

Chapter 3—Screening and Assessment of Co-Occurring Disorders

(For Counselors, Other Treatment/Service Providers, Supervisors, and Administrators)

Key Points

Screening and assessment are imperative to identifying and treating clients with co-occurring disorders (CODs) in a manner that is timely, effective, and tailored to all of their needs. The assessment process helps fulfill a critical need, as most people with CODs receive either treatment for only one disorder or no treatment at all.

Most counseling professionals can initiate the screening process, but understanding why, who, and when to screen and which validated tools to use are the keys to success.

The assessment process is a multifactor, biopsychosocial approach to determining which symptoms and diagnoses might be present and how to tailor decisions about treatment and follow-up care based on assessment results.

The 12 steps of assessment are designed to foster a thorough investigation of pertinent biopsychosocial factors contributing to, exacerbating, and mitigating the client's current symptomatology and functional status. At its core is the client's chronological history of past symptoms of substance use disorders (SUDs) or mental illness, as well as diagnosis, treatment, and impairment related to these issues. Counselors should get a detailed description of current strengths, supports, limitations, skill deficits, and cultural barriers. Identification of clients' stage of change and readiness to engage in services will inform treatment planning and optimize adherence and outcomes.

A serious treatment gap exists between the mental disorder and addiction needs of people with CODs and the number of people who actually receive services. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, of the 9.1 million U.S. adults ages 18 and older who had CODs in the past year, more than 90 percent did not receive treatment for both disorders, and approximately 49 percent received no treatment at all (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2019). Underlying these statistics is the failure of addiction and mental health professionals to adequately recognize CODs.

Screening and assessment are critical components of establishing diagnosis and getting people on the right path to treatment or other needed services. This chapter offers guidance to help addiction counselors understand the purpose and process for effective screening and assessment of clients for possible CODs. It has three parts:

1. An overview of the basic screening and assessment approach that should be a part of any program for clients with CODs
2. An outline of the 12 steps to an ideal complete screening and assessment, including some instruments that can be used in assessing CODs (see Appendix C for select screening tools)
3. A discussion of key considerations in treatment matching

Ideally, information needs to be collected continually and assessments revised and monitored as the client moves through recovery. A comprehensive assessment, as described in the main section of this chapter, leads to improved treatment planning, and it is the intent of this chapter to provide a model of

the optimal process of evaluation for clients with CODs and to encourage the field to move toward this ideal. Nonetheless, the panel recognizes that not all agencies and providers have the resources to conduct immediate and thorough screenings. Therefore, the chapter provides a description of the initial screening and the basic or minimal assessment of CODs necessary for the initial treatment planning.

Note that medical problems (including physical disability and sexually transmitted diseases), cultural topics, gender-specific and sexual orientation matters, and legal concerns always must be addressed, whether basic or more comprehensive assessment is performed. The consensus panel assumes that appropriate procedures are in place to address these and other important areas that must be included in treatment planning. However, the focus of this chapter, in keeping with the purpose of this Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP), is on screening and assessment related to CODs.

Screening and Basic Assessment for CODs

This section provides an overview of the screening and basic assessment process for CODs. A basic assessment covers the key information required for treatment matching and treatment planning. Specifically, the basic assessment offers a structure with which to obtain:

- Demographic and historical information; established or probable diagnoses and associated impairments.
- General strengths and problem areas.
- Stage of change or level of service needed for both substance misuse and mental illness.
- Preliminary determination of the severity of CODs as a guide to final level of care determination.

In carrying out these processes, counselors should understand the limitations of their licensure or certification authority to diagnose or assess mental disorders. Generally, however, collecting screening and assessment information is a legitimate and legal activity even for unlicensed providers, provided that they do not use diagnostic labels as conclusions or opinions about the client. Information gathered in this way is needed to ensure the client is placed in the most appropriate treatment setting (see the section “Step 5: Determine the Level of Care”) and to assist in providing mental disorder and addiction care that addresses each disorder.

In addition, there are a number of circumstances that can affect validity and test responses that may not be obvious to the beginning counselor, such as the manner in which instructions are given to the client, the setting where the screening or assessment takes place, privacy (or the lack thereof), and trust and rapport between the client and counselor. Throughout the process it is important to be sensitive to cultural context and to the different presentations of both SUDs and mental disorders that may occur in various cultures (see Chapter 5 of this TIP for more information about culturally sensitive care for clients with CODs). Detailed discussions of these important screening/assessment and cultural matters are beyond the scope of this TIP. For more information on screening and assessment for CODs, see *Screening and Assessment of Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System* (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2015b). For information on cultural topics, see TIP 59, *Improving Cultural Competence* (SAMHSA, 2014a).

Advice to the Counselor: Dos and Don'ts of Assessment for CODs

- **Do** keep in mind that assessment is about getting to know a person with complex and individual needs. Do not rely on tools alone for a comprehensive assessment.
- **Do** always make every effort to contact all involved parties, including family members, people who have treated the client previously, and probation officers, as quickly as possible in the assessment process. (These other sources of information will henceforth be referred to as collaterals.)
- **Don't** allow preconceptions about addiction to interfere with learning about what the client really needs. CODs are as likely to be underrecognized as overrecognized. Assume initially that an established diagnosis and treatment regimen for mental illness is correct, and advise clients to continue with those recommendations until careful reevaluation has taken place.
- **Do** become familiar with the diagnostic criteria for common mental disorders, including serious mental illness (SMI) (e.g., bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, other psychotic disorders). Also become familiar with the names and indications of common psychiatric medications and with the criteria in your own state for determining who is a mental disorder priority client. Know the process for referring clients for mental illness case management services or for collaborating with mental health services providers.
- **Don't** assume there is one correct treatment approach or program for any type of COD. The purpose of assessment is to collect information on multiple variables, enabling individualized treatment matching. Assess stage of change for each problem and clients' level of ability to follow treatment recommendations.
- **Do** get familiar with the specific role your program plays in delivering services related to CODs in the wider context of the system of care. This allows you to have a clearer idea of what clients your program will best serve and helps you to facilitate access to other settings for clients who might be better served elsewhere.
- **Don't** be afraid to admit when you don't know, either to the client or yourself. If you do not understand what is going on with a client, acknowledge that to the client, indicate that you will work with the client to find the answers, and then ask for help. Identify at least one supervisor who is knowledgeable about CODs as a resource for asking questions.
- Most important, **do** remember that empathy and hope are the most valuable components of your work with a client. When in doubt about how to manage a client with COD, stay connected, be empathic and hopeful, and work with the client and the treatment team to try to figure out the best approach over time.

Screening

Screening is a formal process of testing to determine whether a client does or does not warrant further attention at the current time in regard to a particular disorder and, in this context, the possibility of a co-occurring SUD or mental disorder. The screening process for CODs seeks to answer a “yes” or “no” question: Does the substance misuse (or mental health) client being screened show signs of a possible mental (or substance misuse) problem?

Although both screening and assessment are ways of gathering information about the client in order to better treat him or her, assessment differs from screening in that screening is a process for evaluating the possible presence of a particular problem whereas assessment is a process for defining the nature of that problem and developing specific treatment recommendations for addressing the problem. Thus, assessment is a more thorough and comprehensive process than screening.

The consensus panel recommends SUD treatment and mental health counselors screen all clients presenting for SUD treatment, mental health services, or both for past and present substance misuse and mental disorders routinely—at least annually. They should also screen clients who report experiencing or otherwise show signs or symptoms of an SUD or a mental disorder.

If properly designed, counselors can conduct screening processes using their basic counseling skills. All counselors can be trained to screen for COD. There are seldom any legal or professional restraints on who can be trained to conduct a screening. Counselors should work with their program administrators to determine how often to screen, which tools to use, and who will perform the screening.

Advice to the Counselor: Know the Basics of Screening

- **What is screening?** Screening is a simple process of determining whether more indepth assessment is needed, often consisting of asking the client basic “yes” or “no” questions.
- **Who should conduct screening?** Nearly any counselor can screen. Generally, no special training is required.
- **When does screening take place?** The consensus panel recommends all SUD treatment clients and mental disorder treatment clients be screened for CODs at least annually. Screening is also needed when clients report or exhibit symptoms suggesting another disorder may be present.
- **Where does screening occur?** Screening can happen anywhere that services are offered.
- **Why screen?** Screening is a necessary first step to ensure clients receive the right diagnosis and treatment.
- **How should screening be performed?** A variety of easy-to-administer screening tools are available and are located or linked to throughout this chapter as well as in Appendix C.

The purpose of screening is not necessarily to identify what kind of problem the person might have or how serious it might be. Rather, it determines whether or not further assessment is warranted.

Screening processes always should define a protocol for determining which clients screen positive and for ensuring that those clients receive a thorough assessment. That is, a professionally designed screening process establishes precisely how any screening tools or questions are to be scored and indicates what constitutes scoring positive for a particular possible problem (often called “establishing cutoff scores”). The screening protocol details exactly what takes place after a client scores in the positive range and provides the necessary standard forms to be used to document both the results of all later assessments and that each staff member has carried out his or her responsibilities in the process.

So, what can an SUD treatment or mental health counselor do to screen clients? Screening often entails having a client respond to a specific set of questions, scoring those questions according to the counselor’s training, and then taking the next “yes” or “no” step in the process depending on the results and the design of the screening process. In SUD treatment or mental health service settings, every counselor or clinician who conducts intake or assessment should be able to screen for the most common CODs and know the protocol for obtaining COD assessment information and recommendations. For SUD treatment agencies instituting mental health screening or mental health service programs instituting substance misuse screening, see the section, “Assessment Step 3: Screen for and Detect COD.” Selected instruments from that section appear in this chapter and in Appendix C.

Basic Assessment

A basic **assessment** consists of gathering key information and engaging clients in a process that enables counselors to understand clients’ readiness for change, problem areas, COD diagnoses, disabilities, and strengths. An assessment typically involves a clinical examination of the functioning and well-being of the client and includes a number of tests and written and oral exercises. The COD diagnosis is established by referral to a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, or other qualified healthcare professional. Assessment of the client with CODs is an ongoing process that should be repeated over time to capture the changing nature of the client’s status. Intake information consists of, but is not limited to:

- Background—family, trauma history, history of domestic violence (either as a perpetrator or as a victim), marital status, legal involvement and financial situation, health, education, housing status, strengths and resources, and employment.
- Substance use—age of first use, primary substance(s) used (including alcohol, patterns of substance use, and treatment episodes), and family history of substance use problems.
- Mental illness—family history of mental illness; client history of mental illness including diagnosis, hospitalization and other treatment; current symptoms and mental status; and medications, and medication adherence.

In addition, the basic information can be augmented by some objective measurement (see “Step 3: Screen for and Detect COD” and Appendix C). It is essential for treatment planning that the counselor organize the collected information in a way that helps identify established mental disorder diagnoses and current treatment. The following text box highlights the role of instruments in assessment.

The Role of Assessment Tools

A frequent question asked by providers is, what is the best assessment tool for COD? The answer is, there is no single gold standard assessment tool for COD.

- Many traditional clinical tools focus narrowly on a specific problem, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck & Steer, 1987), a list of 21 questions about mood and other symptoms of feeling depressed.
- Other tools have a broader focus and organize a range of information so that the collection of such information is done in a standard, regular way by all counselors. The Addiction Severity Index (ASI), which is not a comprehensive assessment tool but a measure of addiction severity in multiple problem domains, is an example of this type of tool (McLellan et al., 1992). Not only does a tool such as the ASI help a counselor, through repetition, become adept at collecting the information, it also helps the counselor refine his or her sense of similarities and differences among clients.
- Knowing the appropriateness of a tool is also critical. Has the assessment been well studied? Is it considered valid and reliable? Is it validated for use in the same population as the client? If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” that might mean that the results from the assessment are not reliable, valid, interpretable, applicable to the client, or some combination thereof. This is especially true with clients from diverse populations. Race/ethnicity, educational background, age, gender—all of these factors affect life experiences and can affect the answers a person gives to a questionnaire. Wherever possible, be sure to use tools that are appropriately matched to the client.
- A standard mental status examination can also collect information on current mental health. There are some very good tools, but no one tool stands in for comprehensive clinical assessment.

Careful attention to the characteristics of past episodes of substance misuse and abstinence with regard to mental disorder symptoms, impairments, diagnoses, and treatments can illuminate the role of substance misuse in maintaining, worsening, and interfering with the treatment of any mental disorder. Understanding a client’s mental illness symptoms and impairments that persist during periods of abstinence of 30 days or more can be useful, particularly in understanding what the client copes with even when the acute effects of substance misuse are not present. For any period of abstinence that lasts a month or longer, ask the client about mental health services, SUD treatment, or both.

If mental disorder symptoms (even suicidality or hallucinations) occur within 30 days of intoxication or withdrawal from the substance, symptoms may be substance induced. The best way to manage them is by maintaining abstinence from substances. Even if symptoms are substance induced, formal treatment strategies should be applied to help the client newly in recovery best manage the symptoms.

Provider and client together should try to understand the specific effects that substances have had on mental disorder symptoms, including possible triggering of psychiatric symptoms through substance use. The consensus panel notes that many individuals with CODs have well-established diagnoses when they enter SUD treatment and encourages counselors to find out about any known diagnoses.

As part of basic assessment, assess clients' mental health and SUD history by asking questions like:

- “Tell me about your mental ‘ups and downs’. What is it like for you when things are worse? What is it like when things are better or stable?”
- “How do you notice using alcohol (or whatever substance the client is misusing) affects your depression (or whichever mental disorder symptom the client is experiencing)?”
- “What mental disorders have you been diagnosed with in the past? When was that, and what happened after you received the diagnosis?”
- “What (mental disorder or substance misuse) treatment seemed to work best for you?”
- “What treatment did you like or dislike? Why?”

The Complete Screening and Assessment Process

This chapter is organized around 12 specific steps in the assessment process. Through these steps, the counselor seeks to accomplish the following aims:

- Get a more **detailed chronological history** of mental symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and impairment, particularly preceding substance misuse and during periods of extended abstinence.
- Get a more **detailed description of current strengths, supports, limitations, skill deficits, and cultural barriers** related to following a recommended treatment regimen for a disorder or problem.
- To determine **stage of change for each problem** and identify external contingencies that might help promote treatment adherence.

Advice to the Counselor: How To Make the Assessment Process a Success

There are basic steps counselors can take to increase the chances of a successful assessment process by helping clients feel relaxed and open.

- First, create a welcoming environment by taking an open, nonjudgmental attitude.
 - SUDs and mental disorders each carry their own stigma, and people who have both disorders may feel even more marginalized, leading to underreporting or denial of symptoms and treatment needs.
 - Research suggests that some mental health professionals possess especially negative attitudes and beliefs about individuals with SMI, like psychotic disorders, and SUDs (Avery, Zerbo, & Ross, 2016).
 - By being aware of personal biases and taking steps to create a warm and open environment, counselors can increase the likelihood that clients will feel comfortable discussing distressing symptoms and dysfunctions, which can better inform treatment needs.
- Use open-ended rather than just “yes or no” questions. The former will allow counselors to solicit a greater depth of information and will feel more conversational in tone to the client; the latter can feel more judgmental and detached. Open-ended questions are also more thought provoking and can lead the client to greater self-exploration and self-awareness.
- Furthermore, be sure to address motivation by talking with clients about their ambivalence toward engaging in services. More information about motivational interviewing techniques can be found in the update of TIP 35, *Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment* (SAMHSA, 2019d).

Assessment steps appear sequential, but some can occur simultaneously or in a different order, depending on the situation. Providers should identify and attend to acute safety needs, which often must be addressed before a more comprehensive assessment process can occur. Sometimes, however, components of the assessment process are essential to address the client's specific safety needs. Furthermore, counselors should recognize that although the assessment seeks to identify individual needs and vulnerabilities as quickly as possible to initiate appropriate treatment, **assessment is an ongoing process.** As treatment proceeds and as other changes occur in the client's life and mental status, counselors must actively seek current information rather than proceed on assumptions that might be no longer valid. Exhibit 3.1 lists general considerations for the assessment of clients with CODs.

Exhibit 3.1. Assessment Considerations for Clients With CODs

- Providers should maintain a nonjudgmental attitude while taking a matter-of-fact approach to asking about past and current substance misuse and mental illness.
- First asking about past substance misuse and mental illness could help clients feel more open and amenable to discussing current problems, which people sometimes minimize.
- Counselors should explain to clients why they are asking about substance misuse and mental illness and role of such information in treatment planning.
- Self-report assessments can be informative, but counselors should gather laboratory data and collateral information from family and friends as needed.
- Counselors should be able to recognize the common demographic correlates of COD, such as gender, younger age, lower educational attainment, and single marital status. These give counselors an idea of which clients may be more vulnerable to these disorders and potentially in need of screening and assessment. However, these factors should not be used to justify not screening or assessing certain people. **Screen all clients for substance misuse and mental illness routinely, as least once per year.** All clients who screen positive for symptoms, functional impairment, or other service needs should be fully assessed.

Source: Mueser & Gingerich (2013).

The following section discusses the availability and utility of validated assessment tools to assist counselors in this process. A number of tools are required by various states for use in their SUD treatment systems (e.g., ASI, [McLellan et al., 1992]; American Association of Community Psychiatry – Level of Care Utilization System [LOCUS]). Particular attention will be given to the role of these tools in the COD assessment process, suggesting strategies to reduce duplication of effort when possible. It is beyond the scope of this TIP to provide detailed instructions for administering the tools mentioned in this TIP, but select information about cutoff scores is included in this chapter (and select measures are included in Appendix C). Basic information about each instrument also is given in this chapter, and readers can obtain more detailed information regarding administration and interpretation from the sources given for obtaining these instruments.

This discussion is directed toward providers working in SUD treatment settings, although many of the steps apply equally well to mental health clinicians in mental health settings. At certain key points in the discussion, particular information relevant to mental health clinicians is identified and described.

Using a Biopsychosocial Approach

Because addictions and mental disorders are complex conditions with multiple contributing factors, clinicians should conduct assessments using a biopsychosocial approach that thoroughly investigates the client's history and current status in a holistic manner. "Biopsychosocial" in this context refers to a clinical philosophy and approach to care that seeks to understand clients and their experience through a medical, psychological, emotional, sociocultural, and socioeconomic lens. This is particularly important

when assessing and treating CODs given that numerous determinants and exacerbating and mitigating factors may potentially be relevant to diagnosis, treatment planning, and outcomes. **Biopsychosocial assessment is evidence based and the standard of care. It is comprehensive and widely addresses all aspects of the client’s life that may be relevant to his or her symptoms and service needs.**

By definition, a biopsychosocial assessment will rely on input from multidisciplinary team members including, but not limited to, physicians and nurses (including psychiatric and mental health nurses [specialty practice registered nurses]); psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health professionals; social workers; and addiction counselors and other SUD treatment professionals. Addiction counselors will not be able to assess all biopsychosocial assessment areas (Exhibit 3.2) and will focus primarily on the psychological and social sources of information. Appendix C contains links to sample biopsychosocial assessment forms.

Exhibit 3.2. Biopsychosocial Sources of Information in the Assessment of COD

Topic area	SUD areas of assessment	Mental disorder areas of assessment
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol on the breath Positive urine tests Abnormal laboratory tests Withdrawal symptoms Injuries and trauma Medical signs and symptoms of toxicity and withdrawal Impaired cognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abnormal laboratory tests (e.g., magnetic resonance imaging) Neurological exams Use of psychiatric and other medications
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intoxicated behavior Functional impairment Responses to SUD assessments Documented substance misuse history History of trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental status exam results Responses to mental disorder/symptom screens (e.g., depressed mood, psychosis, anxiety) History of or current diagnosis and treatment Stress and situational factors Self-image and personality History of trauma
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collateral information from others (e.g., family, caregivers) Social interactions, recreation/interests, and lifestyle Family history of SUDs Availability of support systems (e.g., family, friends, close others) Housing, education, and job histories Military history Ethnic and cultural background Legal history (e.g., involvement in the criminal justice system) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information from others (e.g., family, caregivers) Social interactions, recreation/interests, lifestyle Family history of mental disorders Availability of support systems (e.g., family, friends, close others) Housing, education, and employment histories Military history Ethnic and cultural background Legal history (e.g., involvement in the criminal justice system)

Twelve Steps in the Assessment Process

Step 1: Engage the client.

Step 2: Identify and contact collaterals (family, friends, other providers) to gather additional information.

Step 3: Screen for and detect COD.

Step 4: Determine quadrant and locus of responsibility.
Step 5: Determine level of care.
Step 6: Determine diagnosis.
Step 7: Determine disability and functional impairment.
Step 8: Identify strengths and supports.
Step 9: Identify cultural and linguistic needs and supports.
Step 10: Identify problem domains.
Step 11: Determine stage of change.
Step 12: Plan treatment.

Assessment Step 1: Engage the Client

The first step in the assessment process is to engage the client in an empathic, welcoming manner and build a rapport to facilitate open disclosure of information regarding mental illness, SUDs, and related concerns. The aim is to create a safe and nonjudgmental environment in which sensitive personal information may be discussed. Counselors should recognize that cultural matters, including the use of the client's preferred language, play a role in creating a sense of safety and promote accurate understanding of the client's situation and options. Such topics therefore must be addressed sensitively at the outset and throughout the assessment process.

The consensus panel identified five key concepts that underlie effective engagement during initial clinical contact:

1. Universal access ("no wrong door")
2. Empathic detachment
3. Person-centered assessment
4. Cultural sensitivity
5. Trauma-informed services

All staff, including SUD treatment providers and mental health clinicians, in any service setting need to develop competency in engaging and welcoming individuals with COD. (See Chapter 5 for a discussion of working successfully with people who have CODs and establishing a therapeutic alliance.) Whereas engagement is presented here as the first necessary step for assessment to take place, in a larger sense engagement represents an ongoing concern of the counselor—to understand the client's experience and to keep him or her positive and engaged relative to the prospect of better health and recovery.

No Wrong Door

"No wrong door" refers to formal recognition by a service system that individuals with CODs may enter a range of community service sites; that they are a high priority for engagement in treatment; and that proactive efforts are necessary to welcome them into treatment and prevent them from falling through the cracks. Addiction and mental health counselors are encouraged to identify individuals with CODs, welcome them into the service system, and initiate proactive efforts to help them access appropriate treatment in the system, regardless of their initial site of presentation. The recommended attitude counselors should embody is, **"The purpose of this assessment is not just to determine whether the client fits in my program but to help the client figure out where he or she fits in the system of care and to help him or her get there."**

Empathic Detachment

Empathic detachment requires the assessing clinician to:

- Acknowledge that the provider and client are working together to make decisions to support the client's best interest.
- Recognize that the provider cannot transform the client into a different person but can only support change that he or she is already making.
- Maintain an empathic connection even if the client does not seem to fit into the provider's expectations, treatment categories, or preferred methods of working.

Providers should be prepared to demonstrate responsiveness to the requirements of treating clients with CODs. Counselors should be careful not to label mental condition symptoms immediately as caused by addiction but instead should be comfortable with the strong possibility that a mental-health condition may be present independently and encourage disclosure of information that will help clarify the meaning of any CODs for that client. (See Chapter 4 for guidance on distinguishing independent mental disorders from substance-induced mental disorders.)

Person-Centered Assessments

Person-centered assessment emphasizes that the focus of initial contact is not on filling out a form, answering several questions, or establishing program fit, but rather on finding out what the client wants, in terms of his or her perception of the problem, what he or she wants to change, and how he or she thinks that change will occur.

Ewing, Austin, Diffin, and Grande (2015) developed an evidence-based practice tool for conducting person-centered assessment and planning with caregivers of palliative care patients. The framework and key approaches they propose could be generalized to other health issues—including mental illness and substance misuse—and offer useful guidance for ensuring assessment processes are focused on the client and his or her problems, goals, and needs. However, research is needed studying the use of their framework in people with CODs.

Sensitivity to Culture, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

An important component of a person-centered assessment is continually recognizing the significant role of culture on a client's view of problems and treatments. Cultures differ significantly in their views of SUDs and mental disorders, which may affect how a client presents. Clients may participate in treatment cultures (mutual support programs, Dual Recovery Self-Help, psychiatric rehabilitation) that also affect their view of treatment. Cultural sensitivity requires recognition of one's own cultural perspective and a genuine spirit of inquiry into how cultural factors influence the client's request for help.

During the assessment process, it is important to ascertain the individual's sexual orientation and any gender identity matters as part of the counselor's appreciation for the client's personal identity, living situation, and relationships. Counselors also should be aware that clients often have family-related and other concerns that must be addressed to engage them in treatment, such as the need for child care.

For more information about culturally competent treatment, see Chapters 5 and 6 of this TIP as well as TIP 59, *Improving Cultural Competence* (SAMHSA, 2014a) and TIP 51, *Substance Abuse Treatment: Addressing the Specific Needs of Women* (SAMHSA, 2009c).

Trauma-Informed Care

The high prevalence of trauma in individuals with CODs requires that the clinician consider the possibility of a trauma history even before the assessment begins. Trauma may include early childhood physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; experiences of rape or interpersonal violence as an adult; and traumatic experiences associated with political oppression, as might be the case in refugee or other immigrant populations. The approach to the client must be sensitive to the possibility that the client has suffered previous traumatic experiences that may interfere with his or her ability to be trusting of the counselor. Clinicians who observe guardedness on the part of the client should consider the possibility of trauma and try to promote safety in the interview by providing support and gentleness, rather than trying to “break through” evasiveness that might look like resistance or denial. All questioning should avoid “retraumatizing” the client.

See Chapter 4 for information about trauma-informed care, Chapter 6 for information on women’s concerns in CODs, and TIP 57, *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services* (SAMHSA, 2014b).

Assessment Step 2: Identify and Contact Collaterals (Family, Friends, Other Providers) To Gather Additional Information

Clients presenting for SUD treatment, particularly those who have current or past mental disorder symptoms, may be unable or unwilling to report past or present circumstances accurately. For this reason, it is recommended that all assessments include routine procedures for identifying and contacting family and other collaterals (with clients’ permission) who may have useful information.

Information from collaterals is valuable as a supplement to the client’s own report in all of the assessment steps listed in the remainder of this chapter. It is valuable particularly in evaluating the nature and severity of mental disorder symptoms when the client may be so impaired that he or she is unable to provide that information accurately. Note, however, that the process of seeking such information must be carried out strictly in accordance with applicable guidelines and laws regarding confidentiality¹ and with the client’s permission.

Assessment Step 3: Screen for and Detect CODs

Because of the high prevalence of co-occurring mental disorders in SUD treatment settings, and because treatment outcomes for individuals with multiple problems improve if each problem is addressed specifically, the consensus panel recommends that providers:

- **Screen all individuals presenting for SUD treatment routinely for co-occurring mental disorders.**
- **Screen all individuals presenting for mental health services routinely for any substance misuse.**

Screening content will vary by setting. Substance misuse screening in mental health settings should:

- Screen for acute safety risk related to serious intoxication or withdrawal.
- Screen for past and present substance use, substance-related problems, and substance-related disorders (i.e., SUDs and substance-induced mental disorders).

Mental health screening has four major components in SUD treatment settings:

- Screen for acute safety risk, including for:

¹ Confidentiality is governed by the federal “Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records” regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 2) and the federal “Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information” (45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164).

- Suicide.
- Violence to others.
- Inability to care for oneself.
- Risky behaviors.
- Danger of physical or sexual victimization.
- Screen for past and present mental condition symptoms and disorders.
- Screen for cognitive and learning deficits.
- Regardless of setting, all clients should be screened for past and present victimization and trauma.

Exhibit 3.3 lists recommended, validated screening tools across behavioral health service settings.

Exhibit 3.3. Recommended Screening Tools To Help Detect CODs

Client safety

- Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
- Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)
- Risk of harm section of the LOCUS
- Humiliation, Afraid, Rape, and Kick

Past or present mental disorders

- ASI
- Mental Health Screening Form-III (MHSF-III)
- Modified Mini Screen
- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition's* (DSM-5's) Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure

Past or present substance misuse

- 10-item Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) and Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test—Concise (AUDIT-C)
- CAGE Questionnaire Adapted To Include Drugs
- Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (MAST)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-Modified Alcohol, Smoking, and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)
- Simple Screening Instrument for Substance Abuse (SSI-SA)

Trauma

- The Modified PTSD [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder] Symptom Scale: Self-Report Version
- The Primary Care PTSD Screen for DSM-5
- The PTSD Checklist for DSM-5

Level of care

- LOCUS

Functioning and impairment

- World Health Organization (WHO) Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0

Safety Screening

Safety screening requires that, early in the interview, the provider specifically ask the client if he or she has any immediate impulse to engage in violent or self-injurious behavior, or if the client is in any immediate danger from others. These questions should be asked directly of the client and of anyone else who is providing information. If the answer is yes, the provider should obtain more detailed information about the nature and severity of the danger, the client's ability to avoid the danger, the immediacy of the danger, what the client needs to do to be safe and feel safe, and any other information relevant to safety. Additional information can be gathered depending on counselor/staff training for crisis/emergency situations and the interventions appropriate to the treatment provider's particular setting and circumstances. Once this information is gathered, **if it appears that the client is at immediate risk, the provider should arrange for a more indepth risk assessment by a mental-health-trained clinician, and the client should not be left alone or unsupervised.**

Screening for Risk of Suicide or Self-Harm

A variety of validated tools are available for screening for risk of suicide or other self-harm:

- **C-SSRS** is a commonly used, well-supported tool to quickly assess suicidal ideation, behavior, and lethality in adult and adolescent populations (Posner et al., 2011). It is available in over 100 languages and has been used in many settings that serve people with CODs, including primary care, military hospitals, and the criminal justice system. Screeners can be selected based on the setting in which they are being used, the population being screened, and the language needed. Columbia University maintains versions of the C-SSRS at <http://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/cssrs-for-communities-and-healthcare/#filter=.general-use.english>.
- **SBQ-R** (Osman et al., 2001) has demonstrated good reliability and validity in measuring past suicide attempts, frequency of suicidal ideation, previous suicidal communication, and likelihood of future suicide attempt in adults in inpatient and community settings (Batterham et al., 2015). It is supported by SAMHSA as an effective tool for suicide screening and assessment (SAMHSA, 2017). For the full instrument with an overview and scoring instructions, See Exhibits 3.4 through 3.6, beginning on page 46.
- Some systems use the LOCUS (Sowers, 2016) to determine level of care for both mental disorders and addiction. One dimension of LOCUS specifically provides guidance for scoring severity of risk of harm.

Exhibit 3.4. The Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) - Overview

The SBQ-R has 4 items, each tapping a different dimension of suicidality:¹

- Item 1 taps into lifetime suicide ideation and/or suicide attempt.
- Item 2 assesses the frequency of suicidal ideation over the past twelve months.
- Item 3 assesses the threat of suicide attempt.
- Item 4 evaluates self-reported likelihood of suicidal behavior in the future.

Clinical Utility

Due to the wording of the four SBQ-R items, a broad range of information is obtained in a very brief administration. Responses can be used to identify at-risk individuals and specific risk behaviors.

Scoring

See scoring guideline on following page.

Psychometric Properties¹

	Cutoff Score	Sensitivity	Specificity
Adult General Population	≥7	93%	95%
Adult Psychiatric Inpatients	≥8	80%	91%

¹ Osman A, Bagge CL, Guitierrez PM, Konick LC, Kooper BA, Barrios FX. The Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R): Validation with clinical and nonclinical samples. *Assessment*, 2001, (5), 443-454.

Exhibit 3.5. SBQ-R-Scoring

Item 1: taps into *lifetime* suicide ideation and/or suicide attempts

Selected response 1	Non-Suicidal subgroup	1 point	
Selected response 2	Suicide Risk Ideation group	2 points	
Selected response 3a or 3b	Suicide Plan subgroup	3 points	
Selected response 4a or 4b	Suicide Attempt subgroup	4 points	Total Points

Item 2: assesses the *frequency* of suicidal ideation over the past 12 months

Selected Response:	Never	1 point	
	Rarely (1 time)	2 points	
	Sometimes (2 times)	3 points	
	Often (3-4 times)	4 points	
	Very often (5 or more times)	5 points	Total Points

Item 3: taps into the *threat* of suicide attempt

Selected response 1	1 point	
Selected response 2a or 2b	2 points	
Selected response 3a or 3b	3 points	Total Points

Item 4: evaluates *self-reported likelihood* of suicidal behavior in the future

Selected Response:	Never	0 point	
	No chance at all	1 points	
	Rather unlikely	2 points	
	Unlikely	3 points	
	Likely	4 points	
	Rather Likely	5 points	
	Very Likely	6 points	Total Points

Sum all the scores circle/checked by the respondents.

The total score should range from 3-18. **Total Score**

AUC = Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve; the area measures discrimination, that is, the ability of the test to correctly classify those with and without the risk. [.90-1.0 = Excellent; .80-.90 = Good; .70-.80 = Fair; .60-.70 = Poor]

	Sensitivity	Specificity	PPV	AUC
Item 1: a cutoff score of ≥ 2				
• Validation Reference: Adult Inpatient	0.80	0.97	.95	0.92
• Validation Reference: Undergraduate College	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total SBQ-R: a cutoff score of ≥ 7				
• Validation Reference: Undergraduate College	0.93	0.95	0.70	0.96
Total SBQ-R: a cutoff score of ≥ 8				
• Validation Reference: Adult Inpatient	0.80	0.91	0.87	0.89

Exhibit 3.6. SBQ-R Suicide Behaviors Questionnaire - Revised

Patient Name _____ Date of Visit _____

Instructions: Please check the number beside the statement or phrase that best applies to you.

1. Have you ever thought about or attempted to kill yourself? (check one only)

- ☐ 1. Never
- ☐ 2. It was just a brief passing thought
- ☐ 3a. I have had a plan at least once to kill myself but did not try to do it
- ☐ 3b. I have had a plan at least once to kill myself and really wanted to die
- ☐ 4a. I have attempted to kill myself, but did not want to die
- ☐ 4b. I have attempted to kill myself, and really hoped to die

2. How often have you thought about killing yourself in the past year? (check one only)

- ☐ 1. Never
- ☐ 2. Rarely (1 time)
- ☐ 3. Sometimes (2 times)
- ☐ 4. Often (3-4 times)
- ☐ 5. Very Often (5 or more times)

3. Have you ever told someone that you were going to commit suicide, or that you might do it? (check one only)

- ☐ 1. No
- ☐ 2a. Yes, at one time, but did not really want to die
- ☐ 2b. Yes, at one time, and really wanted to die
- ☐ 3a. Yes, more than once, but did not want to do it
- ☐ 3b. Yes, more than once, and really wanted to do it

4. How likely is it that you will attempt suicide someday? (check one only)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0. Never | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. No chance at all | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Rather likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Rather unlikely | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Very likely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Unlikely | |

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For more indepth discussion of how to manage suicidal ideation and behaviors in clients seeking treatment for substance misuse, see Chapter 4 of this TIP as well as TIP 50, *Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment* (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment [CSAT], 2009).

No tool is definitive for safety screening. Providers and programs should use one of these tools only as a starting point, and then use more detailed questions to get all relevant information.

Providers should not underestimate risk because the client is using substances actively. For example, although people who are intoxicated might only seem to be making threats of self-harm (e.g., “I’m just going to go home and blow my head off if nobody around here can help me”), all statements about harming oneself or others must be taken seriously. Individuals who have suicidal or aggressive impulses when intoxicated may act on those impulses; remember, alcohol and drug misuse are among the highest predictors of dangerousness to self or others—even without any co-occurring mental disorder. Determining whether and to what extent an intoxicated client may be suicidal requires a skilled mental health assessment, plus information from collaterals who know the client best. (See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of suicidality in people with CODs.) In addition, it is important to remember that the vast majority of people who are misusing substances will experience at least transient symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental symptoms. Moreover, it may not be possible, even with a skilled clinician, to determine whether an intoxicated suicidal patient is making a serious threat of self-harm; however, safety is a critical and paramount concern.

Positive Suicide Screens

If a client screens positive for suicide risk, counselors should conduct a suicide risk assessment to more thoroughly determine the client’s potential for self-harm. No generally accepted and standardized suicide assessment has been shown to be reliable and valid, but most established suicide assessments contain similar elements. To summarize, assessment should include the following:

- Ask questions about the client’s feelings about living, such as:
 - “Do you ever wish you weren’t alive?”
 - “Have you ever felt that your life wasn’t worth living any longer?”
- Ask questions about specific thoughts of suicide, like:
 - “Have you ever thought about killing yourself?”
 - “Have you been thinking about suicide lately?”
- For people who endorse thoughts of suicide or self-harm questions, ask questions like:
 - “Tell me more about the thoughts you’ve been having. What do you think about and how often?”
 - “Does anyone else know that you have been having these thoughts?”
 - “Do you have a plan for how you would kill yourself?”
 - “What do you think would happen if you decided to kill yourself? How would your family and friends react? What might happen to them?”
 - “What things in life make you want to kill yourself? What things make you want to keep living?”
- For people who have attempted suicide in the past, ask:
 - “What were the circumstances of your suicide attempt? What did you do? Was anyone with you? Where were you?”
 - “What happened after you attempted to kill yourself?”
 - “What were your thoughts leading up to and during the attempt?”
 - “How did you feel afterwards?”

- “Did you get treatment after? Was treatment offered to you? (*If yes*) How did that go for you?”
- Also be sure to ask about risk of harm to others, such as:
 - “Are you having any thoughts about hurting anyone else?”
 - “Are there people you would want to die with you if you decided to kill yourself?”

The provider needs to determine, based on the client’s assessment responses, whether the risk of imminent suicide is mild, moderate, or high. The provider must also determine to what degree the client is willing and able to follow through with a set of interventions to keep safe. Screening personnel should also assess whether suicidal feelings are transitory or reflect a chronic condition. **Factors that may predispose a client toward suicide also should be considered in client evaluation.** Vulnerable populations include (Department of Health and Human Services, 2012):

- American Indians/Alaska Natives.
- Individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide.
- Individuals involved in the criminal justice system or child welfare system.
- Individuals who engage in nonsuicidal self-injury (see Section III of DSM-5).
- Individuals with a history of previous suicide attempts.
- Individuals with physical health conditions.
- Individuals with mental disorders, SUDs, or both.
- Individuals in the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/questioning community.
- Members of the armed forces and veterans.
- Middle-aged and older men.

Asking people about thoughts of suicide does not make them more likely to try to kill themselves. On the contrary, asking about suicide displays a level of care and concern that can help people with suicidal thoughts and intentions open up and feel more receptive to help. Counselors should not avoid asking such questions out of fear that it will “put the idea” of suicide into their clients’ minds; this is simply not true.

Counselors should also be prepared to probe the client’s likelihood of inflicting harm on another person. Specifically, **counselors should ask questions that establish whether homicidal ideation, plans, means, access, and protective factors are present. Also ask about past experiences and future expectations.** Questions can include the following:

- “Have you had any thoughts of harming others?”
- “Have you had any thoughts of harming anyone specific? Who?”
- “If you decided to harm (*name of person*), how would you do it?”
- “On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning ‘not likely at all’, how likely are you to harm this person in the next week?”
- “What reasons do you have to not harm this person? What might stop you from harming him/her?”
- “What else could you do to deal with your anger (*or name whatever other feelings the client reports feeling*) instead of harming this person?”
- “In the past, have you had thoughts of harming someone that you acted on? What happened?”
- “How might your life change if you do harm this person? What might happen to you or to your family? What might happen to this person’s family?”
- “Would you be willing to agree to tell someone before you do this?”

- “How confident are you in remaining sober over the next week? What can you do to increase the chances you will remain sober? (e.g., use of 12-Step meetings, supports, or treatment).”

Screening for Risk of Violence

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that providers routinely screen all women of childbearing age for risk of intimate partner violence (USPSTF, 2016). Similarly, addiction counselors and mental health counselors should be vigilant for risk of victimization among female clients, although men too can and do experience intimate partner violence and should be screened if the counselor suspects victimization. The screener recommended for high sensitivity and specificity (Arkins, Begley, & Higgins, 2016; USPSTF, 2016) is called **Humiliation, Afraid, Rape and Kick**. This four-question tool (which has been validated only for women) screens for emotional, physical, and sexual violence (Sohal, Eldridge, & Feder, 2007). See Appendix C for the tool.

Screening for Past and Present Mental Disorders

Screening for past and present mental disorders accomplishes three goals:

1. **To understand a client’s history and, if the history is positive for a mental disorder, to alert the counselor and treatment team to the types of symptoms that may reappear** so that the counselor, client, and staff can be vigilant about the emergence of any such symptoms.
2. **To identify clients who may have a current mental disorder** and need assessment to determine the nature of the disorder and an evaluation to plan for its treatment.
3. **To determine the nature of the symptoms that may wax and wane to help clients with current CODs monitor their symptoms**—especially how the symptoms improve or worsen in response to medications, “slips” (i.e., substance use), and treatment interventions. For example, clients often need help seeing that the treatment goal of avoiding isolation improves their mood—that when they call their sponsor and go to a meeting, they break the cycle of depressed mood, seclusion, dwelling on oneself and one’s mood, increased depression, greater isolation, and so on.

Several screening, assessment, and treatment planning tools are available to assist the SUD treatment team (see Appendix C). For assessment of specific disorders and for differential diagnosis and treatment planning, there are hundreds of assessment and treatment planning tools. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism offers professional education materials that address screening and assessment for alcohol misuse, including links to several screening instruments (www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/clinical-guides-and-manuals). A NIDA research report (NIDA, 2018a) provides broad background information on assessment processes pertinent to CODs and specific information on many mental health, treatment planning, and substance misuse tools. The mental health field contains a vast array of screening and assessment devices, and subfields are devoted primarily to the study and development of evaluative methods.

Almost all SAMHSA TIPs, available online (<https://store.samhsa.gov/series/tip-series-treatment-improvement-protocols-tips>), have a section on assessment; many have appendixes with wholly reproduced assessment tools or information about locating such tools.

Advanced assessment techniques include assessment instruments for general and specific purposes and advanced guides to differential diagnosis. Most high-power assessment techniques center on a specific type of problem or set of symptoms, are typically lengthy, often require specific doctoral training to use, and can be difficult to adapt properly for some SUD treatment settings. For these reasons, such assessments are not included in this publication.

For both clinical and research activities, there are a number of well-known and widely used guides to the differential diagnostic process in the mental health field, such as the Structured Clinical Interview for Diagnosis (SCID). Again, the SCID involves considerable time and training. Other broad high-power diagnostic tools are the Diagnostic Interview Schedule and the Psychiatric Research Interview for Substance and Mental Disorders, but extensive training is required to use these screens and they can take 1 to 3 hours to administer. These tools generally provide information beyond the requirements of most SUD treatment programs and thus are excluded from discussion in this TIP.

When using any of the wide array of tools that detect symptoms of mental disorders, counselors should bear in mind that symptoms of mental disorder can be mimicked by substances. For example, hallucinogens may produce symptoms that resemble psychosis, and depression commonly occurs during withdrawal from many substances. Even with well-tested tools, it can be difficult to distinguish between a mental disorder and a substance-related disorder without additional information such as the history and chronology of symptoms. In addition to interpreting the results of such instruments in the broader context of what is known about the client's history, counselors also are reminded that retesting often is important, particularly to confirm diagnostic conclusions for clients who have used substances.

The next section briefly highlights some instruments available for mental health screening.

Mental Health Screening Tools

MHSF-III

MHSF-III (Exhibit 3.4) has only 17 simple questions and is designed to screen for present or past symptoms of most major mental disorders (Carroll & McGinley, 2001). The MHSF-III was developed in an SUD treatment setting, and it has face validity—that is, if a knowledgeable diagnostician reads each item, it is clear that a “yes” answer to that item would warrant further evaluation of the client for the mental disorder for which the item represents typical symptomatology. It has been used as a part of integrated behavioral health and physical health services (Chaple, Sacks, Randell, & Kang, 2016) and in behavioral health courts (Miller & Khey, 2016).

The MHSF-III is only a screening device, as it asks only one question for each disorder for which it attempts to screen. If a client answers “no” because of a misunderstanding of the question or a momentary lapse in memory or test-taking attitude, the screen will produce a “false negative.” This means the client might have the mental disorder, but the screen falsely indicates that the person probably does not have the disorder.

The MHSF-III is scored by totaling the “yes” responses (1 point each), for a maximum score of 17. A “yes” response to any of the items on questions 3 through 17 suggests that a qualified mental health specialist should be consulted to determine whether follow-up, including a diagnostic interview, is warranted.

Counselors should bear in mind that symptoms of substance misuse can mimic symptoms of mental disorders.

Modified Mini Screen

The Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.) is a simple 15- to 30-minute tool that covers 20 mental disorders and SUDs. There is considerable validation research on the M.I.N.I. (Sheehan et al., 1998). However, a modified version of the M.I.N.I.—the Modified Mini Screen (MMS)—that contains only 22 items can be used to even more quickly screen for mental disorder problems in three diagnostic areas: mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and psychotic disorders. The MMS has been validated for use

with adults in SUD treatment, social service, and criminal justice settings (Alexander, Layman, & Haugland, 2013; SAMHSA, 2015b).

Exhibit 3.7. MHSF-III

Please circle "yes" or "no" for each question.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Have you ever talked to a psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, social worker, or counselor about an emotional problem? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you ever felt you needed help with your emotional problems, or have you had people tell you that you should get help for your emotional problems? | Yes | No |
| 3. Have you ever been advised to take medication for anxiety, depression, hearing voices, or for any other emotional problem? | Yes | No |
| 4. Have you ever been seen in a psychiatric emergency room or been hospitalized for psychiatric reasons? | Yes | No |
| 5. Have you ever heard voices no one else could hear or seen objects or things which others could not see? | Yes | No |
| 6. (a) Have you ever been depressed for weeks at a time, lost interest or pleasure in most activities, had trouble concentrating and making decisions, or thought about killing yourself? | Yes | No |
| (b) Did you ever attempt to kill yourself? | Yes | No |
| 7. Have you ever had nightmares or flashbacks as a result of being involved in some traumatic/terrible event? For example, warfare, gang fights, fire, domestic violence, rape, incest, car accident, being shot or stabbed? | Yes | No |
| 8. Have you ever experienced any strong fears? For example, of heights, insects, animals, dirt, attending social events, being in a crowd, being alone, being in places where it may be hard to escape or get help? | Yes | No |
| 9. Have you ever given in to an aggressive urge or impulse, on more than one occasion, that resulted in serious harm to others or led to the destruction of property? | Yes | No |
| 10. Have you ever felt that people had something against you, without them necessarily saying so, or that someone or some group may be trying to influence your thoughts or behavior? | Yes | No |
| 11. Have you ever experienced any emotional problems associated with your sexual interests, your sexual activities, or your choice of sexual partner? | Yes | No |
| 12. Was there ever a period in your life when you spent a lot of time thinking and worrying about gaining weight, becoming fat, or controlling your eating? For example, by repeatedly dieting or fasting, engaging in much exercise to compensate for binge eating, taking enemas, or forcing yourself to throw up? | Yes | No |

13. Have you ever had a period of time when you were so full of energy and your ideas came very rapidly, when you talked nearly nonstop, when you moved quickly from one activity to another, when you needed little sleep, and when you believed you could do almost anything?	Yes	No
14. Have you ever had spells or attacks when you suddenly felt anxious, frightened, or uneasy to the extent that you began sweating, your heart began to beat rapidly, you were shaking or trembling, your stomach was upset, or you felt dizzy or unsteady, as if you would faint?	Yes	No
15. Have you ever had a persistent, lasting thought or impulse to do something over and over that caused you considerable distress and interfered with normal routines, work, or social relations? Examples would include repeatedly counting things, checking and rechecking on things you had done, washing and rewashing your hands, praying, or maintaining a very rigid schedule of daily activities from which you could not deviate.	Yes	No
16. Have you ever lost considerable sums of money through gambling or had problems at work, in school, or with your family and friends as a result of your gambling?	Yes	No
17. Have you ever been told by teachers, guidance counselors, or others that you have a special learning problem?	Yes	No

Source: Carroll & McGinley (2000). Reprinted with permission.

ASI

The ASI (McLellan et al., 1992) does not screen for mental disorders and provides only a low-power screen for generic mental condition concerns. Use of the ASI ranges widely, with some SUD treatment programs using a scaled-down approach to gather basic information about a client's alcohol use, drug use, legal status, employment, family/social, medical, and psychiatric status, to an indepth assessment and treatment planning instrument to be administered by a trained interviewer who makes complex judgments about the client's presentation and ASI-taking attitudes. Counselors can be trained to make clinical judgments about how the client comes across, how genuine and legitimate the client's way of responding seems, whether there are any safety or self-harm concerns requiring further investigation, and where the client falls on a nine-point scale for each dimension.

With about 200 items, the ASI is a low-power instrument with a broad range, covering the seven areas mentioned previously and requiring about 1 hour to complete. Development of and research into the ASI continues, including training programs, computerization, and critical analyses. It is a public domain document that has been used widely for two decades. It has been found to be effective in predicting inpatient psychiatric admissions among people seeking SUD treatment (Drymalski & Nunley, 2016).

DSM-5 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure

Among the major revisions to DSM-5 was the inclusion of a newly developed patient assessment tool to help providers screen for common mental disorders and symptoms in need of treatment, including major depression, generalized anxiety, mania, somatic conditions, sleep disturbance, cognitive dysfunction, and substance misuse. The DSM-5 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure includes 23 items that correspond to diagnostic categories in DSM-5 (e.g., depressive disorders, psychotic disorders) or to specific symptom domains (e.g., mania, anger, suicidal ideation).

Because the screener is included in DSM-5's Section III for "emerging measures," meaning it requires further research before being implemented in routine clinical practice, there is little known about its validation. And no published studies to date have examined its use with COD populations. Nonetheless, the measure is worthy of consideration, especially in research settings. It is available online with scoring information (www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/assessment-measures#Disorder).

Screening for Past and Present SUDs

This section is intended primarily for counselors working in mental health service settings and suggests ways to screen clients for substance misuse.

Screening begins with inquiry about past and present substance use and related problems and disorders. **If the client answers “yes” to having problems or a disorder, further assessment is warranted. It is important to remember that if the client acknowledges a past substance problem but states that it is now resolved, assessment is still required.** Careful exploration of what current strategies the individual is using to prevent relapse is warranted. Such information can help ensure that those strategies continue while the individual is focusing on mental health services.

Screening for the presence of substance misuse involves four components, which are:

- Substance misuse symptom checklists.
- Substance misuse severity assessment.
- Formal screening tools that work around denial.
- Screening of urine, saliva, or hair samples.

Symptom Checklists

Checklists address common categories of substances, problems associated with use, and a history of meeting SUD criteria for that substance. Overly detailed checklists are unhelpful; they lose value as simple screening tools. It is helpful to remember to include misuse of over-the-counter medication (e.g., cold medications) and of prescribed medication. Some checklists also screen for behavioral addictions such as gambling as well as compulsive sexual behavior, Internet addiction, and compulsive spending.

Severity Assessment

It is useful to monitor the severity of an SUD (if present). This process can begin with simple questions about past or present diagnosis of an SUD and the client’s experience of associated difficulties. DSM-5 offers guidance on assessing SUD severity based on symptom count. Specifically, 2 to 3 symptoms would be considered a mild SUD, 4 or 5 a moderate SUD, and 6 or more a severe SUD (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Some programs may use formal SUD diagnostic tools; others use the ASI (McLellan et al., 1992) or similar instruments, even in the mental health setting.

Screening and Intoxication/Withdrawal

Counselors cannot formally screen or assess clients who are actively intoxicated. If clients obviously are intoxicated, treat them with empathy and firmness, and ensure their physical safety.

If clients report that they are experiencing withdrawal, or appear to be exhibiting signs of withdrawal, formal withdrawal scales can help even inexperienced providers gather information from which medically trained personnel can determine if medical intervention is required. Such tools include the Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment of Alcohol Scale, Revised (Sullivan, Sykora, Schneiderman, Naranjo, & Sellers, 1989) for alcohol withdrawal and the Clinical Institute Narcotic Assessment (Zilm & Sellers, 1978) for opioid withdrawal. These are included in Appendix C.

Substance Misuse Screening Tools

AUDIT and AUDIT-C

The AUDIT (Babor, Higgins-Biddle, Saunders, & Monteiro, 2001) and its abbreviated version, the AUDIT-C (Bush, Kivlahan, McDonell, Fihn, & Bradley, 1998), have been validated for use in screening adults at risk for alcohol misuse (Dawson, Smith, Saha, Rubinsky, & Grant, 2012; Johnson, Lee, Vinson, & Seale, 2013). These instruments measure current alcohol use, drinking behaviors, and consequences of drinking. Cutoff scores suggesting hazardous alcohol use are 8 or higher on the AUDIT (Babor et al., 2001) and 3 or higher on the AUDIT-C for SUD or heavy drinking (Bush et al., 1998). Both measures are in Appendix C.

CAGE-AID

The CAGE-AID (Cut Down, Annoyed, Guilty, Eye-opener—Adapted to Include Drugs) is a variation of the four-question CAGE screener, which is focused solely on detecting alcohol misuse. The CAGE-AID instead screens for drug use and alcohol misuse. It is brief, valid, and reliable (Mdege & Lang, 2011), and recommended by the USPSTF and others for substance misuse screening, particularly in primary care populations (Halloran, 2013; Lanier & Ko, 2008). Respondents who endorse 1 or more items on the CAGE-AID should be considered for full assessment of substance misuse. The CAGE-AID is online at <https://www.hiv.uw.edu/page/substance-use/cage-aid>.

NIDA-Modified ASSIST

WHO's ASSIST tool (WHO ASSIST Working Group, 2002) is an effective measure for lifetime and current substance misuse, but its length and complex computer scoring system have hindered its widespread adoption. NIDA developed an abbreviated version called the NIDA-Modified ASSIST, which is recommended by APA for use with DSM-5 (NIDA, 2015) and is recommended for primary care as well as general medical populations (NIDA, 2012; Zgierska, Amaza, Brown, Mundt, & Fleming, 2014).

The NIDA-Modified ASSIST can be completed online (www.drugabuse.gov/nmassist/) or on paper. It opens with a Quick Screen to determine if further assessment is warranted. If the client answers “yes” to any of the questions on the Quick Screen, the full NIDA-Modified ASSIST should be administered.

DAST-10

The DAST-10 (Skinner, 1982) is a moderately-to-highly reliable and valid measure that has been widely used in practice and research (Mdege & Lang, 2011; Yudko, Lozhkina, & Fouts, 2007). It assesses past-year use of substances other than alcohol and can be administered quickly. Scores of 3 or higher warrant consideration of further assessment for a possible SUD (Skinner, 1982). The DAST-10 can be accessed online (<https://www.hiv.uw.edu/page/substance-use/dast-10>).

MAST

The MAST (Selzer, 1971) is a widely used self-report screening tool for problematic substance use. A systematic review of its psychometric properties suggests the MAST is moderate to robust in reliability and validity (Minnich, Erford, Bardhoshi, & Atalay, 2018).

This 25-item measure asks about lifetime alcohol use and consequences. It takes 8 to 10 minutes to complete. A score of 0 to 3 suggests no drinking problems. A score of 4 suggests early or moderate problems. A score of 5 or higher indicates problem drinking and warrants further assessment. See Appendix C for the measure.

SSI-SA

Developed by CSAT, the SSI-SA (CSAT, 1994) screens for alcohol consumption and other substance use, preoccupation and loss of control, negative consequences of substance use, problem recognition, and tolerance and withdrawal. The SSI-SA has strong psychometric properties (Boothroyd, Peters, Armstrong, Ryneerson-Moody, & Caudy, 2015) and includes items drawn from existing validated substance screeners, including the AUDIT, CAGE, DAST, and MAST. It is often used in criminal justice settings (SAMHSA, 2015b) but also has been found effective in hospital settings (Mdege & Lang, 2011). A score of 4 or higher is considered indicative of moderate to high risk of substance misuse and warrants further assessment (Boothroyd et al., 2015). See Appendix C for this instrument.

Trauma Screening

Trauma refers to an event or circumstance experienced, witnessed, or learned of by an individual that has a protracted, negative influence on his or her physical, emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, or functional well-being. Common traumatic events include childhood maltreatment (e.g., physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; neglect); being a victim of physical or sexual assault; experiencing a terrorist event, natural or man-made disaster, accident, fire, or mass casualty event; repeatedly being exposed to details of horrific or violent events (e.g., first responders seeing injured or dead victims, police officials repeatedly hearing details about child abuse); or learning that something extremely disturbing happened to a loved one or close friend (e.g., learning that your child has died).

Trauma is common in individuals with SUDs, mental disorders, or both, particularly women and military populations (Berenz & Coffey, 2012; Carter, Capone, & Short, 2011; Gilmore et al., 2016; Kline et al., 2014; Konkoly Thege et al., 2017; Mandavia, Robinson, Bradley, Ressler, & Powers, 2016; Mason & Du Mont, 2015; Palmer et al., 2016; Vest, Hoopsick, Homish, Daws, & Homish, 2018; Walsh, McLaughlin, Hamilton, & Keyes, 2017; see also Chapter 4 for more discussion). **To determine whether trauma screening is warranted, counselors can ask clients about past traumatizing events directly or use a structured tool**, like the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study Score Calculator (available online at <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>). In screening for a history of trauma or obtaining a preliminary diagnosis of PTSD, asking clients to describe traumatic events in detail can be traumatizing. **Limit questioning to very brief and general questions**, such as “Have you ever experienced childhood physical abuse? Sexual abuse? A serious accident? Violence or the threat of it? Have there been experiences in your life that were so traumatic they left you unable to cope with day-to-day life?”

To screen for PTSD, assuming the client has a positive trauma history, consider using these scales:

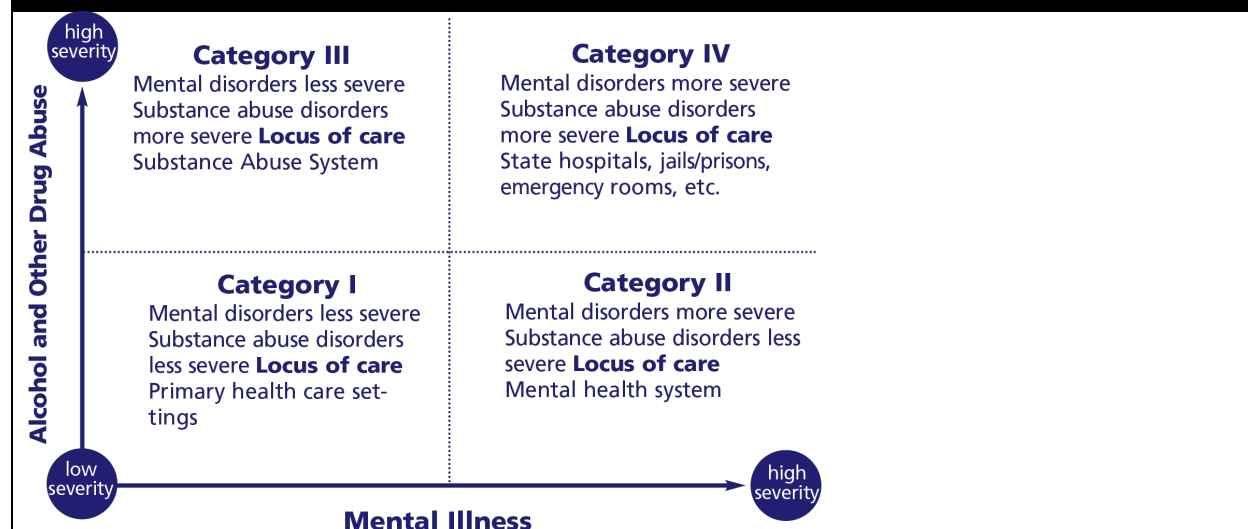
- The Primary Care PTSD Screen for DSM-5 (Prins et al., 2015) and administration and scoring information are available online (www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/pc-ptsd5-screen.pdf).
- The PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (Weathers et al., 2013) and administration and scoring information are available online (www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/assessment/documents/PCL-5_Standard.pdf).

See TIP 57, *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services* (SAMHSA, 2014b), for more indepth discussion of screening, assessment, and management of trauma in behavioral health populations. Valuable guidance about counseling people with CODs and trauma is in Chapter 7 of this TIP.

Assessment Step 4: Determine Quadrant and Locus of Responsibility

Quadrants of care (i.e., Four Quadrants Model) is a conceptual framework that classifies clients in four basic groups based on relative symptom severity, not diagnosis (Exhibit 3.5).

Exhibit 3.8. Level of Care Quadrants



Quadrant assignment is based on the severity of the mental disorders and SUDs as follows:

- **Category/Quadrant I: This quadrant includes individuals with low-severity substance misuse and low-severity mental disorders.** These low-severity individuals can be accommodated in intermediate outpatient settings of either mental disorder or chemical dependency programs, with consultation or collaboration between settings if needed. Alternatively, some people will be identified and managed in primary care settings with consultation from mental health service or SUD treatment providers.
- **Quadrant II: This quadrant includes individuals with high-severity mental disorders who are usually identified as priority clients within the mental health system and who also have low-severity SUDs** (e.g., SUD in remission or partial remission). These individuals ordinarily receive continuing care in the mental health system and are likely to be well served in a variety of intermediate-level mental health programs using integrated case management.
- **Quadrant III: This quadrant includes individuals who have severe SUDs and low- or moderate-severity mental disorders.** They are generally well accommodated in intermediate-level SUD treatment programs. In some cases, there is a need for coordination and collaboration with affiliated mental health programs to provide ongoing treatment of the mental disorders.
- **Quadrant IV: Quadrant IV has two subgroups. One includes people with serious, persistent mental illness (SPMI) who also have severe and unstable SUDs.** The other includes people with severe and unstable SUDs and severe and unstable behavioral problems (e.g., violence, suicidality) who do not (yet) meet criteria for SPMI. These individuals require intensive, comprehensive, and integrated services for both their SUDs and mental disorders. The locus of treatment can be specialized residential SUD treatment programs such as modified therapeutic communities in state hospitals, jails, or even in settings that provide acute care such as emergency departments (EDs).

The quadrants of care were derived from a conference, the National Dialogue on Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders, supported by SAMHSA and two of its centers—CSAT and the Center for Mental Health Services—and co-sponsored by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) and the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Directors (NASADAD). The quadrants of care model was originally developed by Ries (1993) and used by the State of New York (NASMHPD & NASADAD, 1999; see also Rosenthal, 1992). It has two distinct uses:

- To help conceptualize an individual client's treatment and to guide improvements in system integration (for example, if the client has acute psychosis and is known to the treatment staff to have a history of alcohol use disorder (AUD), the client will clearly fall into Category IV—that is, severe mental disorder and severe SUD). However, the severity of the client's needs, diagnosis, symptoms, and impairments all determine level of care placement.
- To guide improvements in systems integration, including efficient allocation of resources.

The model is considered valid, reliable, and feasible (McDonell et al., 2012), which is particularly beneficial for clients with CODs given that conditions tend to fluctuate over time, underscoring the need for a stable framework that can accurately classify individuals and capture their potential treatment needs throughout the course of their illnesses.

Step 2 will collect most information necessary to make this determination, but there will sometimes be additional nuances to consider. Certain states formally specify procedures for quadrant determination. In the absence of formal procedures, SUD treatment providers in any setting can follow Exhibit 3.5.

Determination of SMI Status

Every state mental health system has developed a set of specific criteria for determining who can be considered seriously mentally ill and therefore eligible to be considered a mental health priority client. These criteria are based on combinations of specific diagnoses, severity of disability, and duration of disability (usually 6 months to 1 year). Some require that the condition be independent of an SUD. These criteria are different for every state. It would be helpful for SUD treatment providers to obtain copies of the criteria for their own states, as well as copies of the specific procedures by which eligibility is established by their states' mental health systems. By determining that a client might be eligible for consideration as a mental health priority client, the SUD treatment counselor can assist the client in accessing various services and benefits the client may not know are open to her or him.

To gauge SMI status, start by asking whether the client already gets mental health priority services (e.g., “Do you have a mental health case manager?” “Are you a Department of Mental Health client?”).

- If the client already is a mental health client, then he or she will be assigned to quadrant II or IV. Contact the mental health case manager and establish collaboration to promote case management.
- If the client is not already a mental health client but appears to be eligible, and the client and family are willing, arrange a referral for eligibility determination.
- Clients who present in SUD treatment settings who look as if they might have SMI, but have not been so determined, should be considered to belong to quadrant IV.

For assistance in determining the severity of symptoms and disability, the SUD treatment provider can use the severity criteria listed in DSM-5. For disorders in which DSM-5 does not offer any guidance on determining severity, counselors can use Dimension 3 (Co-Morbidity) subscales in the LOCUS (see the section “Assessment Step 5: Determine Level of Care”), particularly the levels of severity of comorbidity and impairment/functionality.

Determination of Severity of SUDs

Presence of active or unstable substance misuse or serious substance misuse as indicated by a DSM-5 severity rating of “severe” would identify the individual as being in quadrant III or IV. Less serious SUD (a DSM-5 severity rating of “mild” or “moderate”) identifies the individual as being in quadrant I or II.

If the client is determined to have SMI with a serious SUD, he or she falls in quadrant IV; those with SMI and a mild SUD fall in quadrant II. A client with a serious SUD who has mental disorder symptoms that do not constitute SMI falls into quadrant III. A client with mild to moderate mental disorder symptoms and a less serious SUD falls into quadrant I.

Clients in quadrant III who present in SUD treatment settings are often best managed by receiving care in the SUD treatment setting, with collaborative or consultative support from mental health providers. Individuals in quadrant IV usually require intensive intervention to stabilize and determine eligibility for mental health services and appropriate locus of continuing care. If they do not meet SMI criteria, once their more serious mental symptoms have stabilized and substance use is controlled initially, they begin to look like individuals in quadrant III, and can respond to similar services.

Note, however, that this discussion of quadrant determination is not validated by clinical research. It is merely a practical approach to adapting an existing framework for clinical use, in advance of more formal processes being developed, tested, and disseminated.

In many systems, the process of assessment stops largely after assessment Step 4 with the determination of placement. Some information from subsequent steps (especially Step 7) may be included in this initial process, but usually more indepth or detailed consideration of treatment needs may not occur until after “placement” in an actual treatment setting.

Assessment Step 5: Determine Level of Care

Client placement in the appropriate care setting for his or her needs is necessary to optimize treatment completion and desirable outcomes. Level of care placement is also often required by private and public payers (i.e., Medicaid) for authorization of mental health services or SUD treatment decisions. Thus, the availability of valid and reliable commonly used tools can not only help increase the odds of effective treatment matching but can help providers meet documentation requirements for reimbursement.

Assessment Step 5—Application to Case Examples (Jane B.)

Jane B. is a 28-year-old single White woman diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, AUD, and cocaine use disorder. She has a history of multiple episodes of sexual victimization. She is experiencing homelessness (living in a shelter), is actively psychotic, and will not admit to substance misuse. She often visits the local ED for mental and medical complaints but refuses follow-up treatment. Her main requests are for money and food, not treatment. Jane has been offered involvement in a housing program that requires no treatment engagement or sobriety but has refused because of paranoia about working with staff in this setting. Jane B. declines medication, given her paranoia, but does not seem acutely dangerous to herself or others.

The severity of Jane B.’s condition and her psychosis, homelessness, and lack of stability may lead the provider initially to consider psychiatric hospitalization or referral for residential SUD treatment. In fact, application of assessment criteria in the LOCUS might have led easily to that conclusion. In the LOCUS, more flexible matching is possible. The first consideration is whether the client meets criteria for involuntary psychiatric commitment (usually, suicidal or homicidal impulses, or inability to feed oneself or obtain shelter). In this instance, she is psychotic and experiencing homelessness but has been able to find food and shelter; she is unwilling to accept voluntary mental health services. Further, residential SUD treatment is inappropriate, both because she is completely unmotivated to get help and because she is likely to be too psychotic to participate in treatment effectively. The LOCUS would therefore recommend Level 3 – “High Intensity Community Based Services.”

If after extended participation in the engagement strategies described earlier, she began to take antipsychotic medication, after a period of time her psychosis might clear up, and she might begin to express interest in getting sober. In that case, if she had determined that she is unable to get sober on the street, residential SUD treatment would be indicated. Because of the longstanding severity of her mental illness, it is likely that she

would continue to have some level of symptoms of her mental disorder and disability even when medicated. In this case, Jane B. probably would require a residential program able to supply an enhanced level of services.

Tools for Determining Level of Care

LOCUS

The LOCUS Adult Version 20 (Sowers, 2016) can be used as a systemwide level of care assessment instrument for either mental health settings only or for both mental health and SUD treatment settings. The LOCUS uses multiple dimensions of assessment, including:

- Risk of harm.
- Functional status.
- Comorbidity (medical, addictive, psychiatric).
- Recovery environment.
- Treatment and recovery history.
- Engagement and recovery status.

The LOCUS (Plakun, 2018) helps:

- Determine a client's level of service needs.
- Describe all levels of care, from short-term outpatient services to inpatient residential care.
- Provide a quantified approach to defining level of care based on scores on its six dimensions.

LOCUS has a point system for each dimension that permits aggregate scoring to suggest level of service intensity. It permits level of care assessment for clients with mental disorders or SUDs only, as well as those with CODs. It is highly correlated with the DSM-IV-TR Global Assessment of Functioning scale and has demonstrated good sensitivity in assessing severity of symptoms, particularly those that are psychiatric in nature (Thurber, Wilson, Realmuto, & Specker, 2018).

Assessment Step 6: Determine Diagnosis

Determining the diagnosis can be a formidable clinical challenge in the assessment of CODs. Clinicians in both mental health services and SUD treatment settings recognize that it can be impossible to establish a firm diagnosis when confronted with the mixed presentation of mental symptoms and ongoing substance misuse. Of course, substance misuse contributes to the emergence or severity of mental symptoms and therefore confounds the diagnostic picture. Therefore, this step often includes dealing with confusing diagnostic presentations. Three guiding principles can help counselors thoroughly assess the client's current and past history of mental and substance-related symptoms and problems:

1. Conduct a thorough interview to **establish past mental and SUD diagnoses and treatments**.
2. **Document all past diagnoses**, including their relationship to certain time periods (e.g., just before the diagnosis, just after the diagnosis, during symptomatic phases) and events, symptoms, and levels of functioning during those time periods.
3. **Determine the timing of mental disorder symptoms**, particularly in relationship to periods of substance use and SUDs (e.g., during periods of abstinence, within 30 days of onset of an SUD).

Addiction counselors who want to improve their competencies to address CODs are urged to become conversant with the basic resource used to diagnose mental disorders, DSM-5 (APA, 2013). In-depth discussion of what counselors need to know concerning DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, differential diagnosis, and management of mental disorders in the context of co-occurring addiction is in Chapter 4.

Principles of Determining Diagnosis

1. The Importance of Client History

Diagnosis is established more by history than by current symptom presentation. This applies to both mental disorders and SUDs. The first step in determining the diagnosis is to determine whether the client has an established diagnosis or is receiving ongoing treatment for an established disorder. This information can be obtained by the counselor as part of the routine intake process. If there is evidence of a disorder but the diagnosis or treatment recommendations are unclear, the counselor immediately should begin the process of obtaining this information from collaterals. If there is a valid history of a mental disorder diagnosis at admission to SUD treatment, that diagnosis should be considered presumptively valid for initial treatment planning, and any existing stabilizing treatment should be maintained. In addition to confirming an established diagnosis, the client's history can provide insight into patterns that may emerge and add depth to knowledge of the client.

For example, if a client comes into the clinician's office and says she hears voices (whether or not the client is sober currently), no diagnosis should be made on that basis alone. There are many reasons people hear voices. They may be related to substance-related syndromes (e.g., substance-induced psychosis or **hallucinosi**s, which is the experience of hearing voices that the client knows are not real, and that may say things that are distressing or attacking—particularly when there is a trauma history—but are not bizarre). With CODs, most causes will be independent of substance use (e.g., schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, affective disorder with psychosis or dissociative hallucinosi related to PTSD). **Psychosis** usually involves loss of ability to tell that the voices are not real and increased likelihood that they are bizarre in content. Methamphetamine psychosis is particularly confounding because it can mimic schizophrenia. Many clients with psychotic disorders will still hear voices when on medication, but the medication makes the voices less bizarre and helps clients know they are not real.

If clients state, for example, that they have heard voices, although not as much as they used to; have been abstinent for 4 years; have remembered to take medication most days, but may forget; and have had multiple hospitalizations for psychosis 10 years ago but none since, then they clearly have a diagnosis of psychotic illness (probably schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder). Given their continuing symptoms while abstinent and on medication, it is quite possible that the diagnosis will persist.

Chapter 4 offers additional information about differential diagnosis.

2. Documenting Prior Diagnoses

It is important to document prior diagnoses and gather information related to current diagnoses, even though SUD treatment counselors may not be licensed to make a mental disorder diagnosis.

Diagnoses established by history should not be changed at the point of initial assessment. If the clinician has a suspicion that a long-established diagnosis may be invalid, it is important that he or she takes time to gather additional information, consult with collaterals, get more careful and detailed history, and develop a better relationship with the client before recommending diagnostic reevaluation. The counselor should raise concerns related to diagnosis with the clinical supervisor or at a team meeting.

In many instances, no well-established mental disorder diagnosis exists, or multiple diagnoses confuse the picture. Even with an established diagnosis, it is helpful to gather information to confirm that diagnosis. During initial assessment, SUD treatment counselors can gather data that can assist diagnosis, either by supporting the findings of the existing mental health assessment or by providing useful background information in the event a new mental health assessment is conducted. **The key is not**

merely to gather lists of past and present symptoms but to connect those symptoms to periods in the client’s life that are helpful in the diagnostic process—namely, before the onset of an SUD and during periods of abstinence (or very limited use) or after SUD onset and persisting for more than 30 days.

The clinician should determine whether mental symptoms occur only when the client is using substances actively. Therefore, it is important to determine the nature and severity of the symptoms of the mental disorder when the SUD is stabilized. Note whether the client had a recent complete physical, including appropriate labs. Physical diseases can also present with or mimic mental disorders (e.g., hypothyroidism presenting with or like depression) and need to be identified and treated accordingly.

3. Linking Mental Symptoms to Specific Periods

For diagnostic purposes, it is almost always necessary to tie mental symptoms to specific periods of time in the client’s history, in particular those times when an active SUD was not present.

Most SUD assessment tools do not require connection of mental symptoms to substance use or abstinence. Mental disorder symptom information obtained from such tools can confuse counselors and make them feel that the whole process is not worth the effort. In fact, it is striking that when clinicians seek information about mental symptoms during periods of abstinence, such information is almost never part of traditional assessment forms. The mental history and substance use history have in the past been collected separately and independently. As a result, the opportunity to evaluate interaction, **which is the most important diagnostic information beyond the history**, has been routinely lost. Newer and more detailed assessment tools overcome these historical, unnecessary divisions.

The M.I.N.I. Plus (a more detailed version of the Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview [Sheehan et al., 1998]) is structured to connect any identified symptoms to periods of abstinence. Clinicians can use this information to distinguish substance-induced mental disorders from independent mental disorders. The Timeline Follow-Back Method also is a valid and practical tool that can be used with individuals with substance misuse or CODs (Hjorthoj, Hjorthoj, & Nordentoft, 2012) to gather a detailed and comprehensive assessment of patterns of substance misuse beyond just quantity and frequency.

Consequently, the SUD treatment counselor can proceed in two ways:

- Ask whether mental symptoms or treatments identified in screening were present during periods of 30 days of abstinence or longer, or were present before onset of substance use. (“Did this symptom or episode occur during a period when you were abstinent for at least 30 days?”)
- Define with the client specific time periods when the SUD was in remission, and then get detailed information about mental symptoms, diagnoses, impairments, and treatments during those periods of time. (“Can you recall a time when you were not using? Did these symptoms [or whatever the client has reported] occur during that period?”) This approach may yield more reliable information.

During this latter process, the counselor can use one of the medium-power symptom screening tools as a guide. Alternatively, the counselor can use the handy outlines of the DSM-5 criteria for common disorders (provided in Chapter 4) and inquire whether those criteria symptoms were met, whether they were diagnosed and treated, and if so, with what methods and how successfully. This information can suggest or support the accuracy of diagnoses. Documentation also can facilitate later diagnostic assessment by a mental-health-trained clinician.

Assessment Step 7: Determine Disability and Functional Impairment

Determination of both current and baseline functional impairment contributes to identification of the need for case management or higher levels of support. This step also relates to the determination of

level of care requirements. Assessment of current cognitive capacity, social skills, and other functional abilities also is necessary to determine if there are deficits that may require modification in the treatment protocols of relapse prevention efforts or recovery programs. For example, the counselor might inquire about past participation in special education or related testing.

Assessing Functional Capability

Current level of impairment is determined by assessing functional capabilities and deficits in each of the areas indicated in the following list. Similarly, baseline level of impairment is determined by identifying periods of extended abstinence and mental health stability (greater than 30 days) according to the methods described in the previous assessment step. The clinician determines:

- Is the client capable of **living independently** (in terms of independent living skills, not in terms of maintaining abstinence)? If not, what types of support are needed?
- Is the client capable of **supporting himself or herself financially**? If so, through what means? If not, is the client disabled, or dependent on others for financial support?
- Can the client engage in reasonable **social relationships**? Are there good social supports? If not, what interferes with this ability, and what supports would the client need?
- What is the client's level of **cognitive functioning**? Is there a developmental or learning disability? Are there cognitive or memory impairments that impede learning? Is the client limited in ability to read, write, or understand? Is there difficulty focusing, concentrating, and completing tasks?

Functional Assessment Tools

Several freely available, reliable, well-validated tools measure functioning and impairment in clients with mental illness, substance misuse, or both (Gold, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Sanchez-Moreno, Martinez-Aran, & Vieta, 2017), including:

- **WHO Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0** ([WHODAS 2.0] Üstün & WHO, 2010; www.who.int/classifications/icf/whodasii/en/). When DSM-5 removed the Global Assessment of Functioning (Axis V in DSM-IV), APA proposed in its place the WHODAS 2.0 as a tool to rate global impairment and functional capabilities (APA, 2013). The WHODAS 2.0 assesses six major domains, which are:
 - Understanding and communicating.
 - Getting around (mobility).
 - Self-care.
 - Getting along with people (social and interpersonal functioning).
 - Life activities (home, academic, and occupational functioning).
 - Participation in society (participation in family, social, and community activities).
- **ASI** (McLellan et al., 1992), a mental health screening tool that provides information about level of functioning for clients with SUDs. This is valuable when supplemented by interview information. (Note that the ASI also exists in an expanded version specifically for women, ASI-F [SAMHSA, 2009c].)

In a clinical interview, the counselor also should inquire about any current or past difficulties the client has had in learning or using relapse prevention skills, participating in mutual support recovery programs, or obtaining medication or following medication regimens. In the same vein, the clinician may inquire about use of transportation, budgeting, self-care, and other related skills, and their effect on life functioning and treatment participation.

For individuals with CODs, impairment may be related to intellectual/cognitive ability or the mental disorder, which may exist in addition to the SUD. The clinician should establish level of intellectual/cognitive functioning in childhood, whether impairment persists, and if so, at what level, during the periods when substance use is in full or partial remission, just as in the previous discussion of diagnosis.

Determining the Need for Capable or Enhanced-Level Services

A specific tool to assess the need for capable- or enhanced-level services for people with CODs currently is not available. The consensus panel recommends a process of “practical assessment” that seeks to match the client’s assessment (mental health, substance misuse, level of impairment) to the type of services needed. The individual may even be given trial tasks or assignments to determine in concert with the counselor if her performance meets the requirements of the program being considered.

ASAM criteria for COD-capable and -eligible programs are as follows (Mee-Lee, Shulman, Fishman, Gastfriend, & Miller 2013):

- **Co-occurring-capable (COC) programs** in addiction treatment focus primarily on SUDs but can treat patients with subthreshold or diagnosable but stable mental disorders (Mee-Lee et al., 2013). Mental health services may be onsite or available by referral. COC programs in mental health are those that mainly focus on mental disorders but can treat patients with subthreshold or diagnosable but stable SUDs (Mee-Lee et al., 2013). Addiction counselors are onsite or available through referral.
- **Co-occurring-enhanced (COE) programs** have more integrated addiction and mental health services and have staff who are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of both disorders and are competent in providing integrated treatment for both mental disorders and SUDs at the same time.
- **Complexity-capable programs** are designed to meet the needs of individuals (and their families) with multiple complex conditions that extend beyond just CODs. Physical and psychosocial conditions and treatment areas of focus often include chronic medical illnesses like HIV, trauma, legal matters, housing difficulties, criminal justice system involvement, unemployment, education concerns, childcare or parenting difficulties, and cognitive dysfunctions.

Assessment Step 8: Identify Strengths and Supports

All assessment must include some specific attention to the individual’s current strengths, skills, and supports, both in relation to general life functioning, and in relation to his or her ability to manage either mental disorders or SUDs. This often provides a more positive approach to treatment engagement than does focusing exclusively on deficits that need to be corrected. This is no less true for individuals with serious mental disorders than it is for people with SUDs only. Questions might focus on:

- Talents and interests.
- Areas of educational interest and literacy; vocational skill, interest, and ability, such as social skills or capacity for creative self-expression.
- Areas connected with high levels of motivation to change, for either disorder or both.
- Existing supportive relationships—treatment, peer, or family—particularly ongoing mental disorder treatment relationships.
- Previous mental health services and SUD treatment successes and exploration of what worked.
- Identification of current successes: What has the client done right recently for either disorder?
- Building treatment plans and interventions based on utilizing and reinforcing strengths and extending or supporting what has worked previously.

Assessment Step 8—Application to Case Examples (Jane B.)

Jane B. expressed significant interest in work once her paranoia subsided. She was attempting to address her SUD on an outpatient basis, as a residential treatment program was unavailable. Her case management team noted her interest and experience in caring for animals. Via individualized placement and support, they helped her obtain a part-time job at a local pet shop two afternoons per week. She was proud of her job and reported that it helped maintain her motivation to stay away from substances and to keep taking medication.

For individuals with SMI or substance misuse, the Individualized Placement and Support model of psychiatric rehabilitation has demonstrated that it is a cost-effective way to generate positive vocational and mental health outcomes compared with other models of vocational rehabilitation for this population, including improved rates of obtaining competitive employment, greater number of hours worked, increased wages, improvements in self-esteem and quality of life, and reductions in mental health service use (Drake, Bond, Goldman, Hogan, & Karakus, 2016; LePage et al., 2016). In this model, clients with disabilities who want to work may be placed in sheltered work activities based on strengths and preferences, even when actively using substances and inconsistently complying with medication regimens. In nonsheltered work activities, it is critical to remember that many employers have substance-free workplace policies. Participating in ongoing jobs is valuable to self-esteem in itself and can generate the motivation to address mental disorders and substance problems, as they appear to interfere specifically with work success. Taking advantage of educational and volunteer opportunities also may enhance self-esteem and is often a first step in securing employment.

Assessment Step 9: Identify Cultural and Linguistic Needs and Supports

Detailed cultural assessment is beyond the scope of this publication. Cultural assessment of individuals with CODs is not substantially different from cultural assessment for those with SUDs or mental disorders only, but some specific areas are worth addressing, such as:

- Problems with literacy.
- Not fitting into the treatment culture (SUD or mental health culture); conflict in treatment.
- Cultural and linguistic service barriers.

Not Fitting Into the Treatment Culture

To a certain degree, individuals with addiction and SMI may have difficulty fitting into existing treatment cultures. Many clients are aware of a variety of different attitudes and suggestions toward their disorders that can affect relationships with others. Traditional culture carriers (parents, grandparents) may have different views of their problems and the most appropriate treatment compared with peers. Individual clients may have positive or negative allegiance to a variety of peer or treatment cultures (e.g., mental health consumer movement, having mild or moderate severity mental disorders vs. SMI, 12-Step or dual recovery mutual support) based on past experience or on fears and concerns related to the mental disorder. Specific questions to explore with the client include:

- “How are your substance use and mental health concerns defined by your parents? Peers? Other clients?”
- “What do they think you should be doing to remedy these problems?”
- “How do you decide which suggestions to follow?”
- “In what kinds of treatment settings do you feel most comfortable?”
- “What do you think I (the counselor) should be doing to help you improve your situation?”

Assessment Step 9—Application to Case Example (George T.)

The client is a 34-year-old married, employed African American man with cocaine use disorder, alcohol misuse, and bipolar disorder (stabilized on lithium) mandated to cocaine treatment by his employer after a failed drug test. George T. and his family realize he needs help not to use cocaine but disagree that alcohol is a significant problem (nor does his employer). He complains that his mood swings intensify when he is using cocaine.

George T.'s counselor originally referred him to Cocaine Anonymous (CA). When George T. went, however, he reported back to the counselor that he did not feel comfortable there. He felt that as a family man with a responsible job, he had pulled himself out of the "street culture" that this specific meeting reflected. He also noted that most participants were White. Unlike many people with CODs who feel more ashamed of mental disorders than addiction, he felt more ashamed at the CA meeting than at his support group for people with mental disorders. Therefore, for George T., it was culturally appropriate to address the shame surrounding his substance use, encourage him to try other mutual support program meetings, and continue to provide positive feedback about his attendance at the support group for his mental disorder.

Cultural and Linguistic Service Barriers

Cultural and linguistic barriers can compound access to COD treatment. The assessment process must address whether these barriers prevent access to care (e.g., the client reads or speaks only Spanish; the client is illiterate) and if so, determine options for providing more individualized intervention or for integrating intervention into naturalistic culturally and linguistically appropriate human service settings.

Chapter 5 describes components of culturally responsive services. Chapter 6 offers information about people of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds with CODs needs and how counselors can help reduce treatment access and outcome disparities experienced by marginalized racial/ethnic groups.

Assessment Step 10: Identify Problem Domains

Individuals with CODs may have difficulties in multiple life domains (e.g., medical, legal, vocational, family, social). The ASI can identify and quantify substance use–related problems across domains, to see which require attention. It is used most effectively as a component of a comprehensive assessment.

A comprehensive, biopsychosocial evaluation for individuals with CODs requires clarifying how each disorder interacts with the problems in each domain, as well as identifying contingencies that might promote treatment adherence for mental health, SUD treatment, or both. Information about others who might assist in the implementation of such contingencies (e.g., probation officers, family, friends) needs to be gathered, including appropriate releases of information.

Assessment Step 11: Determine Stage of Change

A key evidence-based best practice for treatment matching clients with CODs is **to match interventions not only to specific diagnoses but also to stage of change and stage of treatment for each disorder.**

In SUD treatment settings, stage of change assessment usually involves determination of Prochaska and DiClemente Stages of Change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation (or determination), action, maintenance, and relapse (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992). This can involve using questionnaires such as the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (McConaughy, Prochaska, & Velicer, 1983; available at <https://habitslab.umbc.edu/urica/>) or the Stages of Change Readiness and Treatment Eagerness Scale (Miller & Tonigan, 1996; available at <https://casaa.unm.edu/inst/SOCRATESv8.pdf>). Stage of change can be determined clinically by interviewing clients and evaluating their responses in the context of change. For example, one approach to stage of change identification is to ask clients, for each problem, to select the statement that most closely fits their view of that problem:

- No problem, no interest in change, or both (Precontemplation).
- Might be a problem; might consider change (Contemplation).
- Definitely a problem; getting ready to change (Preparation).
- Actively working on changing, even if slowly (Action).
- Has achieved stability, and is trying to maintain (Maintenance).

Stage of change assessment ideally will be applied separately to each mental disorder and to each SUD. For example, a client may be willing to take medication for a depressive disorder but unwilling to discuss trauma, or motivated to stop cocaine but unwilling to consider alcohol as a problem.

For more indepth discussion of the stages of change and motivational enhancement, see TIP 35, *Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment* (SAMHSA, 2019d).

Assessment Step 12: Plan Treatment

A comprehensive assessment is the basis for an individualized treatment plan. Appropriate treatment plans and treatment interventions can be quite complex, depending on what might be discovered in each domain. **There is no single, correct intervention or program for individuals with CODs. Rather, match appropriate treatment to individual needs per these multiple considerations.**

The following case (Maria M.) illustrates how the noted factors help generate an integrated treatment plan that is appropriate to the needs and situation of a particular client.

Assessment Step 12—Application to Case Example (Maria M.)

The client is a 38-year-old Latina woman who is the mother of two teenagers. Maria M. presents with an 11-year history of cocaine dependence, a 2-year history of opioid dependence, and a history of trauma related to a longstanding abusive relationship (now over for 6 years). She is not in an intimate relationship at present and there is no current indication that she is at risk for either violence or self-harm. She also has persistent major depression and panic treated with antidepressants. She is very motivated to receive treatment.

Ideal Integrated Treatment Plan: The plan for Maria M. might include medication-assisted treatment (e.g., methadone or buprenorphine), continued antidepressant medication, a mutual support program, and other recovery group support for cocaine dependence. She also could be referred to a group for both SUD and trauma that is designed specifically to help reduce symptoms of trauma and resolve long-term problems.

Individual, group, and family interventions could be coordinated by the primary counselor from opioid maintenance treatment. The focus of these interventions might be on relapse prevention skills, taking medication as prescribed, and identifying and managing trauma-related symptoms without using.

Considerations in Treatment Matching

A major goal of the screening and assessment process is to ensure the client is matched with appropriate treatment. Acknowledging the overriding importance of this goal, this discussion of the process of clinical assessment for individuals with CODs begins with a fundamental statement of principle: Because clients with CODs are not all the same, program placements and treatment interventions should be matched individually to the needs of each client.

The ultimate purpose of the assessment process is to develop an appropriately individualized integrated treatment plan. In this model, **the consensus panel recommends the following approach:**

- Treatment planning for individuals with CODs and associated problems should follow the principle of mental disorder dual (or multiple) primary treatment, in which a specific intervention is matched

to each problem or diagnosis, as well as to stage of change and external contingencies. Exhibit 3.6 shows a sample treatment plan consisting of the problem, intervention, and goal.

- Integrated treatment planning involves helping the client to make the best possible treatment choices for each disorder and adhere to that treatment consistently. At the same time, the counselor needs to help the client adjust the recommended treatment strategies for each disorder as needed in order to take into account problems related to the other disorder.

These principles are best illustrated by using a case example to develop a sample treatment plan. For this purpose, the case example for George T. is used, incorporating the data gathered during assessment (Exhibit 3.7). The problem description presents various factors influencing the problem, including stage of change and client strengths. No specific person is recommended to carry out interventions proposed in the second column, as a range of professionals might carry out each intervention appropriately.

Exhibit 3.9. Sample Treatment Plan for Case Example George T.

Problem	Intervention	Goal
Cocaine use disorder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work problem, primary reason for referral • Family and work support • Resists mutual support • Mental symptoms trigger use • Action phase 	Outpatient treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAP monitoring • Family meetings • Address shame related to disorder • Skill-building to manage symptoms without using • Mutual support meetings 	Abstinence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative urinalysis results • Daily recovery plans
Rule out AUD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear problem • May trigger cocaine use • Precontemplation phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient motivational enhancement; thorough evaluation of role of alcohol in patient's life, including family education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move into contemplation • Willing to consider the risk of use or possible misuse
Bipolar disorder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long history • On lithium • Some mood symptoms • Maintenance phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication management • Help taking medication in recovery programs • Bipolar Support Alliance meetings • Advocate/collaborate with prescribing health professional • Identify mood symptoms that are triggers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain stable mood • Able to manage fluctuating mood symptoms that do occur without using cocaine or other substances to regulate his bipolar disorder

The consensus panel has reviewed research evidence and consensus clinical practice to identify factors critical to the process of matching clients to available treatment. Exhibit 3.7 lists these considerations.

Exhibit 3.10. Considerations in Treatment Matching

Variable	Key Data
Acute safety needs Determines need for immediate acute stabilization to establish safety prior to routine assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate risk of harm to self or others • Immediate risk of physical harm or abuse from others (Mee-Lee et al., 2013) • Inability to provide for basic self-care • Medically dangerous intoxication or withdrawal • Potentially lethal medical condition • Acute severe mental symptoms (e.g., mania, psychosis) leading to inability to function or communicate effectively
Quadrant assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPMI vs. non-SPMI

Exhibit 3.10. Considerations in Treatment Matching

Variable	Key Data
Guides the choice of the most appropriate setting for treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severely acute or disabling mental symptoms vs. mild-moderate severity symptoms High-severity SUD (e.g., active SUD) vs. lower severity SUD (e.g., hazardous substance use) Substance dependence in full vs. partial remission (Mee-Lee et al., 2013; APA, 2013)
Level of care Determines program assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dimensions of assessment for each disorder using criteria from the LOCUS
Diagnosis Determines the recommended treatment intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific diagnosis of each mental disorder and SUD, including distinction of substance-induced symptoms Information about past and present successful and unsuccessful treatment efforts for each diagnosis Identification of trauma-related disorders and culture-bound syndromes, in addition to other mental disorders and substance-related problems
Disability Determines case management needs and whether a standard intervention is sufficient—one at the capable or intermediate level—or whether an enhanced-level intervention is essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitive deficits, functional deficits, and skill deficits that interfere with ability to function independently or follow treatment recommendations and which may require varying types and amounts of case management or support Specific functional deficits that may interfere with ability to participate in SUD treatment in a particular program setting and may therefore require a COE setting rather than a co-occurring-capable one Specific deficits in learning or using basic recovery skills that require modified or simplified learning strategies
Strengths and skills Determines areas of prior success around which to organize future treatment interventions Determines skill-building needs for management of either disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of particular capacity or motivation related to general life functioning (e.g., capacity to socialize, work, or obtain housing) Ability to manage treatment participation for any disorder (e.g., familiarity and comfort with mutual support programs, commitment to medication adherence)
Availability and continuity of recovery support Determines availability of existing relationships and whether to establish continuing relationships to provide contingencies to promote learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence or absence of continuing treatment relationships, particularly mental disorder treatment relationships, beyond the single episode of care Presence or absence of an existing and ongoing supportive family, peer support, or therapeutic community; quality and safety of recovery environment (Mee-Lee et al., 2013)
Cultural context Determines most culturally appropriate treatment interventions and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of cultural identification and support in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic or linguistic culture identification (e.g., attachment to traditional Native American cultural healing practices) Cultures that have evolved around treatment of mental disorders and SUDs (e.g., identification with 12-Step and mutual recovery culture; commitment to mental health empowerment movement) Gender and gender identity Sexual orientation Rural vs. urban
Problem domains	Is there impairment, need, or strength in any of the following areas?

Exhibit 3.10. Considerations in Treatment Matching

Variable	Key Data
Determines specific problems to be solved and opportunities for contingencies to promote treatment participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Legal • Employment • Housing • Social/family • Medical, parenting/child protective, abuse/victimization/victimizer
Phase of recovery/stage of change (for each problem) Determines appropriate phase-specific or stage-specific treatment intervention and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for acute stabilization of symptoms, engagement, or motivational enhancement • Active treatment to achieve prolonged stabilization • Relapse prevention/maintenance • Rehabilitation, recovery, and growth • Within the motivational enhancement sequence, precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, or relapse (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992) • Engagement, stabilization/persuasion, active treatment, or continuing care/relapse prevention (Mueser & Gingerich, 2013; SAMHSA, 2009a)

Conclusion

Assessment is a systematic approach for behavioral health service providers to gather information that supports matched treatment plans for individuals with CODs. It is a required competency and a key component of the counselor–client relationship in which providers learn to better understand their clients; have opportunities to express genuine concern, hope, and empathy for long-term recovery; and help set the stage for effective treatment. Most of these activities are already a routine component of substance misuse-only assessment; the key additional element is attention to treatment requirements and stage of change for mental disorders, and the possible interference of mental disorder symptoms and disabilities (including personality disorder symptoms) in SUD treatment participation.