke marijuana. So now I have no bail money, nowhere to stay since my mother kicked me out, no career, and now no car. I had a promising life at one point...."

### **Scenario #3**

Anna is a 17-year-old Latina female who is the middle child of three siblings, 13, 17, and 19. Anna lives in a very patriarchal religious family system where her father makes all the decisions for the house, her mother, and her two brothers. At an early age, the client experienced sexual trauma by the abuse of her uncle. The sexual abuse occurred from the age of six until she was nine years old. She tried to tell her father and he slapped her, called her a "slut," and told her to never speak of such topics again. Her mother said she supported her but would not stand up to her father and get her the help she needed.

Anna's father has stated that "no one in this family goes to counseling!" Anna watched her mother being physically and emotionally abused by her father. Her mother refused to get a divorce because it was against their religious beliefs.

Anna learned a distorted view of how women should be treated by watching her mother suffer as a victim of her father. She reports being alienated from her family and snuck out of the house frequently and also stayed after school as long as she could every day. At the age of 12, Anna began having sex with her 16-year-old boyfriend and she started drinking every weekend.

Anna started bringing vodka to school in water bottles. She found if she drank at school and shared with friends she was in the "cool crowd." She did not get any healthy attention from the adults in her life and was looking for connection in any way she could find it.

Anna reported that she didn't always want to drink or do drugs, but didn't want to be viewed as a "baby." She is now in 12th grade, and was caught drinking and smoking marijuana at her high school by the school resource officer for the fourth time this school year. She was arrested and brought to juvenile detention. She is terrified of her father's reaction and response.

### **Scenario #4**

Joe is a 62-year-old homosexual white male being assessed for alcohol dependence after being admitted for detox at the local treatment center. He reports a long history of drinking, which began when he was 16 years old. He has a career as a professor of biology at the college in his town, can support a nice lifestyle, and has a few close friends. He did not "announce" he was homosexual officially until both of his parents passed away when he was 50 years old. Joe was an only child from a religious small town—growing up in an era that had no tolerance and compassion for different types of families. His family system also condemned lifestyles different than theirs and his parents never understood why he was "single."

Joe had a secret life partner from the age of 25 to 45. His life partner died from AIDS in the mid-80s before there were successful anti-viral medications and other resources. He had to lead a private, secluded life and had to grieve the death of his life partner in silence because no one knew he was gay due to his fear of prejudice from his upbringing. Joe led a very lonely life, not being able to be himself at work or with his family due to fear of ridicule and bias.

Joe's alcohol abuse increased significantly after the death of his life partner and his parents a few years later. He reports drinking alone every evening until he passes out watching television. He no longer participates in activities in his department at the college or with the few friends he has. He reports going to work, drinking all night, passing out, and doing it all over again the next day. Joe does not believe he has much left to live for. He reports being lonely and has lived through everything he wants to experience. He is seeking treatment because he states "if I have to live, I don't want to feel this bad."