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A Reflection Tool for Clinicians Navigating Drinking Culture in the Workplace

Use this guide to explore how social pressure and workplace norms may influence drinking behaviors—and identify strategies for protecting your boundaries in professional settings.

PREVENTIVE REFLECTION: NAVIGATING WORKPLACE DRINKING CULTURE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **HAVE YOU EVER FELT OBLIGATED TO DRINK AT A WORK EVENT TO AVOID STANDING OUT?**
- **HAVE YOU MADE DIFFERENT CHOICES AT WORK FUNCTIONS THAN YOU WOULD IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE?**
- **DO YOU FEEL RESPECTED WHEN YOU CHOOSE NOT TO DRINK—OR DOES IT BECOME A TOPIC OF PRESSURE OR QUESTIONING?**

SOCIAL TRIGGERS & CULTURAL NORMS

- **WHAT ARE SOME PHRASES OR ASSUMPTIONS YOU'VE HEARD AROUND DRINKING AT WORK? (E.G., "JUST ONE WON'T HURT," "IT'S HOW WE BOND")**
- **HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY RESPOND WHEN YOU'RE OFFERED ALCOHOL IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING?**

SELF-SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- **WHAT HELPS YOU FEEL GROUNDED AND AUTHENTIC IN SPACES WHERE ALCOHOL IS PRESENT?**
- **WHAT COULD YOU SAY OR DO IN ADVANCE TO PROTECT YOUR BOUNDARIES NEXT TIME?**

PROMPT: WRITE A RESPONSE YOU'D FEEL COMFORTABLE USING IF ASKED, "WHY AREN'T YOU DRINKING?"

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FOR SUPERVISORS & TEAMS BUILDING INCLUSIVE SOCIAL CULTURES

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **ARE WE UNINTENTIONALLY PROMOTING ALCOHOL AS THE NORM FOR CELEBRATION OR CONNECTION?**
- **DO OUR EVENTS OFFER NON-ALCOHOLIC OPTIONS—AND ARE THOSE OPTIONS NORMALIZED?**
- **HAVE WE ASKED STAFF ABOUT THEIR PREFERENCES WHEN PLANNING?**

PRACTICES TO NORMALIZE

- **OFFER VISIBLE NON-ALCOHOLIC ALTERNATIVES (MOCKTAILS, SPARKLING WATER)**
- **MAKE SPACE FOR MULTIPLE TYPES OF CELEBRATION —NOT JUST HAPPY HOURS**
- **REFRAIN FROM SINGLING PEOPLE OUT FOR NOT DRINKING**

SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE TIPS

- **AVOID: "JUST ONE!" OR "YOU'RE NO FUN!"**
- **TRY: "WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE," OR "WHAT DO YOU FEEL LIKE HAVING?"**

PREVENTIVE PLANNING

- **INCLUDE QUESTIONS ABOUT EVENT COMFORT IN STAFF FEEDBACK SURVEYS**
- **PROVIDE OPT-OUT OPTIONS WITHOUT PENALTY OR EXCLUSION**

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