About This Handbook

This Handbook is the third edition of a resource originally produced well over a decade ago. The last edition proved to be a valuable and much sought after document. In the intervening years since the last edition of the Handbook was produced the alcohol and other drugs field has changed, expanded and progressed in many ways. Hence, this new version covers expanded territory (such as polydrug use and coexisting mental health problems) and newer topic areas (such as gambling). Effort was directed at producing a resource document that was both user-friendly and also captured up-to-date, empirically sound health and medical advice. The information contained in the Handbook reflects evidence-based perspectives that are seen to be of practical value to the clinician in their day-to-day practice.

This Handbook has been produced with a very broad target audience in mind. Largely it will cater for the professional alcohol and other drugs needs of non-specialist medical practitioners and nurses. But it is also designed to be a useful practical tool for a wide range of other health and human services workers including psychologists, social workers and counsellors. We also envisage that it will be of value and interest to groups such as teachers, community workers and those with wider roles such as health promotion.

As a ‘Handbook’ this resource provides only a general summary overview of key issues pertinent to each of the topics covered. Readers are encouraged to seek more in-depth information from the various resources, links and contacts cited throughout the Handbook. Finally, it is important to note that the alcohol and other drugs field is particularly dynamic. While knowledge in any field is by necessity ‘provisional’, this may be considered to be especially the case in the changing and evolving area of alcohol and other drugs. The reader is therefore encouraged to use this resource as an entry point to the complex phenomenon of drug using behaviour and the challenging world of problem resolution.

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Acknowledgments

The production of this Handbook on alcohol and other drugs has involved the input, support and collaboration of many players and partners. The proposal for the Handbook came from the consortium that formed the Editorial Group, and this was largely formed at the instigation of Professor James Rankin. Professor Rankin is thanked for his enthusiasm and drive in getting this project off the ground. The other consortium members are thanked for their sound advice and support throughout the duration of the production of the Handbook. The consortium’s Editorial Group included:

- Professor Ann Roche (Project Head)
- Associate Professor Robert Ali
- Professor Richard Mattick
- Professor Brian McAvoy
- Professor James Rankin

The Handbook also involved the input of a range of individuals and groups that are not immediately apparent and this included our Reference Group and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) who assisted in the piloting of the draft version of the document.

In addition, we would like to gratefully acknowledge the feedback received from many colleagues who contributed to various parts and stages of the process. Without the input of all of the above the production of this third edition of the Handbook would not have been possible.

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*Managing Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Problems: A Pocket Guide for Physicians and Nurses*

Illustrations by Simon Kneebone.
List of Contributors

A wide range of contributors, each experts in specific areas, were involved in the writing of this Handbook. Some authors contributed whole chapters, others wrote smaller parts that were subsequently worked into larger sections or chapters. The authors who contributed to the Handbook in various ways are listed below.

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In addition to the authors and the overseeing Consortium, an important role was played by a team of NCETA staff who worked extensively on the editing of the Handbook to ensure its accuracy and consistency in terms of style and presentation. The final editorial team mainly comprised Dr Carolyn Edmonds, Jodie Shoobridge and Professor Ann Roche.

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# Contents

## Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About This Handbook</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Contributors</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents – Overview</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents – Detailed</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 1: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

1. Overview and Introduction                  | 3    |
2. General Principles of Management and Intervention | 17   |

## PART 2: THE DRUGS

3. Alcohol                                    | 31   |
4. Tobacco                                    | 59   |
5. Cannabis                                    | 73   |
6. Amphetamines                                | 79   |
7. Ecstasy                                     | 95   |
8. Cocaine                                     | 105  |
9. Heroin and Other Opioids                   | 119  |
10. Volatile Substances                       | 137  |
11. Benzodiazepines                            | 147  |
12. Other Drugs                                | 157  |

## PART 3: NON-MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

13. Psychosocial Interventions                | 167  |
14. Alternative Therapies                     | 177  |
### Contents

**PART 1: OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION**

1. **OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION**
   - Types of Drugs and their Effects
     - Identifying Harms
     - *The drug*
     - *The individual*
     - *The environment*
   - Drug Usage
     - Alcohol
     - Tobacco
     - Other Drugs
     - Polydrug Use
     - Routes of Administration
     - Terminology
   - Definitions of Drug and Alcohol Problems
     - Hazardous Use
     - Harmful Use
     - Substance ‘Abuse’
     - Substance Dependence
   - Standards of Care
     - Attitudes Towards Drug Users
     - Drug Users’ Rights
   - Role of Health and Human Services Providers
     - Medical Practitioners and Nurses
     - Other Frontline Workers
     - Health Professionals’ Role with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
     - Health Professionals’ Role with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups
   - Prevention and Treatment Strategies
   - Secondary Prevention
   - Interpreting and Translation
   - Resources
   - Other Special Needs Groups
   - References

---

#### Detailed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Drugs and their Effects</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Harms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The drug</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The individual</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The environment</em></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Usage</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Drugs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polydrug Use</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes of Administration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Drug and Alcohol Problems</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Use</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful Use</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance ‘Abuse’</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Dependence</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of Care</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Towards Drug Users</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Users’ Rights</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Health and Human Services Providers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Practitioners and Nurses</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Frontline Workers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professionals’ Role with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professionals’ Role with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention and Treatment Strategies</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Prevention</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting and Translation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Special Needs Groups</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT AND INTERVENTION

Harm Minimisation 17
Efficacy of Treatment 18
Early Recognition and Screening 18
Routine Enquiry About Alcohol and Drug Use 18
  Screening Questionnaires 18
  Biological Screening 19
Common Clinical Presentations 19
  Assessment 19
Management of Low Level Problems 20
  Psychosocial Interventions 21
Maintenance Pharmacotherapies 21
Pharmacotherapies for Alcohol Dependence 22
  Acamprosate (Campral®) 22
  Naltrexone (Revia®) 22
  Disulfiram (Antabuse®) 22
Pharmacotherapies for Opioid Dependence 22
  Buprenorphine 22
  Methadone 22
  Levoalphaacetylmethadol (LAAM) 22
  Naltrexone (Revia®) 23
Withdrawal and Detoxification 23
Intoxication and Overdose 23
Coexisting Mental Health Problems 24
Drug Seeking 24
  Clinical Features 24
  Management 25
General Management Approaches 25
  Readiness to Change 26
Resources 27
References 27
PART 2: THE DRUGS

3. ALCOHOL

Pharmacology
Absorption 31
Distribution 32
Metabolism 32

Patterns of Drinking 32
Benefits and Harms 32
Effects of Alcohol Consumption 33

Measuring Consumption: The ‘Standard Drink’ 35
Identifying ‘At-risk’ Drinking Levels 35
Groups at High Risk for Alcohol-related Harm 35
Young people (up to 18 years) and young adults (19–25 years) 35
People with mental health problems 37
Unborn children 37
Women 37
Occupational groups 37

Identifying Harms 37
The drug 37
The individual 38
The environment 38

Alcohol Assessment 39
Early Recognition of Alcohol-related Problems 39
Four Key Assessment Steps 39

Screening for Alcohol Use 42
Invasive Measures 42
Estimating BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) 42
Non-invasive Measures 42
CAGE 42
The AUDIT 43

Brief Interventions 43

Alcohol Intoxication 44
Acute Alcohol Intoxication 44
Assessment of Alcohol Intoxication 44

Alcohol Dependence 46

Alcohol Withdrawal 46
General Guidelines for Alcohol Withdrawal Management 46
Home withdrawal management 47
Psychosocial and Physical Support During Alcohol Withdrawal 47
Pharmacological Management of Alcohol Withdrawal 48

After-care 50
Self-help Resources 50
Self-help Groups 50
Pharmacotherapies to Reduce Relapse/Promote Abstinence 50
3. ALCOHOL (continued)

Alcohol-related Brain Injury (ARBI) 50
Wernicke–Korsakoff’s Syndrome 51

Resources 54
References 56

4. TOBACCO 59

Pharmacology 59
At-risk Groups 60
Detection and Assessment 60

Adverse Physical and Psychological Effects 60
Acute System Effects 60
Local Toxic Effects 60
Chronic System Toxicity 60
Cardiovascular disease 60
Respiratory 60
Cancer and malignancies 61
Gastrointestinal 61
Complications related to pregnancy and reproduction 61
Degenerative disease 61
Injuries and trauma 61
Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) 61

Nicotine Dependence and Withdrawal 61
Nicotine dependence 61
Nicotine withdrawal effects 62
Psychological effects 62

Social Complications 62

Smoking Cessation Strategies 63
The Benefits of Quitting 63
Barriers to Assisting Smokers 63
Smoking Cessation Guidelines 63
The Five ‘A’s 65
CREATE 65
Decision Balance Worksheet 65
Pharmacotherapies 66
Nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) 66
Bupropion (Zyban®) 66

Other Strategies 68
Resources 69
References 72
# Appendix A

5. **CANNABIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Names</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes of Administration</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Psychosocial Complications</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Effects</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Acute Effects</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harms Associated with Chronic Use</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Risk Groups</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Intervention Strategies</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Function</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection by Urine Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Interventions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance, Dependence and Withdrawal</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Intervention</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Function</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection by Urine Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Interventions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance, Dependence and Withdrawal</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Intervention</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory Function</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection by Urine Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Interventions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance, Dependence and Withdrawal</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Intervention</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **AMPHETAMINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metabolism</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability and Quality</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of Use</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes of Administration</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Psychological Effects</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Physical and Psychological Effects</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Physical Effects</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Psychological Effects</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamine-related Harms</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Intervention Strategies</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Adverse Effects: Uncomplicated Intoxication</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute Adverse Effects: Intoxication with Complications</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using and Stopping Amphetamines</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification and Detection of Amphetamine Use and Related Problems</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-pharmacological Management of Withdrawal</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient withdrawal management</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacotherapies for Managing Withdrawal and Relapse</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Strategies Post-withdrawal</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm Reduction Measures</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. **COCAINES (continued)**

Cocaine Withdrawal Syndrome 110
Foetal Effects 110

**Management and Intervention Strategies** 111
Clinical Screening 111
Acute toxic reactions 111
Chronic Cocaine Use 111
Treatment of Toxic Reactions 111
Management of Withdrawal 112
Treatment of Cocaine Dependence 112
Pharmacotherapy 112
Cognitive-behavioural therapy 112
Contingency management 113
Enhancement of psychosocial skills 113
Acupuncture 113
General approaches 113
Comorbid disorders 113
Readiness to change 114

References 115

9. **HEROIN AND OTHER OPIOIDS** 119

Patterns of Heroin Use 119
Opioid Drugs 119
Heroin 119
Morphine 120
Methadone 120
Buprenorphine (Subutex®) 121
Naltrexone 122

Tolerance 123

Withdrawal 123

Dependent Heroin Use 123
The Dependence Syndrome 123
Natural History of Dependent Heroin Use 123
Features of Dependent Heroin Use in Australia 124

Harms Associated with Heroin Use 124
Overdose 124
Harms Related to Injecting 124
Psychological Harms 125
Social and Community Harms 125

Management and Intervention Strategies 125
Withdrawal Services 125
Objectives 125
Key Components 125
Assessment 125
Setting 125
Supportive care 125
9. HEROIN AND OTHER OPIOIDS (continued)

Frequent monitoring and review 126
Medication 126
Medication Regimes for Opioid Withdrawal 127
Post-withdrawal Interventions 130
Psychosocial interventions 130
Outpatient counselling 130
Therapeutic communities 130
Self-help groups 131
Naltrexone Treatment 131
Clinical aspects 131
Adverse events 131
Outcomes associated with naltrexone treatment 131

Substitution Maintenance Treatment with Methadone or Buprenorphine 131
Rationale, Objectives and Outcomes 131
Delivering Substitution Treatment in Australia 132
Problems with Maintenance Substitution Treatment 133
Principles of Safe and Effective Methadone/Buprenorphine Treatment 133

Resources 134
References 135

10. VOLATILE SUBSTANCES 137

Commonly Used Volatile Substances 137
Modes of Administration 138
Prevalence 138
Appeal 139

Physical Complications 139
Acute Effects 139
Negative Acute Effects 139
Effects at Higher Doses 139
Specific Physical Effects 139
Central nervous system 139
Maternal and neonatal 140
Heart 140
Lung 140
Kidneys, liver and bone marrow 140
Other Morbidity and Mortality 140

Psychosocial Complications 140
Management and Intervention Strategies 141
Detection and Assessment 141
Intoxication 141
Experimental, Recreational and Chronic Use 141
Primary Prevention Strategies 143

Resources 144
References 145
11. BENZODIAZEPINES

Pharmacology 147
Absorption 147
Distribution 148
Metabolism 148
Patterns of Use 148
Effects of Benzodiazepines 148
  Short-term Effects 148
  Long-term Effects 149
Uses and Problems 149
High Risk Groups 149
Prescribing Benzodiazepines 150
  Rational Use of Benzodiazepines 150
  Precautions 150
  Drug Interactions 150
  Use in Management of Anxiety and Insomnia 150
Management and Intervention Strategies 151
  Reviewing Benzodiazepines in Long-term Users: A Staged Approach 151
  Dependence and Withdrawal 152
  Aged Care Residential Facilities 153
Benzodiazepine Misuse 153
  Habitual Drug Users (‘Doctor Shoppers’) 153
  Drug Dependent Patients 153
References 155

12. OTHER DRUGS

Hallucinogens 157
  Physical and Psychological Effects 158
  Management and Intervention 158
Party Drugs 158
  GHB 159
  Ketamine 159
Anabolic Steroids 160
Over The Counter Drugs 161
  Non-prescription Medication 161
    Analgesics 161
    Antihistamines 161
    Sympathomimetics 161
    Cough suppressants 162
  Injecting Drug Users 162
    Other 162
References 163
PART 3: NON-MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

13. PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS

Patient Readiness — A Model of the Process of Change
- Pre-contemplation Stage
- Contemplation Stage
- Preparation Stage
- Action Stage
- Maintenance Stage

Clinical Strategies
- Patient-centred Approach
- Decision Balance
- Building A Therapeutic Alliance
  - Empathy and reflective listening
  - Using open ended questions
  - Reflective listening
  - Summarising
- Roadblocks to empathy
- Motivational Interviewing
- Brief Motivational Interviewing
- Problem Solving
- Goal Setting
- Relapse Prevention
- Quality of Life

References

14. ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Evidence of Effectiveness
- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Conclusions

References
PART 4: ISSUES FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

15. PREGNANCY AND DRUG USE

Assessment
Information on Alcohol and Drug Effects
  Alcohol
  Tobacco
  Cannabis
  Heroin
  Psychostimulants — Amphetamines and Cocaine
  Ecstasy
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
Child Protection
References

16. SURGERY AND SUBSTANCE USE

Tobacco
Alcohol
  Alcohol and Post-operative Morbidity
  Peri-operative Management of Alcohol-related Complications
Opioids
  Management Strategies
Benzodiazepines
Stimulant Use
References

17. MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

Acute and Chronic Pain
Assessment and Pain Management in Drug Users
  Screening for Substance Dependence
  Alternative Options in Management
  Dependence and Tolerance
  Preventing Drug Dependence in Patients with Chronic Non-malignant Pain
  Principles of Pain Management in Opioid Dependent Patients
    Methadone maintenance
    Buprenorphine
    Terminal illness
The Potential for Adverse Interactions
The Patient–Clinician Relationship
Resources
18. COEXISTING MENTAL ILLNESS

Epidemiology 207
Terminology 208
Some Specific Associations 208
  From a Drugs Perspective 209
  From a Mental Health Perspective 209
Management 210
  What Works? 210
  Principles of Care 210
  Assessment and Management 210
  Harm Minimisation 211
Resources 212
References 213

19. INJECTING AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES 215

Infective Problems Associated with Injecting Drug Use 216
Blood Borne Communicable Diseases 216
Hepatitis C 216
  Testing for HCV 216
  Natural History 217
  Assessing Patients for Treatment 217
  Antiviral Therapy 217
  Managing Patients who have Failed Therapy or are Ineligible for Treatment 217
  Liver Transplantation in HCV 217
  Prevention of HCV 217
  Alcohol and HCV 218
Hepatitis B 218
  Testing for HBV 218
  Natural History 218
  Treatment of HBV 218
Hepatitis D 219
Human Immunodeficiency Virus 219
  Testing for HIV 219
  Treatment of HIV 219
  Prevention 219
  Effect of HIV on IDU Problems 219
HTLV/II/II 220
Resources 221
20. DRUG ISSUES IN CORRECTIONAL SERVICES 223
   Patterns of Drug Use Among Prisoners 223
   History of Imprisonment and Prevalence of Injecting 224
   Prevalence and Transmission of Blood Borne Viral Infections 224
   Interventions to Reduce Risk Behaviour and Transmission 224
      Bleach Programs 225
      Condoms 225
      Methadone Maintenance Treatment 225
      Syringe Exchange Schemes in Prison 225
   References 227

21. HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AS PATIENTS 229
   Treating a Health Professional with a Drug or Alcohol Problem 230
   Dealing with a Colleague with a Drug or Alcohol Problem 230
      Registering Authorities 230
      The Steps to Take 231
   Being a Health Professional with a Drug or Alcohol Problem 231

22. GAMBLING 233
   Problem Gambling 233
      Identifying Problem Gamblers 234
   Presentation of Problem Gamblers 234
   Treatment/Referral Options 236
   References 237
PART 5: APPENDICES AND GLOSSARY 239

A. NHMRC Alcohol Guidelines – Short- and Long-term Risk 241
B. Laboratory Markers for Alcohol-related Damage 243
C. AUDIT – Interview Version 245
D. AUDIT – Self-report Version 247
E. Tip Sheet for Reducing Alcohol Consumption 249
F. Alcohol Withdrawal Assessment Scale (CIWA–AR) 251
G. Alcohol Withdrawal Observation Chart 253
H. The Five ‘A’s 255
I. CREATE 259
J. Proforma for Decision Balance Worksheet 261
K. Hepatitis C Referral Checklist 263
Glossary 265