



TOOLKIT 15 · PRIMARY HEALTH CLINIC · TOOL 5 OF 6

Mental Health in Primary Care — Screening and First-Step Cards

Depression, anxiety, harmful alcohol use, and suicide risk: the brief questions, what a positive means, and the first step — from WHO mhGAP

Screen	Ask (over the last 2 weeks unless stated)	Positive if	First step
Depression — PHQ-2	"Little interest or pleasure in doing things?" · "Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?" Each: not at all 0 · several days 1 · more than half the days 2 · nearly every day 3	Total ≥ 3 → complete PHQ-9; ≥ 10 = moderate depression	Psychoeducation; problem-solving; activity; sleep; follow-up in 2 weeks. Antidepressant if moderate–severe and persisting. Refer if severe, psychotic, or not improving at 8 weeks.
Anxiety — GAD-2	"Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?" · "Not being able to stop or control worrying?" Scored as above	Total ≥ 3	Psychoeducation; breathing and relaxation; reduce caffeine and alcohol; follow-up. Refer if disabling.
Alcohol — AUDIT-C	"How often do you have a drink?" · "How many on a typical day?" · "How often 6 or more on one occasion?" (each scored 0–4)	Men ≥ 4 · women ≥ 3	Brief intervention: feedback, advice, goal, follow-up. Refer if dependence (morning drinking, withdrawal).
Suicide risk — ask directly, always when depression is positive	"Have you had thoughts that life is not worth living?" → "Have you thought about ending your life?" → "Have you made a plan?" → "Do you have the means?" → "Have you tried before?"	Any plan or means, recent attempt, or intent	Do not leave alone; remove means; safety plan (below); same-day referral or emergency; involve family with consent.

Safety plan — written with the patient

My warning signs	
What I can do myself to feel safer	
People and places that help me	
Who I will call — family / friend / clinic / crisis line:	
How I will make my environment safe (means removed, by whom)	
Next appointment	

Adapted from WHO mhGAP Intervention Guide 2.0 (2016). Asking about suicide does not increase risk; not asking does.

ASF standards: PHC Standard 4 — mental health; Universal Floor — patient safety