

Rob - Care scenario



Rob is a 35-year-old married male with one child (son aged 4 months), who is employed fulltime as an accountant. Rob presents with daily alcohol use over the past six months. Alcohol was last consumed one week ago prior to Rob having a 'near miss' single vehicle car accident while driving under the influence of alcohol. Rob was disturbed by this event and made admissions to his partner the next day on the extent of his alcohol use.

Rob began to feel unwell approximately 36 hours after his last drink with symptoms including cold sweats, racing pulse, nausea, shaky hands and increased feelings of anxiety. At his partner's insistence, Rob attended an appointment with his GP, who has commenced him on medication for alcohol withdrawal management and ordered follow-up tests. Rob's GP provided him with the details for the Alcohol and Drug Service. There has been no prior history of alcohol withdrawal complications.

Rob's overall physical health has declined in recent months and he has been experiencing concentration difficulties, fatigue, reduced appetite and an inability to stay asleep during the night (waking several times and struggling to get back to sleep).

Rob is seeking to sustain his current remission from regular alcohol use, however, is unsure about what he would like his alcohol use to be like in the future.

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Rob grew up in a household in which his father consumed alcohol daily. During his interview, Rob recalled the first time he mentioned his Dad's drinking to a school friend in Grade 2 (age 7 y.o.) and finding out that his father's behaviour was not common in all families. When he was aged 5, Rob's family experienced the death of his younger brother from stillbirth. When describing this experience, Rob noted that the death of his brother made him realise "how risky it is to have a baby, so many things can go wrong".

Rob's recent escalation in alcohol use occurred when his wife was 7 months pregnant. Rob reported that, at that time, he was drinking to cope with increasing stress associated with the possibility of something going wrong with the health of his son. Rob's alcohol consumption occurs in the evenings when arriving home from work. He has found that, over time, he has needed to increase the amount of alcohol he consumes to achieve the desired effect of being calm.

The most recent pattern has involved consumption of 2 x 700ml bottles of white wine in his car before entering the family home (thinking this would keep his drinking hidden from his partner), and 2 x 375ml full strength beer consumed over the course of the evening prior to dinner. Rob stated that he drinks in the evenings because he's "always stressing about something terrible happening to my son when I'm at home", and he finds that the alcohol helps to "calm my nerves so I can deal with everything at home better".

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Rob's use of alcohol first commenced at age 16 in a pattern described as 'recreational/social' during weekends and social events with same age peers. Rob noted that he always felt happy and carefree when drinking with his friends. He noted more regular consumption emerging around age 26 years when he would drink "a few beers" (up to 3 x 375ml full strength beer = approx. 5 standard drinks) on three to four evenings per week (not daily). This increase in alcohol consumption coincided with increased stress in his job, and Rob reported that drinking helped him to "chill out".

Despite the increase in his alcohol use over the past 6 months, Rob has been able to maintain his usual level of functioning at work. Rob notes that alcohol has always been his main choice when seeking to relax and unwind, and that he has always found it to be successful. For this reason, he reports that he has never felt a need to find other relaxation or calming strategies. Rob is motivated to change his pattern of alcohol use and to continue to engage as a partner, father and employee.

Rob has accessed ongoing medical support and has support from his partner. However, Rob's partner has made it known that he needs to actively engage in treatment for his alcohol use in order to receive her ongoing support. Rob wishes to understand the potential links between his drinking and adverse childhood experiences, wants to prevent ever being under the influence of alcohol while driving, and desires to increase his options to manage challenging emotions without any form of substance use.

