

# NCLEX SUBSTANCE ABUSE PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

## STUDY GUIDE



## SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

**VISIT US ONLINE FOR  
THE FULL VERSION STUDY GUIDE**

<https://nclexsubstanceabuse.examzify.com>



**Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.**

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

# Table of Contents

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Copyright .....             | 1  |
| Table of Contents .....     | 2  |
| Introduction .....          | 3  |
| How to Use This Guide ..... | 4  |
| Questions .....             | 5  |
| Answers .....               | 8  |
| Explanations .....          | 10 |
| Next Steps .....            | 16 |

SAMPLE

# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

## 1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

## 2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

## 3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

## 4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

## 5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

## 6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

## Questions

SAMPLE

- 1. What lifestyle changes are recommended for individuals recovering from substance abuse?**
  - A. Increased work hours and solitude
  - B. Healthy diet, regular exercise, and social support
  - C. Avoiding all social interactions
  - D. High caffeine and sugar intake
- 2. Withdrawal delirium in alcoholics is often characterized by which of the following symptoms?**
  - A. Severe agitation and confusion
  - B. Fatigue and drowsiness
  - C. Nausea and vomiting
  - D. Calmness and composure
- 3. A client in recovery states that making friends used to be challenging. What statement indicates successful teaching about relationships?**
  - A. I've set limits on my behaviors toward others.
  - B. I need to be judgmental of others.
  - C. I won't become intimately involved with others.
  - D. I can't bear to see myself hurt again in a relationship.
- 4. How does the prevalence of substance abuse disorders compare between men and women?**
  - A. Men have a lower prevalence than women
  - B. Men generally have a higher prevalence than women
  - C. The prevalence is the same
  - D. Women are more likely to develop substance use disorders
- 5. In which situation does a client show progress in addressing addiction issues?**
  - A. The client expresses uncertainty about meeting with the nurse.
  - B. The client acknowledges the addiction's effects on the children.
  - C. The client avoids discussing financial problems related to the addiction.
  - D. The client shares their reason for starting to use drugs.

- 6. What finding is anticipated in a client who previously used LSD?**
- A. Lack of trust
  - B. Panic attacks
  - C. Recurrent depression
  - D. Loss of ego boundaries
- 7. What is a major health risk associated with needle sharing among drug users?**
- A. Transmission of infectious diseases
  - B. Increased tolerance to drugs
  - C. Improved mental health
  - D. Reduction of withdrawal symptoms
- 8. What should nurses do if they suspect a colleague is impaired?**
- A. Confront them in front of other staff.
  - B. Ignore the signs and focus on their work.
  - C. Follow institutional protocols for reporting and intervention.
  - D. Discuss the issue with patients.
- 9. Which intervention can help improve outcomes in patients with substance use disorders?**
- A. Detoxification programs
  - B. Integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders
  - C. Short-term hospitalization
  - D. Peer support groups
- 10. A client in treatment for alcohol dependence states, "I don't have a problem." What defense mechanism does this represent?**
- A. Projection and suppression
  - B. Denial and rationalization
  - C. Rationalization and repression
  - D. Suppression and denial

## **Answers**

SAMPLE

1. B
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. B
6. B
7. A
8. C
9. B
10. B

SAMPLE

## **Explanations**

SAMPLE

## 1. What lifestyle changes are recommended for individuals recovering from substance abuse?

- A. Increased work hours and solitude
- B. Healthy diet, regular exercise, and social support**
- C. Avoiding all social interactions
- D. High caffeine and sugar intake

Individuals recovering from substance abuse are encouraged to adopt a lifestyle that promotes overall well-being and supports their journey towards recovery. A healthy diet, regular exercise, and social support are foundational elements in this process. A balanced and nutritious diet helps in repairing the body, which may have been adversely affected by substance abuse. Good nutrition can enhance mood, energy levels, and overall physical health. Regular exercise has been shown to have positive effects on mental health, reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, which are common in individuals in recovery. Exercise also serves as a constructive outlet for stress and frustration, contributing to better emotional well-being. Social support is crucial in maintaining recovery, as it helps individuals connect with others who understand their experiences. Positive relationships can provide encouragement and accountability, which are essential for staying on track. Engaging with supportive friends, family, and community groups fosters a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of isolation that can accompany recovery. In contrast, increased work hours and solitude can lead to stress and feelings of overwhelm, which might trigger relapse. Avoiding social interactions can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and deprive individuals of valuable support networks. High caffeine and sugar intake often contribute to physical and mental health issues, which can be counterproductive in the recovery process.

## 2. Withdrawal delirium in alcoholics is often characterized by which of the following symptoms?

- A. Severe agitation and confusion**
- B. Fatigue and drowsiness
- C. Nausea and vomiting
- D. Calmness and composure

Withdrawal delirium, also known as delirium tremens, is a serious complication of alcohol withdrawal that can occur in individuals with a history of chronic alcohol use. The condition is characterized by severe agitation and confusion, which are hallmark symptoms. During withdrawal delirium, the autonomic nervous system becomes hyperactive, leading to symptoms such as tremors, sweating, and increased heart rate, along with profound disorientation and agitation. This state of heightened arousal can cause significant distress and can be dangerous if not managed appropriately. The other symptoms listed do not align with the acute presentation of withdrawal delirium. Fatigue and drowsiness, for example, would reflect a more subdued state, while nausea and vomiting may occur in mild to moderate alcohol withdrawal but are not prominent features of delirium tremens. Calmness and composure are contrary to the overwhelming agitation and confusion experienced by those undergoing this severe withdrawal. Therefore, the severity of agitation and confusion in withdrawal delirium makes it a critical symptom to recognize and address in clinical practice.

**3. A client in recovery states that making friends used to be challenging. What statement indicates successful teaching about relationships?**

- A. I've set limits on my behaviors toward others.**
- B. I need to be judgmental of others.
- C. I won't become intimately involved with others.
- D. I can't bear to see myself hurt again in a relationship.

*The statement indicating successful teaching about relationships is that the individual has set limits on their behaviors toward others. This demonstrates an understanding of healthy boundaries, which are crucial for building and maintaining positive relationships, especially in recovery. Setting limits helps individuals protect themselves from potential emotional harm and fosters an environment where relationships can flourish without the risks associated with unhealthy patterns, such as codependency or enabling behaviors. By recognizing the importance of personal boundaries, the individual shows they have learned to engage with others in a way that promotes mutual respect and understanding. This is essential for someone in recovery, as it aids in establishing a support system without compromising their emotional well-being. The other statements reflect attitudes that may hinder healthy relationships. Being judgmental of others can create barriers and foster negativity, while avoiding intimacy altogether can lead to isolation and inhibit the development of deeper connections. Additionally, expressing an inability to handle potential hurt indicates a fear of vulnerability that can impede meaningful relationships. In contrast, by setting limits, the individual is taking proactive steps towards healthier interactions.*

**4. How does the prevalence of substance abuse disorders compare between men and women?**

- A. Men have a lower prevalence than women
- B. Men generally have a higher prevalence than women**
- C. The prevalence is the same
- D. Women are more likely to develop substance use disorders

*Men generally exhibit a higher prevalence of substance use disorders compared to women. This pattern has been observed in various studies and statistics, which consistently show that men are more likely to engage in substance abuse behaviors and meet criteria for substance use disorders. The reasons for this difference can be attributed to a variety of factors, including biological, psychological, and sociocultural influences. Men may be more inclined to partake in risk-taking behaviors and substance use as a result of societal norms that encourage such activities. Additionally, hormonal differences and varying responses to substances can contribute to this disparity. Although the gap in substance use between genders has started to narrow in recent years—particularly with increased substance use among women—the overall prevalence still tends to be higher among men. While women do experience substance use disorders and may often face different challenges, including stigma and barriers to treatment, the general population statistics favor a higher prevalence within the male demographic. This understanding is vital for tailoring prevention and treatment strategies for substance use disorders effectively.*

**5. In which situation does a client show progress in addressing addiction issues?**

- A. The client expresses uncertainty about meeting with the nurse.
- B. The client acknowledges the addiction's effects on the children.**
- C. The client avoids discussing financial problems related to the addiction.
- D. The client shares their reason for starting to use drugs.

*The situation in which a client shows progress in addressing addiction issues is when the client acknowledges the addiction's effects on the children. Recognizing the impact that one's addiction has on loved ones, particularly children, signifies an important step in the recovery process. This awareness demonstrates the client's ability to reflect on their behavior and its consequences, which is crucial for fostering motivation to change. Acknowledging the effects on children can lead to increased responsibility and a desire to improve both their own situation and that of their family. It often serves as a catalyst for seeking help, as clients become more aware of the benefits of sobriety not just for themselves but for their loved ones as well. This understanding can strengthen their commitment to recovery, enhance their insight, and encourage them to engage more fully in therapeutic processes. In contrast, the other situations presented suggest barriers to progress. Uncertainty about meeting with the nurse indicates hesitation in seeking help. Avoiding discussions about financial problems related to the addiction demonstrates a reluctance to confront the realities of the situation. Sharing a reason for starting to use drugs can indicate self-awareness, but it does not necessarily reflect progress in taking responsibility for the addiction's consequences or making positive changes. Each of these aspects highlights challenges rather than advancements in the recovery journey.*

**6. What finding is anticipated in a client who previously used LSD?**

- A. Lack of trust
- B. Panic attacks**
- C. Recurrent depression
- D. Loss of ego boundaries

*In individuals who have previously used LSD, one anticipated finding is the occurrence of panic attacks. LSD, as a hallucinogenic substance, can significantly alter a person's perception, mood, and cognitive functioning. After using LSD, some individuals may experience lingering psychological effects, which can include anxiety and panic attacks. These can manifest as sudden feelings of intense fear, palpitations, or an overwhelming sense of loss of control, often stemming from the drug's profound alteration of perception during intoxication. The experience of panic attacks in individuals who have used LSD is often linked to heightened anxiety levels and an increased sensitivity to stressors after drug use. The effects of LSD can be persistent and may lead to increased vulnerabilities to anxiety disorders, including panic attacks, even long after the drug has left their system. In contrast, while options like lack of trust, recurrent depression, and loss of ego boundaries may be associated with psychological effects from substance use, they are not as directly linked to the immediate aftermath of LSD use compared to the more acute experience of panic attacks. Panic attacks specifically highlight the psychological instability that can arise in some individuals following hallucinogen use, making it a notable outcome to anticipate.*

**7. What is a major health risk associated with needle sharing among drug users?**

**A. Transmission of infectious diseases**

B. Increased tolerance to drugs

C. Improved mental health

D. Reduction of withdrawal symptoms

*The major health risk associated with needle sharing among drug users is the transmission of infectious diseases. Sharing needles can lead to the spread of bloodborne pathogens, most notably Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B and C. When multiple individuals use the same needle, any infectious agents present in one person's blood can be transferred to another, significantly increasing the risk of contracting these serious and potentially life-threatening diseases. In contrast, the other options do not accurately reflect health risks related to needle sharing. Increased tolerance to drugs typically occurs due to repeated use rather than sharing needles. Improved mental health is not a consequence of needle sharing; in fact, substance abuse generally leads to deteriorating mental health. Similarly, while needle sharing can lead to various complications, it does not contribute to the reduction of withdrawal symptoms. Therefore, the primary and most significant health risk linked to this behavior is indeed the transmission of infectious diseases.*

**8. What should nurses do if they suspect a colleague is impaired?**

A. Confront them in front of other staff.

B. Ignore the signs and focus on their work.

**C. Follow institutional protocols for reporting and intervention.**

D. Discuss the issue with patients.

*When a nurse suspects that a colleague is impaired, the most appropriate action is to follow institutional protocols for reporting and intervention. Healthcare organizations typically have set guidelines and procedures in place to address situations involving potential impairment among staff members. These protocols ensure that the issue is handled discreetly and professionally, while also safeguarding patient safety and maintaining the integrity of the healthcare team. Following the established protocols usually involves reporting the suspicions to a supervisor or designated authority within the institution, who can then assess the situation and take the necessary steps. This process is crucial, as it allows for a thorough investigation and appropriate response, which might include interventions for the colleague or support services that can help them. By adhering to institutional protocols, nurses not only protect the affected colleague but also maintain a safe and effective healthcare environment for patients and staff alike. This approach fosters a culture of support and responsibility, encouraging colleagues to seek help if needed without fear of public confrontation or stigma.*

**9. Which intervention can help improve outcomes in patients with substance use disorders?**

- A. Detoxification programs
- B. Integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders**
- C. Short-term hospitalization
- D. Peer support groups

*Integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders is a comprehensive approach that benefits individuals who are dealing with both substance use disorders and mental health issues. This intervention is grounded in the understanding that substance abuse often coexists with conditions such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder. Treating both issues concurrently enhances the chances of a better outcome, as it addresses the complex interrelations between mental health and substance use. When individuals receive integrated treatment, they benefit from tailored interventions that consider their unique circumstances and needs. This holistic method often involves a combination of psychotherapy, medication management, and peer support, creating a supportive environment where patients can work through both their mental health and substance use challenges. In contrast, detoxification programs primarily focus on the process of withdrawing from substances and may not provide the necessary support for any underlying mental health issues. Short-term hospitalization can stabilize a patient's condition but may not continue to support long-term recovery or address co-occurring disorders effectively. Peer support groups, while beneficial in many ways, may not offer the comprehensive structure required for individuals who need dual diagnosis support. Integrating treatment shows a more substantial positive impact on patient outcomes by looking at the whole person rather than isolating their conditions.*

**10. A client in treatment for alcohol dependence states, "I don't have a problem." What defense mechanism does this represent?**

- A. Projection and suppression
- B. Denial and rationalization**
- C. Rationalization and repression
- D. Suppression and denial

*The statement "I don't have a problem" is a clear indication of denial, a common defense mechanism in individuals struggling with substance dependence, particularly alcohol. Denial allows a person to refuse to accept reality or facts, which can be crucial in maintaining their current state without facing the consequences of their behavior. In this context, the client is not acknowledging the seriousness of their alcohol dependence, which impedes their ability to seek help or engage fully in treatment. Rationalization is also present here, as it involves justifying behaviors or feelings in a way that makes them seem more acceptable. The client may believe that their alcohol use does not qualify as a problem, perhaps comparing their situation to others or minimizing the impact of their drinking on their life. This combination of defense mechanisms—denial and rationalization—illustrates the cognitive distortions that often accompany addiction and are barriers to recovery. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for healthcare providers as they develop treatment plans that address not just the substance abuse but also the psychological frameworks that support denial and rationalization.*

## Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://nclexsubstanceabuse.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

SAMPLE