

COMMUNITY AGED CARE CLINICAL WORKFLOW

ASSIST-Lite for Older People

Home Visit Practice Guide

1 Notice the clinical clues

Psychoactive substance use should be thought of as a possible contributor whenever an older person presents with:

- Falls or reduced mobility
- Poor sleep or fatigue
- Memory or concentration problems
- Increasing anxiety or low mood
- Frequent hospital or emergency department presentations
- Pain requiring multiple medications
- Family concerns about behaviour
- Loss of function or independence

2 Introduce the conversation

Normalise the discussion.

"Because alcohol, medications and other substances can sometimes affect health, risk of falls and memory, we ask everyone these routine questions."

Explain:

- **the last 3 months**
- include prescribed medicines only if **not taken as prescribed**. Explain meaning.
- confidentiality and its limits

3 Complete the ASSIST-Lite OP

Ask about every substance in order.

If **No** to the first question, move to the next substance.

If **Yes**, complete the additional questions.

4 Score each substance

Risk level	Action
Low	Reinforce healthy behaviour
Moderate	Provide Brief Advice
High	Provide Brief Advice and recommend further assessment or referral

Use the **Feedback Card** and ask how they feel about their score.

5 Deliver Brief Advice (FRAMES)

F	Feedback	Explain the score and what it means. Make it as personally relevant as possible.
R	Responsibility	"What you decide is your choice." Personal ownership of decisions is motivationally important.
A	Advice	Explain how reducing use reduces risk, along with other ways to reduce risk (for example, not mixing alcohol with certain medications).
M	Menu	Discuss a range of practical options.
E	Empathy	Listen without judgement, and this includes not communicating judgement non-verbally.
S	Self-efficacy	Build and reinforce confidence that change is possible.

6 Link your advice to what matters most to the client

Ask: *"What concerns you most at the moment?"*

Examples:

- Remaining independent
- Avoiding falls
- Better sleep
- Less pain
- Better memory
- Staying in their own home

Link substance use directly to these goals.

7 Decide the next step with the client

Possible actions include:

- ☐ Medication review (GP)
- ☐ Falls assessment
- ☐ Physiotherapy
- ☐ Occupational therapy
- ☐ Home safety review
- ☐ Specialist AOD service
- ☐ Mental health support
- ☐ Smoking cessation support
- ☐ Community supports

8 Document

- ASSIST-Lite scores
- Risk level
- Feedback provided
- Client's goals
- Actions taken
- Referrals made
- Follow-up plan

Remember

You do not need to diagnose dependence. Your role is to:

- ✓ Recognise risk
- ✓ Ask routinely
- ✓ Use the ASSIST-Lite OP
- ✓ Provide Brief Advice
- ✓ Support informed choices
- ✓ Connect to appropriate care