

Handout

Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST)

This screening test was developed by two social workers, Jones and Pilat.

Please check the answer below that best describes your feelings, behavior and experiences related to a parent's alcohol use. Take your time and be as accurate as possible.

- Have you ever thought that one of your parents had a drinking problem?
- Have you ever lost sleep because of a parent's drinking?
- Did you ever encourage one of your parents to quit drinking?
- Did you ever feel alone, scared, nervous, angry or frustrated because a parent was not able to stop drinking?
- Did you ever argue or fight with a parent when he or she was drinking?
- Did you ever threaten to run away from home because of a parent's drinking?
- Has a parent ever yelled at or hit you or other family members when drinking?
- Have you ever heard your parents fight when one of them was drunk?
- Did you ever protect another family member from a parent who was drinking?
- Did you ever feel like hiding or emptying a parent's bottle of liquor?
- Do many of your thoughts revolve around a problem drinking parent or difficulties that arise because of his or her drinking?
- Did you ever wish that a parent would stop drinking?
- Did you ever feel responsible for or guilty about a parent's drinking?
- Did you ever fear that your parents would get divorced due to alcohol misuse?
- Have you ever withdrawn from and avoided outside activities and friends because of embarrassment and shame over a parent's drinking problem?
- Did you ever feel caught in the middle of an argument or fight between a problem drinking parent and your other parent?
- Did you ever feel that you made a parent drink alcohol?
- Have you ever felt that a problem drinking parent did not really love you?
- Did you ever resent a parent's drinking?
- Have you ever worried about a parent's health because of his or her alcohol use?
- Have you ever been blamed for a parent's drinking?
- Did you ever think your father was an alcoholic?
- Did you ever wish your home could be more like the homes of your friends who did not have a parent with a drinking problem?

- Did a parent ever make promises to you that he or she did not keep because of drinking?
- Did you ever think your mother was an alcoholic?
- Did you ever wish that you could talk to someone who could understand and help the alcohol-related problems in your family?
- Did you ever fight with your brothers and sisters about a parent's drinking?
- Did you ever stay away from home to avoid the drinking parent or your other parent's reaction to the drinking?
- Have you ever felt sick, cried, or had a "knot" in your stomach after worrying about a parent's drinking?
- Did you ever take over any chores and duties at home that were usually done by a parent before he or she developed a drinking problem?

Score: Total Number of Yes Answers

0-1 Most likely parent is not alcoholic. A score of 1 might suggest problem drinking.

2-5 Has had problems due to at least one parent's drinking behavior. This is a child of a drinker or possibly an alcoholic.

6+ More than likely the child of an alcoholic. Stage of alcoholism needs to be determined.

(Modified CAST) CAST-6

These questions are a subsample of questions appearing on the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test, developed by Jones and Pilat, and have also been rigorously tested.

- Have you ever thought that one of your parents had a drinking problem?
- Did you ever encourage one of your parents to quit drinking?
- Did you ever argue or fight with a parent when he or she was drinking?
- Have you ever heard your parents fight when one of them was drunk?
- Did you ever feel like hiding or emptying a parent's bottle of liquor?
- Did you ever wish that a parent would stop drinking?

Scoring:

3 or more yes answers - probably a COA

Source: The Center on Addiction and the Family (COAF) retrieved from <http://www.coaf.org/professionals/screenCAST.htm>