

A Disease of Isolation:

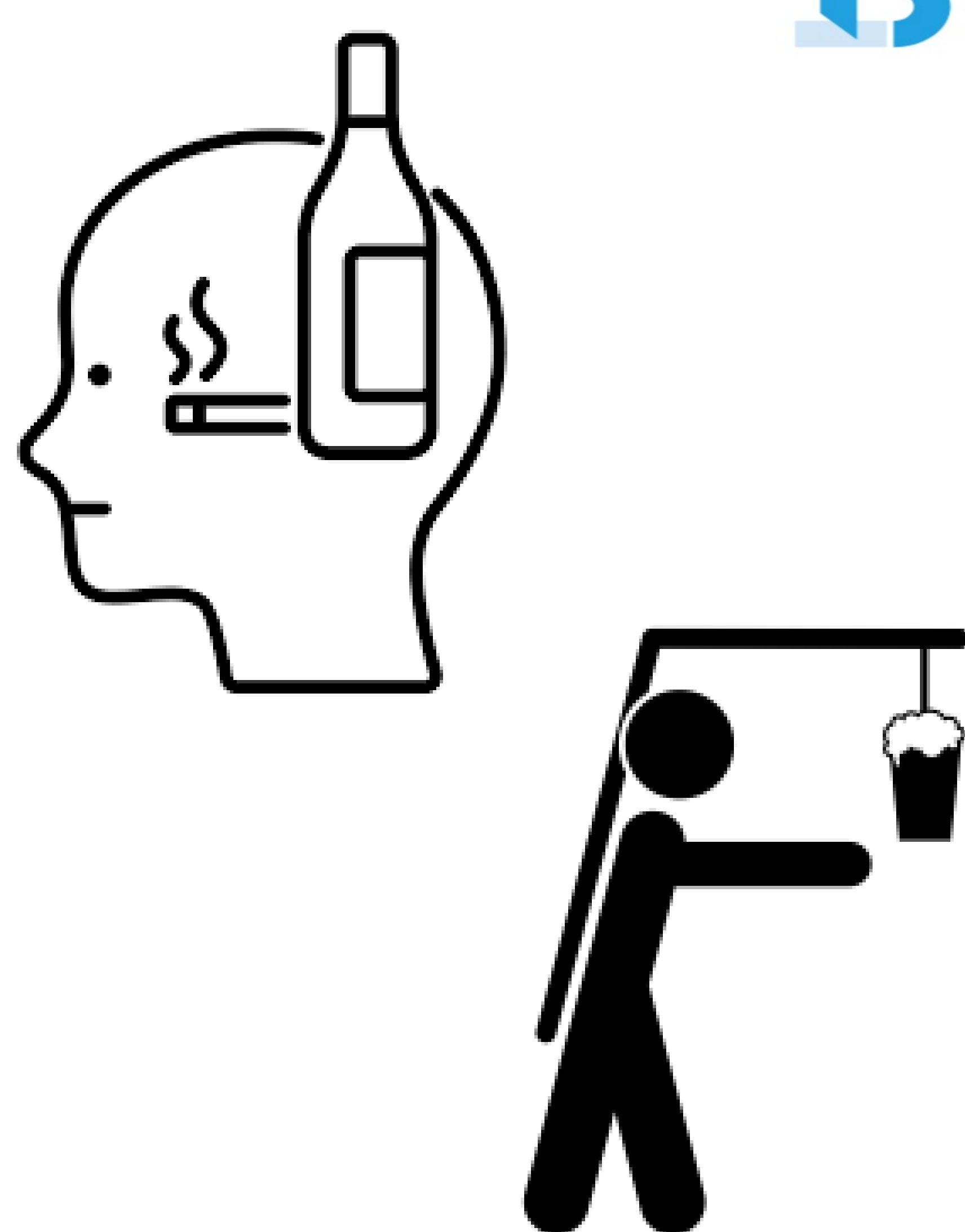
Alcohol Use Disorder and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic isolated everyone and has had an overall negative impact on mental health. For those struggling with alcohol use disorder, this could be deadly.



What is AUD?

Alcohol use disorder, or AUD, is defined by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism as, "a chronic relapsing brain disorder characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences."¹



Quick Facts



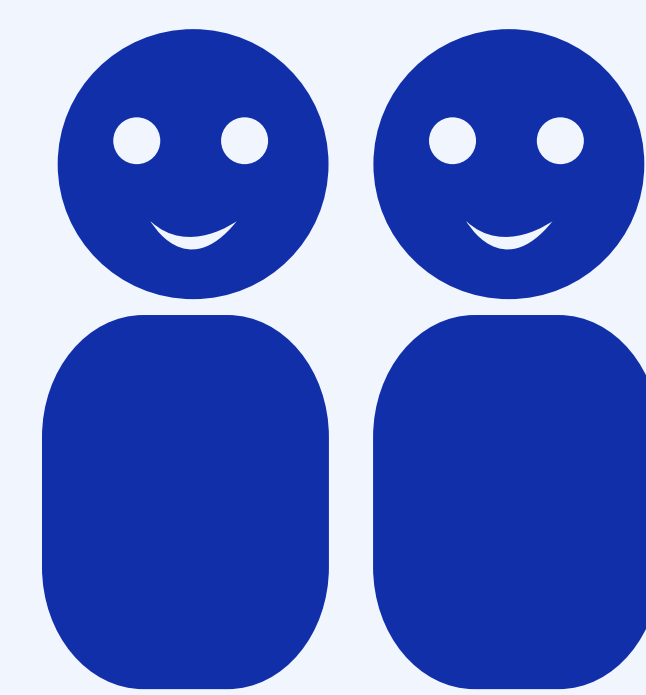
Prevalence

AUD affects an estimated 14.1 million adults in the United States.²



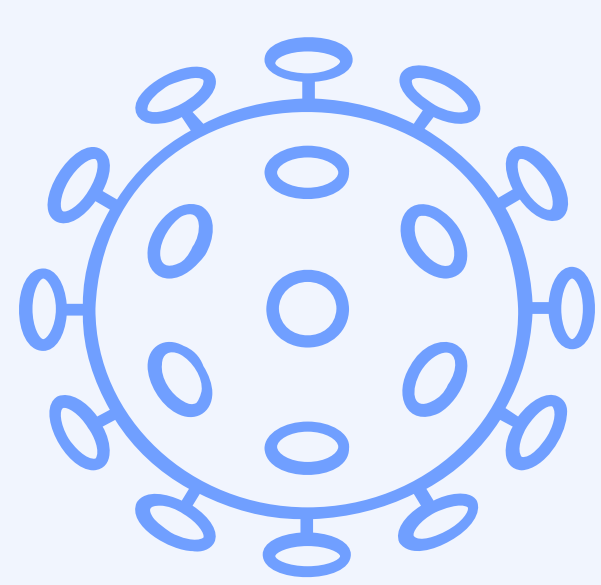
Treatment

Many people use abstinence programs like Alcoholics Anonymous.³



Recovery

Alcoholics require structure, routine, and companionship to be successful in recovery.



Pandemic

Alcoholics are now isolated and have too much free time.⁴



Consequences

Boredom and isolation could lead to relapse, which can be fatal.⁴



What now?

Researchers are identifying ways to keep alcoholics connected to the program.

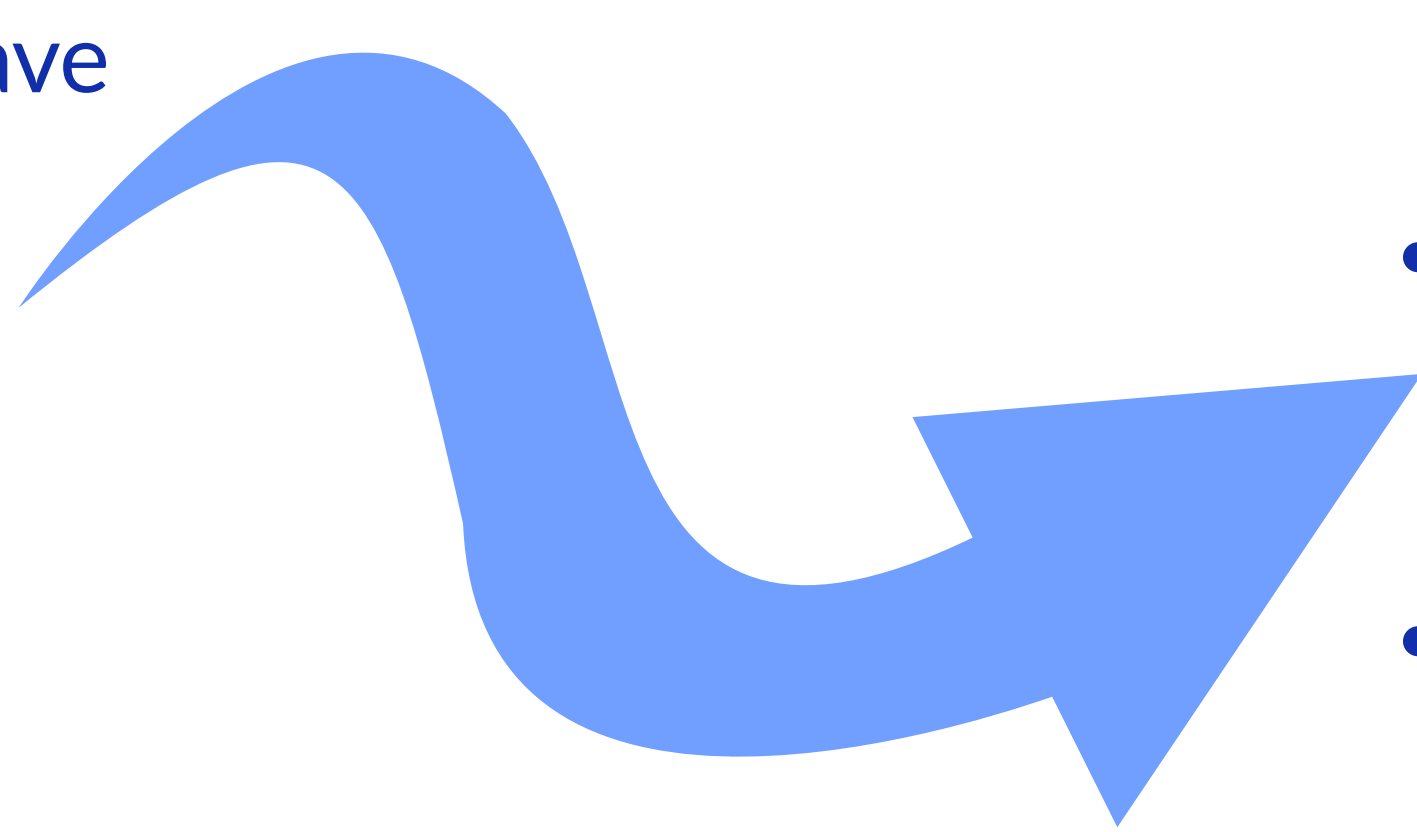
Zoom Meetings: Problems and Solutions



As A.A. meetings have shifted to an online format, it has been a less-than-smooth transition.

Problems

- People without reliable Internet access have trouble attending regular meetings.⁵
- Members who are not technologically inclined report having difficulty accessing their meetings.⁵
- New members coming to their first meetings may be too anxious to get on a video conference.
- "Zoom-bombing" is when an outsider enters the meeting for the purpose of harassing attendees.⁵



Solutions

- Zoom calls can be accessed with a regular telephone.
- Members are encouraged to keep their cameras on to feel more engaged.⁵
- Meeting hosts can password-protect meetings, use the waiting room function to screen users before entry, and not post meeting IDs online.
- Members are encouraged to create a schedule of meetings they would like to attend for the week to provide structure.



References

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3. What Is A.A.? Alcoholics Anonymous website. Accessed November 9, 2020. https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/what-is-aa
4. Da BL, Im GY, Schiano TD. Coronavirus Disease 2019 hangover: A rising tide of Alcohol Use Disorder and Alcoholic Liver Disease. *Hepatology*. 2020;72(3):1102-08. doi:10.1002/hep.31307.
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