



The State Bar of California

ALCOHOL, HEALTH, AND ATTORNEY WELLNESS TOOLKIT INSTRUCTIONS

TOOLKIT INSTRUCTIONS

This toolkit enables non-expert facilitators to confidently lead the *Alcohol, Health, and Attorney Wellness: Navigating Risks and Professional Responsibility* course. The program provides one hour of Prevention and Detection competence minimum continuing legal education credit (MCLE). The materials distill authoritative public information (such as the U.S. Surgeon General's 2025 Advisory on Alcohol and Health) into clear talking points. Facilitators should review all materials in advance, noting key statistics and resources. It may be helpful to practice pronunciation of any medical terms and to familiarize yourself with California-specific programs (like the Lawyer Assistance Program) so you can comfortably discuss them.

If a medical professional is preferred to present on the Medical Insights into the Health Effects of Alcohol section, consider reaching out to addiction medicine specialists at local hospitals, the California Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM), or local public health departments. If you are unable to source a medical professional or would prefer to present the medical insights portion of the CLE yourself, you may.

To source an attorney in recovery presenter, consider contacting The Other Bar (<https://otherbar.org/>) or the Wellness committees of local and affinity bar associations. If necessary, consider using a recorded recovery story from The Other Bar (<https://otherbar.org/testimonials/>) or available on YouTube. After the video, facilitate a brief discussion using key talking points drawn from the recording.

Suggested slide distribution:

- Facilitator: Slides 1-10
- Medical Professional (or facilitator if no Medical Professional): Slides 11-17
- Facilitator: Slide 18-19
- Attorney in Recovery: Slide 19 (slides to be adapted as needed)
- Facilitator: Slides 20-29

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This one-hour Prevention and Detection competence MCLE program provides a research-based examination of alcohol's health effects, its documented impact on professional functioning, and the ways in which alcohol misuse affects multiple dimensions of attorney wellness. The program begins with a medical overview of alcohol's role as a carcinogen and its contribution to

cancer incidence and other chronic health conditions. An attorney in recovery then offers a candid personal account illustrating how alcohol use disorder affects legal practice, relationships, and personal well-being. The presentation concludes with a detailed review of confidential support resources available to California attorneys, law students, and bar applicants, including the State Bar’s Lawyer Assistance Program and peer-support organizations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this program, participants will be able to:

- Apply current medical evidence regarding alcohol-related cancer risk to assess how personal drinking patterns may affect their physical health and long-term professional capacity.
- Analyze how alcohol use can impair multiple dimensions of attorney well-being and evaluate when those impacts raise concerns under the duty of competence in Rule 1.1.
- Select and appropriately use confidential support resources to address concerns about their own alcohol use or to support a colleague while maintaining ethical and confidentiality obligations.
- This program is designed to support early prevention and detection by helping attorneys recognize risk factors, identify early warning signs, and access confidential support before competence is impaired.

COURSE COMPONENTS

- Lesson Plan (timing, content flow, and faculty notes)
- PowerPoint Presentation (aligned with lesson plan)
- Handouts (summaries, reference sheets, case examples, or outlines)
- Polling questions or discussion prompts (included in the Lesson Plan, PowerPoint, and below)

BEST INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

When presenting, strive to be empathetic and stigma-free. Avoid derogatory terms (e.g. “alcoholic” as a label); instead use person-centered language like “lawyer with a drinking problem” or “someone experiencing alcohol misuse.” Emphasize that substance use issues are common and help is available because this framing reduces fear and encourages openness. If attendees ask complex questions (legal or medical) beyond your expertise, it’s fine to acknowledge you are not an expert and suggest consulting a professional or the resources provided. The provided script as contained within the “Content” column and faculty notes of the Lesson Plan will guide you on what to say for each topic, including how to introduce sensitive issues (such as health risks or ethical duties) in a factual yet caring manner.

To maximize engagement and impact, the course uses a mix of teaching methods. Below are best practices and strategies for facilitators:

Tone and Approach: Set a supportive, non-fear-based tone from the outset and foster a safe space for discussion. You might begin by acknowledging that the topic can feel personal, welcoming questions, and offering anonymous submission options if available. If someone shares a sensitive experience or concern, respond with empathy and appreciation. Normalize conversations about alcohol use and mental health by reinforcing that these are common challenges, not moral failings. Avoid dramatizing worst-case scenarios (“Alcohol will ruin your career!”). Rather than using scare tactics, frame the information as practical knowledge that helps participants make informed decisions and protect their health and careers. When discussing potential consequences, do so calmly and factually, then pivot to the message that early awareness and use of available resources can prevent harm. Maintain a hopeful outlook by noting that many legal professionals successfully address substance-related challenges and thrive with the right support.

Presentation and Media: Use the PowerPoint slides to stay on track and reinforce key points visually. The slide deck is aligned with the lesson plan – slide numbers are referenced in the facilitator script. Avoid reading slides verbatim; instead, speak around the bullets using the script for inspiration and detail. Where slides prompt an activity (e.g., a poll or to consider a point), be sure to pause and engage the audience as intended. When co-presenters are involved (e.g., a facilitator plus a medical expert or a LAP representative), coordinate transitions so each person knows when to speak.

Use of Data and References: The course draws on reputable sources such as the 2025 U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on Alcohol and Cancer Risk, California statutes, and ABA studies. Cite these during the presentation to add weight (“According to the Surgeon General’s report ...”) but keep it approachable by summarizing in plain language. The participants have a handout with a list of references, so you do not need to recite footnotes; just mention sources generally to bolster credibility.

By following these practices (maintaining a supportive tone, engaging participants through questions, and sticking to the structured materials) facilitators will deliver an informative and impactful session that meets the MCLE objectives and leaves attorneys better equipped to manage alcohol-related issues in their lives and practice.

POLLING QUESTIONS

Please load each question as a separate and individual poll. Please title the poll with the slide number and poll/hypo number.

If you need assistance adding the poll in zoom, please visit [Conducting Polls in Meetings](#).
Conducting Polls in Teams [Conducting Polls in Teams](#).

1. POLL: ALCOHOL AND CANCER RISK

Slide 5

What percentage of Americans are aware that alcohol consumption increases cancer risk?

- a. 91%

- b. 89%
- c. 81%
- d. 53%
- e. 45%

Correct Response

e. 45%

DEBRIEF OF POLL: ALCOHOL AND CANCER RISK

Slide 6

- Tip: Use polling software (Zoom polls, Zoom Q&A or chat, Teams polls) or hand raise
- Highlight how unfamiliar many are with alcohol-cancer links compared to tobacco or radiation
- This question primes awareness for the Surgeon General's Advisory

2. POLL: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ALCOHOL MISUSE

Slide 18

How confident are you in identifying early signs of alcohol misuse in yourself or others?

- a. Very confident
- b. Somewhat confident
- c. Neutral
- d. Not very confident
- e. Not confident at all

Correct Response

Any of the above

DEBRIEF OF POLL: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF ALCOHOL MISUSE

Slide 18

Given that this is a self-assessment question, there is no correct answer.

Thank you for sharing your perspective. Recognizing signs is important, but understanding the real-world impact is equally critical. Let's now explore the professional and personal toll that alcohol can have on attorneys and their well-being. If you were not very confident in your ability to identify early signs of alcohol misuse, you will learn more about the early signs, and the impact alcohol misuse can have on each dimension of well-being.