

IC&RC Announces Updated Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) Job Analysis

IC&RC, the world leader in addiction-related credentialing, is pleased to announce the completion of its updated **Alcohol and Drug Counselor Job Analysis (JA)**. IC&RC's Alcohol and Drug Counselor credential is held by more addiction counselors than any other credential of its kind.

A JA is the methodical process of determining what elements of practice and knowledge are important to assess as part of a certification examination and serves as the blueprint for the examination. It is the process that directly links an examination score to a specific job and ensures that an exam is valid, reliable, and legally defensible. To stay relevant to current trends and practices, a JA must be updated every five to seven years.

The updated Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) Job Analysis will be used to develop a new examination to be administered by all IC&RC member boards.

The first administration date for the updated examination will be Monday, February 16, 2015. All candidates taking the ADC examination on or after February 16th will be taking the updated examination.

The updated examination will include the following four domains:

1. Screening, Assessment, and Engagement
2. Treatment Planning, Collaboration, and Referral
3. Counseling
4. Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

Changes in the JA include combining the previous eight domains into four essential domains and inclusion of DSM-5 diagnostic criteria. The full exam content outline and updated reference list can be found on the following pages.

For more information on the first administration of this exam and all IC&RC's testing policies and procedures, please visit our examination page at <http://professionals.internationalcredentialing.org/>

IC&RC is proud to stay in the forefront of the ever evolving field with the release of its updated ADC Job Analysis.

Please feel free to direct any questions you may have regarding these changes to Rachel Witmer, Assistant Director at Rachel@internationalcredentialing.org or via phone at +1-717-540-4457 Ex. 105.

Domains	Weight on Exam
Domain I: Screening, Assessment, and Engagement	23%
Domain II: Treatment Planning, Collaboration, and Referral	27%
Domain III: Counseling	28%
Domain IV: Professional and Ethical Responsibilities	22%

Domain I: Screening, Assessment, and Engagement

Task 1: Demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communication to establish rapport and promote engagement.

Knowledge of:

1. Best practices related to interviewing techniques
2. Self-awareness and therapeutic use of self
3. Stages of change
4. How culture affects communication

Skill in:

1. Building trust and establishing rapport with clients
2. Recognizing and understanding verbal and non-verbal behaviors
3. Using stages of change to promote engagement

Task 2: Discuss with the client the rationale, purpose, and procedures associated with the screening and assessment process to facilitate client understanding and cooperation.

Knowledge of:

1. Criteria for evaluation of substance use disorders
2. Significance of diagnostic reports from laboratory tests
3. Behavior, patterns, and progressive stages of substance use disorders
4. States of intoxication, stages of withdrawal, psychological and physical effects of psychoactive substances
5. Patterns and methods of misuse and abuse of prescribed and over-the-counter medications
6. Current commonly used substances
7. How blood alcohol content affects behavior
8. Professional ethics and confidentiality

Skill in:

1. Utilizing interview techniques
2. Gathering and assessing information and summarizing data
3. Assessing and determining the severity of client psychoactive substance use

Task 3: Assess client's immediate needs by evaluating observed behavior and other relevant information including signs and symptoms of intoxication and withdrawal.

Knowledge of:

1. Current commonly used substances

2. How blood alcohol content affects behavior
3. Legal limits of blood alcohol content
4. Effects and interactions of using substances
5. Withdrawal symptoms
6. Behavioral management of an impaired person
7. Emergency procedures associated with overdose and acute withdrawal symptoms

Skill in:

1. Recognizing signs and symptoms of intoxication and withdrawal
2. Using interview techniques
3. Assessing verbal and non-verbal behavior
4. Referring to appropriate medical personnel

Task 4: Administer appropriate evidence-based screening and assessment instruments specific to clients to determine their strengths and needs.

Knowledge of:

1. The variety of substance use disorder assessment instruments and their limitations and strengths
2. The administration and scoring procedures for substance use disorder instruments
3. Diagnostic criteria for evaluating substance use
4. Behavior patterns and progressive stages of substance use disorders
5. Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT)
6. The role of the client's culture, demographics, and cognitive functioning in the assessment process

Skill in:

1. Selecting and administering assessment instruments

Task 5: Obtain relevant history and related information from the client and other pertinent sources to establish eligibility and appropriateness of services.

Knowledge of:

1. Information and resources regarding cultures, sexual orientation, gender and special needs
2. The significance of diagnostic reports from laboratory tests
3. Signs and symptoms of co-occurring mental health disorders
4. Interview processes, including objectives and techniques
5. The use and method of feedback to the client
6. How a client's financial circumstances influence treatment options

Skill in:

1. Identifying and understanding non-verbal behaviors
2. Building trust and establishing rapport
3. Gathering and assessing information
4. Identifying discrepancies in information given by client and/or concerned others
5. Determining the importance of the relationship between the client and concerned others
6. Assessing the appropriateness of involving concerned others in the assessment process
7. Recognizing a need for more in-depth information from other professionals
8. Effective use of open- and closed ended questions and other interview techniques

Task 6: Screen for physical needs, medical conditions, and co-occurring mental health disorders that might require additional assessment and referral.

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate screening and assessment tools
2. Screening and identification of issues outside the scope of practice of a substance abuse counselor that require referrals
3. Conditions commonly associated with substance use e.g. physical needs, medical conditions and co-occurring mental health disorders
4. Crisis Intervention

Skill in:

1. Applying the use of screening and assessment instruments
2. Using interview techniques
3. Collaborating with multiple disciplinary teams to determine course of action

Task 7: Interpret results of screening and assessment and integrate all available information to formulate diagnostic impression, and determine an appropriate course of action.

Knowledge of:

1. Criteria for diagnosis of substance use disorder
2. Behaviors indicative of other addictive disorders
3. Conditions commonly associated with substance use e.g. physical needs, medical conditions and co-occurring mental health disorders
4. The relationship between substance use and trauma
5. The various manifestations of client ambivalence related to readiness to change
6. Treatment options
7. Detoxification
8. Laboratory data related to substance use disorders

Skill in:

1. Identifying and understanding verbal and non-verbal behaviors
2. Prioritizing the information obtained from the client relative to the assessment
3. Organizing and summarizing client data and clinical impressions
4. Documenting information in a concise, clinically accurate and objective manner
5. Recognizing client needs
6. Communicating treatment options

Task 8: Develop a written summary of the results of the screening and assessment to document and support the diagnostic impressions and treatment recommendations.

Knowledge of:

1. Interpretation of results to integrate all available information, formulate diagnostic impressions, and determine an appropriate course of action
2. The elements of a bio psychosocial assessment
3. Appropriate recommendations for treatment planning
4. Diverse communication styles and systems

5. The various manifestations of client ambivalence relative to stages of change
6. Clinically appropriate documentation practices

Skill in:

1. Documenting information in a concise, clinically accurate and objective manner
2. Organizing and summarizing client data, reports from other professionals, and clinical impressions

Domain II: Treatment Planning, Collaboration, and Referral

Task 1: Formulate and discuss diagnostic assessment and recommendations with the client and concerned others to initiate an individualized treatment plan that incorporates client's strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences.

Knowledge of:

1. The purpose of the assessment and treatment planning process
2. Client ambivalence encountered during assessment process
3. Criteria for evaluating substance use disorders

Skill in:

1. Building trust and establishing rapport with the client
2. Eliciting feedback to assure understanding of information given
3. Communicating effectively
4. Presenting technical information in a manner appropriate to the client
5. Writing obtainable and measurable goals with the client

Task 2: Use ongoing assessment and collaboration with the client and concerned others to review and modify the treatment plan to address treatment needs.

Knowledge of:

1. How culture, demographics and other client characteristics affect response to treatment
2. Risk factors that relate to suicide, homicide, family violence, self-injury, and other harmful behaviors
3. Methods to respond to client in crisis
4. Circumstances which may necessitate a change in the course of treatment

Skill in:

1. Collaborating with client and, when appropriate, concerned others to negotiate adjustments to the treatment plan
2. Using client feedback to enhance treatment
3. Documenting any adjustments to the treatment plan

Task 3: Match client needs with community resources to facilitate positive client outcomes.

Knowledge of:

1. Community resources to meet client needs
2. Appropriate practices regarding case consultation
3. Appropriate practices for handling confidential client information

Skill in:

1. Assessing client's needs for referral
2. Identifying professional and agency limitations
3. Responding to client and/or family in crisis
4. Planning and facilitating referral
5. Developing and maintaining working relationships with other professionals

Task 4: Discuss rationale for a referral with the client.

Knowledge of:

1. Referral rationale for group, individual and family counseling
2. Methods of responding to a client and/or family in crisis
3. Professional scope of practice in substance use disorder counseling
4. Personal/professional strengths and limitations
5. Strengths and limitations of other service providers
6. Philosophies and approaches of outside community resources
7. Rationale, benefits, and modalities of other treatment providers
8. Level of care placement criteria

Skill in:

1. Communicating warmth, respect and acceptance of cultural and individual differences
2. Communicating (oral and written)
3. Collaborating with multidisciplinary team members
4. Coordinating care

Task 5: Communicate with community resources regarding needs of the client.

Knowledge of:

1. Consultation and referral within confidentiality guidelines
2. Oral/written communication
3. Agency's policies regarding case consultation
4. Services available to family and significant others especially as they affect access to treatment and the recovery process

Skill in:

1. Explaining the rationale for decisions affecting confidentiality
2. Making clear and concise oral/written case presentations
3. Gathering, organizing, and interpreting data for case consultation
4. Interpreting written reports of other professionals
5. Seeking and responding to information from other professionals relative to own knowledge of the case
6. Identifying and using sources of supervision and consultation
7. Establishing trust and rapport with colleagues
8. Identifying appropriateness of request for information from consultation source
9. Communicating with community resources

Task 6: Advocate for the client in areas of identified needs to facilitate continuity of care.

Knowledge of:

1. Skills and services provided by other professionals
2. How to maintain working relationships with other professionals
3. Oral/written communication
4. Follow-up process with referral sources
5. Advocacy techniques
6. Eligibility requirements for funding
7. Level of care placement criteria
8. Knowledge of symptoms of substance use disorders

Skill in:

1. Collaborating with outside resources and professionals
2. Preparing comprehensive and relevant documentation in a timely manner
3. Matching client's needs with resources
4. Making clear and concise oral/written case presentations
5. Gathering, organizing, and interpreting data for case consultation
6. Establishing trust and rapport with colleagues

Task 7: Evaluate the effectiveness of case management activities to ensure quality service coordination.

Knowledge of:

1. Skills and services provided by other professionals
2. How to maintain working relationships with other professionals
3. Utilization of consultation results
4. Understanding all aspects of the referral process
5. Understanding importance of service coordination
6. Documentation procedures for referral and follow-up
7. Individual differences (i.e., culture, ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, religion) and how these differences affect all aspects of substance use disorder treatment

Skill in:

1. Communicating warmth, respect, and acceptance of cultural and individual differences
2. Effective verbal and written communication
3. Identifying and addressing personal and organizational limitations
4. Organizing and interpreting relevant information and data
5. Preparing comprehensive and relevant documentation in a timely manner
6. Applying organizational policies and procedures
7. Interpreting written reports of other professionals
8. Identifying and using sources of supervision and consultation
9. Conducting effective service coordination
10. Identifying possible conflicts of interest with outside resources

Task 8: Develop a plan with the client to strengthen ongoing recovery outside of primary treatment.

Knowledge of:

1. Recovery process and relapse dynamics
2. Techniques to interrupt the relapse process
3. Residual effects of substance use as it affects the relapse process
4. External factors (e.g., peers, family, the environment, support groups) that influence recovery and relapse
5. Developmental stages of recovery
6. How to develop an individualized recovery plan that meets the unique needs of the client
7. Integrated service delivery within the continuum of care
8. Confidentiality best practices and administrative rules
9. Treatment planning and discharge criteria
10. Available self-directed support

Skill in:

1. Educating the client and concerned others about the recovery and relapse process
2. Recognizing client manifestations of the relapse process
3. Assessing a client's risk factors for relapse
4. Educating the client in understanding their individual relapse signs and symptoms
5. Assisting the client in intervening in the relapse process
6. Assessing community resources to support recovery
7. Guiding the client through the developmental stages of recovery
8. Collaborating with the client in developing and writing a recovery plan
9. Creating, maintaining, and monitoring effective follow-up with the client
10. Preparing client and concerned others in separation issues inherent in the referral and aftercare process
11. Recognizing addiction substitution
12. Obtaining, updating, and reviewing data related to the client
13. Explaining to the client impressions of progress and problems in the treatment process
14. Providing comprehensive and individualized discharge planning and referral services
15. Feedback procedures (e.g., reflection, reframing, interpretation, clarification)

Task 9: Document treatment progress, outcomes, and continuing care plans.

Knowledge of:

1. Informed consent and limitations of confidentiality
2. Specific rules of the treatment provider related to continuum of care and record keeping formats
3. Basic formats for written documentation in objective/medical charting
4. Components of treatment or continuing care plans according to best practices
5. Documentation standards in clinical record

Skill in:

1. Providing timely record keeping
2. Preparing clear, complete and concise written communication
3. Reporting in observable and measurable terms

Task 10: Utilize multiple pathways of recovery in treatment planning and referral.

Knowledge of:

1. Benefits and limitations of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
2. Benefits and limitations of other recovery support approaches
3. Benefits and limitations of harm reduction based models of recovery
4. Ways in which medical consultation and treatment may enhance the recovery process

Skill in:

1. Providing unbiased information regarding treatment approaches and assist the client in choosing the best alternative
2. Explaining difficult or contradicting concepts to clients in language that helps them understand differences in approaches to recovery
3. Collaborating with other professionals to maximize support for the recovery process

Domain III: Counseling

Task 1: Develop a therapeutic relationship with clients, families, and concerned others to facilitate transition into the recovery process.

Knowledge of:

1. Methods and techniques for client engagement
2. Counseling approaches (e.g., empathy, active listening, authenticity, appropriate self-disclosure)
3. Appropriate use of boundaries
4. Positive reinforcement (e.g., identifying client strengths, instilling hope, identifying client potential)
5. Transference and countertransference

Skill in:

1. Using reinforcing and affirming behaviors
2. Staying consistent in the professional role
3. Demonstrating a non-judgmental attitude
4. Identifying and interpreting verbal and non-verbal behaviors
5. Asking open-ended questions
6. Responding therapeutically
7. Determining relevant therapeutic approaches appropriate to stages of recovery
8. Responding appropriately to ambivalence
9. Identifying and managing transference and countertransference
10. The termination process, techniques, and effects

Task 2: Provide information to the client regarding the structure, expectations, and purpose of the counseling process.

Knowledge of:

1. Counseling and therapeutic process specific to substance use
2. Stages of treatment

3. Methods and techniques for enhancing client engagement
4. Recovery-oriented behavior
5. Feedback procedures (e.g., reflection, reframing, interpretation, clarification)

Skill in:

1. Communicating effectively
2. Responding therapeutically
3. Responding appropriately to ambivalence
4. Identifying and interpreting verbal and non-verbal behavior
5. Explaining the treatment process

Task 3: Continually evaluate the client's safety, relapse potential, and the need for crisis intervention.

Knowledge of:

1. Recovery and relapse process
2. Risk factors associated with relapse
3. Feedback procedures
4. Various forms of reinforcement
5. Defense mechanisms and appropriate counseling approaches
6. Recovery -oriented systems of care (ROSC)
7. Services provided in the community and necessary referral information
8. Crisis Intervention
9. Non-life/life-threatening crises situations and impact on recovery

Skill in:

1. Obtaining, updating, reviewing, and synthesizing data related to the client
2. Communicating clearly and concisely
3. Utilizing counseling techniques
4. Building trust and establishing rapport through various counseling techniques
5. Maintaining a non-judgmental attitude
6. Assessing risk potential and responding appropriately
7. Utilizing crisis intervention techniques and documenting results
8. Utilizing crisis situations to facilitate the recovery process

Task 4: Apply evidence-based, culturally competent counseling strategies and modalities to facilitate progress towards completion of treatment objectives.

Knowledge of:

1. Appropriate counseling techniques for client needs
2. Various psychosocial needs and intrinsic motivations
3. Different types of groups, their purposes, function, and parameters
4. Various facilitator roles and techniques
5. Group dynamics and stages of group functioning
6. How differences among various populations (e.g., cultural, ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation) affect response to treatment
7. How peer influence and the community environment encourages or discourages substance use disorders
8. Family dynamics and theories of family counseling

9. Client resistance strategies and the modalities to assistance the client

Skill in:

1. Observing and responding to family interaction
2. Applying different family counseling techniques
3. Assisting family members to differentiate between individual needs and family needs in the treatment process
4. Orienting clients for group counseling
5. Managing membership issues (e.g., turnover, dropout, adding new members)
6. Establishing an environment to support trust among group members
7. Developing cohesiveness and identity among group members
8. Using group dynamics for individual and group growth
9. Guiding group process appropriate to the developmental stage of the group
10. Terminating the counseling process with the group or an individual member
11. Determining relevant strategies appropriate to different therapeutic stages
12. Selecting and implementing appropriate counseling approaches

Task 5: Assist families and concerned others in understanding substance use disorders and engage them in the recovery process.

Knowledge of:

1. Substance use disorder as a primary disease, including symptomatology and pharmacology
2. Behavior patterns and progressive stages of substance use disorder
3. How substance abuse disorders affect society and the family of the substance user
4. Adverse effect of combining various types of psychoactive drugs, as well as over-the-counter medications
5. The potential for cross and multiple dependencies
6. The dynamics of relapse
7. Effect of substance abuse on various body systems (e.g., endocrine, immune, reproductive system, skeletal, neurological, muscular, respiratory, circulatory, digestive)
8. Patterns and methods of misuse and abuse of prescribed and over-the counter medications
9. Learning styles and teaching methods
10. Family dynamics and roles

Skill in:

1. Communicating effectively
2. Conveying respect for personal differences
3. Evaluating the reception of the information provided
4. Time management and organizing information

Task 6: Document counseling activity and progress towards treatment goals and objectives.

Knowledge of:

1. Oral/written communication
2. Acceptable documentation standards
3. Record keeping requirements
4. Skills and services provided by other professionals

Skills in:

1. Making clear and concise oral/written case presentations

2. Gathering and organizing data for case consultation
3. Identifying and using sources of supervision and consultation

Task 7: Provide information on issues of identity, ethnic background, age, sexual orientation, and gender as it relates to substance use, prevention and recovery.

Knowledge of:

1. A variety of cultures
2. Personal biases
3. Diagnoses of substance use disorders, treatment issues, support group and prevention strategies

Skill in:

1. Communicating effectively
2. Conveying respect for individual needs

Task 8: Provide information about the disease of addiction and the related health and psychosocial consequences.

Knowledge of:

1. 1 Health and high-risk behaviors associated with substance use, including transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases
2. Health consequences of substance use and its relationship to other chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease, cirrhosis and other effects of chemical substances on the body
3. Life skills, including but not limited to, stress management, relaxation, communication, assertiveness, and refusal skills
4. Emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of substance use
5. Sociological and environmental effect of substance use
6. Continuum of care and resources available to develop an understanding of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery

Skill in:

1. Educating the client, family, and concerned others about the disease of addiction and the related health and psychosocial consequences
2. Effective oral and written communication
3. Adapting education style to the specific needs of the client

Domain IV: Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

Task 1: Adhere to established professional codes of ethics and standards of practice to uphold client rights while promoting best interests of the client and profession.

Knowledge of:

1. Applicable professional codes of ethics
2. Professional standards of practice
3. Client rights
4. Consequences of violating codes of ethics, confidentiality laws, and client rights

5. Jurisdictional specific rules and regulations regarding best practices
6. Grievance processes
7. Agency policies and procedures
8. Confidentiality and privacy laws

Skill in:

1. Applying professional codes of ethics to professional practice
2. Developing professional competencies through continuing education, professional supervision and training
3. Applying best practices regarding client rights

Task 2: Recognize diversity and client demographics, culture and other factors influencing behavior to provide services that are sensitive to the uniqueness of the individual.

Knowledge of:

1. Differences found in diverse populations
2. Culturally sensitive counseling techniques
3. Different resources to assist in working with clients who are members of a diverse population

Skill in:

1. Advocating for client specific needs
2. Recognizing client feelings and behaviors that result from their respective culture
3. Conveying respect for culture and diversity in the therapeutic process
4. Adapting therapeutic strategies to specific client needs
5. Assessing client substance use in light of client's cultural context
6. Assessing counselor bias

Task 3: Continue professional development through education, self-evaluation, clinical supervision, and consultation to maintain competence and enhance professional effectiveness.

Knowledge of:

1. Education and training methods which promote personal/professional growth
2. Current professional literature on substance use
3. Information sources on current trends in the substance use field
4. Personal and professional strengths and limitations
5. Self-evaluation techniques
6. Emerging trends in the treatment of addiction
7. Clinical supervision and consultation utilization

Skill in:

1. Assessing personal training needs
2. Selecting and participating in appropriate training programs
3. Reading, interpreting, and applying professional literature
4. Applying evidence-based practices to the counseling process
5. Developing professional goals and objectives
6. Using self-assessment for personal and professional growth
7. Eliciting and using feedback from colleagues and supervisors
8. Accepting both constructive criticism and positive feedback

Task 4: Identify and evaluate client needs that are outside of the counselor's ethical scope of practice and refer to other professionals as appropriate.

Knowledge of:

1. Physical disorders that may complicate treatment of substance use disorders
2. The relationship between psychoactive substance use and trauma
3. The relationship between psychoactive substance use and other mental and emotional disorders
4. Crisis situations that need an immediate response
5. The diversity of services provided within the community and necessary referral information
6. Services available to family and concerned others as they affect treatment and the recovery process
7. The continuum of care
8. Potential conflicts of interest

Skill in:

1. Assessing the need for referral to outside services
2. Protecting and communicating client rights
3. Identifying appropriate resources for specific client needs
4. Collaborating with outside resources
5. Identifying personal and agency limitations
6. Identify legitimacy and legality of requested information

Task 5: Uphold client's rights to privacy and confidentiality according to best practices in preparation and handling of records.

Knowledge of:

1. Best practices for handling confidential client information
2. Essential components of client records and their uses
3. Regulations governing storage and destruction of records
4. Electronic health record utilization

Skill in:

1. Communicating effectively and sharing of client records within the rules and regulations of confidentiality
2. Applying appropriate laws and regulations for the handling of confidential information

Task 6: Obtain written consent to release information from the client and/or legal guardian, according to best practices.

Knowledge of:

1. Best practices for handling confidential client information
2. Essential components of client records and their uses

Skill in:

1. Applying appropriate laws and regulations for the handling of confidential information

Task 7: Prepare concise, clinically accurate, and objective reports and records.

Knowledge of:

1. Significance of presenting symptoms
2. Related physical and behavioral health concerns that could affect treatment
3. Client progress
4. Critical incidents and crisis intervention
5. Factors effecting prognosis development
6. Appropriate and relevant recommendations

Skill in:

1. Summarizing and synthesizing relevant client information
2. Reporting in observable and measurable terms
3. Timely record keeping

Examination Reference List

The following resources were compiled as suggested reading to assist candidates preparing for the IC&RC Alcohol & Drug Counselor examination. Consulting these and other references may be beneficial to candidates. Please note that this is not a comprehensive listing of all references and that not all questions on the examination came from these references.

1. Abadinsky, H. (2014). **Drug Use and Abuse (8th ed.)**. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
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About IC&RC

IC&RC is the global leader in the credentialing of prevention, addiction treatment, and recovery professionals. Organized in 1981, it provides standards and examinations to certification and licensing boards in 24 countries, 47 states and territories, five Native American regions, and all branches of the U.S. military.

Quality and integrity are the foundation of IC&RC's work. IC&RC's credentials use the latest research on evidence-based practices, and they are updated every five years and subjected to an extensive process of peer review. IC&RC examinations are based on formal Job Analyses, written by subject matter experts, and supported by current references. Member boards are audited regularly to ensure compliance with international standards.

With more than 45,000 professionals in prevention, alcohol and drug counseling, clinical supervision, criminal justice addictions, and co-occurring disorders, IC&RC represents up to half of all substance abuse professionals in the U.S.