



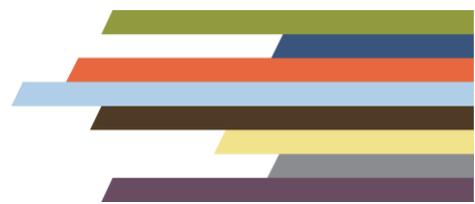
Alcohol Use Disorders (AUD) and Mental Health Disorders: Often Over-Shadowed but Still a Concern in Rural Communities

Alcohol Use Disorders and Mental Health Disorders remain serious problems in the United States (US)

- In 2018, about 139.8 million Americans aged 12 or older were past month alcohol users, 67.1 million were binge drinkers in the past month, and 16.6 million were heavy drinkers in the past month¹
- Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in the United States. An estimated 17.3 million (7.1%) adults in the US had at least one major depressive episode²
- Stress is a prominent risk factor for the onset and maintenance of alcohol misuse. Rural farmers and agricultural producers are uniquely impacted by farm stress that affects them mentally, physically, emotionally and financially³
- Alcohol use increases symptoms of panic and anxiety disorders, depression and other mental health disorders, as well as the risk of family and domestic violence⁴

Rural communities often face unique barriers to healthcare, including care for those with AUD and Mental Health Disorders³

- **Accessibility:** limited access to healthcare services. People with AUD may go unrecognized and untreated because residents of remote rural communities often need to travel long distances to receive healthcare services. This includes screening for AUD and mental health disorders
- **Availability:** U.S. rural counties are experiencing both primary care and mental health professional shortage service areas. This impacts care for those with substance abuse and mental health disorders
- **Acceptability:** Rural residents are likely to experience self-stigma, fear or embarrassment related to seeking out mental healthcare or care for AUD



Providers should universally screen for risky alcohol use and mental health disorders

- Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral the Treatment (SBIRT) is an effective technique available for anyone to use
- The AUDIT-C is a 3-item screen that can help identify people with hazardous drinking behavior and/or alcohol dependence
- The Patient Health Questionnaires 2 & 9 screen for common mental health disorders

Farmers, farm workers and farm families are facing an unprecedented time in our history. Our U.S. farmers who struggle with AUD and depression may be especially challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain healthy choices and sobriety.

The Mountain Plains Addiction Technology Transfer Center has published a unique tool for healthcare providers working with our rural farm families struggling with AUD and Depression.

Please visit our website to view: [Depression, Alcohol and Farm Stress: Addressing Co-Occurring Disorders in Rural America](https://attcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-attc/product/depression-alcohol-and-farm-stress-addressing-co-occurring) (<https://attcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-attc/product/depression-alcohol-and-farm-stress-addressing-co-occurring>)

References

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