

Medications for Alcohol Use Disorder (MAUD): A Toolkit for Social Workers

MAUD are evidence-based treatments and, when used in conjunction with behavioral therapy, have been shown to be helpful for those with alcohol use disorder (AUD).



Alcohol is the most commonly used substance in the US.

10.5% (29.5 million) of people ages ≥12 years in the US **meet the criteria** for an AUD¹

7.6% of people with a past-year AUD diagnosis received any treatment and **even fewer** received MAUD¹

MAUD, in conjunction with behavioral therapy have been shown to:

- Increase rates of abstinence
- Reduce recurrence of alcohol use (return to drinking)
- Decrease health risks related to alcohol use (e.g., liver disease, cancer, etc.)
- Restore normal brain functioning
- Decrease symptoms of protracted withdrawal (e.g., cravings, mood instability, sleep disturbance)
- Reduce all-cause mortality²

Social workers are vital to a patient's success with MAUD.

Social workers are essential in supporting patients with AUD and in recovery from AUD. They play a pivotal role in increasing the use and adherence of MAUD by performing comprehensive assessments, removing barriers to access, providing patient education, collaborating with interdisciplinary teams, and advocating on behalf of patients. Their expertise in patient education does not only enhance treatment adherence and recovery, but also strengthens the therapeutic relationship with patients, which is essential for promoting overall well-being and achieving successful recovery.

How Social Workers Help Patients Achieve Success with MAUD

PATIENT ASSESSMENT

Social workers:

- Create plans for medication and treatment adherence
- Continuously assess the patient's thoughts on the medication and treatments, and convey this information to prescribers and medical professionals
- Measure and monitor the patient's wellness

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Social workers can help by:

- Discussing treatment options with the patient
- Enhancing treatment adherence and recovery
- Aiding in the most effective treatment decisions and outcomes by supporting both the prescriber's medication recommendation and the patient's choice

PATIENT ADVOCACY

When progress or barriers arise social workers ensure transparency with the:

- Patient
- Prescribers
- Treatment team

Provide insight into how medical systems create barriers that impact health by discriminating against:

- Culture
- Socioeconomic status
- Sexuality
- Race/ethnicity
- Religion

PATIENT EDUCATION

Social workers:

- Promote overall well-being and successful recovery
- Build trust and rapport with the patient, strengthening their therapeutic relationship
- Create safe spaces to discuss and address alcohol use

INTEGRATED CARE

Social workers may:

- Be the first healthcare professional to whom the patient discloses struggles
- Have more insight on the patient than other healthcare professionals within the interdisciplinary team

Interact with all medical professionals involved in the patient's treatment team and involved in:

- Care and treatment planning
- Goal setting

Social workers can facilitate supportive discussions about MAUD with patients.

A Getting the Conversation Started—Assess how a patient is feeling and their experience with MAUD.

- I am curious to know what you know about medications that help with alcohol use.
- What has taking medication been like for you in the past?
- How was the medication helpful or not helpful?

B Gather Information using Motivational Interviewing—Understand where the patient is and if they are ready to explore MAUD.

[CLICK ON THE TOOL BELOW VIEW THE FULL VERSION. A NEW WINDOW WILL OPEN. BE SURE TO CLOSE TO RETURN TO THIS PDF.](#)

Motivational Interviewing for Alcohol Use Disorder Treatment

Online Module

Overview

In this module, learners will explore motivational interviewing (MI) as a guided approach to clinical interactions and fostering behavior change in patients. Learners will explore how to use MI strategies to help patients with alcohol use disorder (AUD) identify and change risky behaviors associated with alcohol use. The target audience for this activity includes: Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers, and other healthcare professionals part of the care team. This activity addresses the following ACGME Competencies: Patient Care, Medical Based Knowledge, Practice Based Learning.

C Deploy Psychoeducation—Help patients have a better understanding of the pros and cons of using MAUD as a way to improve wellness outcomes.

D Roll with a Patient's Resistance Towards Change—Validate their concerns while asking if it is ok to discuss the benefits of MAUD.

There are three FDA-approved medications* for treating AUD.³

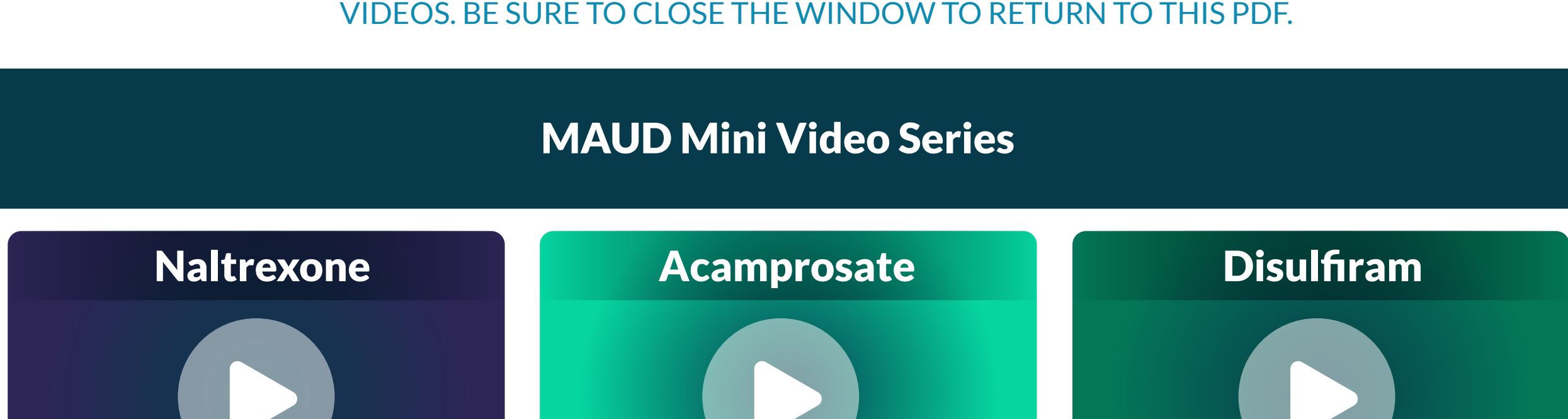
	Naltrexone	Acamprosate	Disulfiram
Patient Type	• Option for patients seeking abstinence or a reduction in alcohol use	• Option for patients seeking abstinence or a reduction in alcohol use	• Best suited for highly motivated patients seeking abstinence from alcohol
How It Works	• Blocks opioid receptors • Reduces cravings and euphoric feelings • Opioids should be avoided while on this medication	• Restores the balance of neurotransmitters • Reduces cravings	• Blocks the body's metabolism of alcohol • Alcohol usage on this drug will induce a severe physical reaction similar to a hangover
Recommended Dose	• 1 pill/day, or • 1 extended-release injection/month • Prescription required	• 3 pills/day • Prescription required	• 1 pill/day • Prescription required
Additional Considerations	• Opioids should be avoided while on this medication	• Best started after completion of medically managed alcohol withdrawal • Can also be used if the patient returns to alcohol use	

*None of the medications require special licensure or training and can be provided by any healthcare professional with prescribing ability⁴

Topiramate, Gabapentin, and Baclofen are non-FDA-approved medications that may also help patients.

[CLICK ON THE TAB BELOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MEDICATIONS. A NEW WINDOW WILL OPEN WITH A LINK TO THE VIDEOS. BE SURE TO CLOSE THE WINDOW TO RETURN TO THIS PDF.](#)

MAUD Mini Video Series



Summary

Although alcohol is the most commonly used substance, very few people receive any treatment. In conjunction with behavioral therapy, MAUD can be an effective option. Equipped with the skillsets to listen to, connect with, and offer help to patients with AUD, social workers are essential to increasing the usage and adherence of MAUD as well as strengthening the therapeutic relationship with patients. Working with a team of healthcare professionals, social workers support their patients into the following FDA-approved medications for AUD: acamprosate, disulfiram, and naltrexone.

Learn more at www.pcass-maud.org

References

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP23-07-01-006, NSDUH Series H-58). Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
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Funding for this initiative was made possible by cooperative agreement number 1H79TI086771-01 from SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.