



Pacific Sands Educates on Alcohol Blackouts

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In a new blog post, Pacific Sands Recovery Center goes into detail on alcohol blackouts. They cover the causes of blackouts, different types of blackouts, their relation to alcohol use disorder, and what to do when someone is experiencing an alcohol blackout.

First, Pacific Sands defines alcohol blackouts. "A blackout happens when someone has impaired memory of events while drinking. They can occur to anyone who drinks alcohol and are common when people have higher blood alcohol concentrations (BACs). A blackout is not the same as "passing out" because the person is still awake during a blackout," the article explains. The blog offers an example of this with an anecdote about a woman who drinks every Friday after a long week of working hard. She drinks so much that she can't remember what happened the night before by the time Saturday comes. "She was experiencing alcohol blackouts, which can occur from binge drinking," Pacific Sands says in the blog. "Between 2015 and 2020, 20.3% of men and 11% of women in California participated in binge drinking," they add.

The blog shares that the danger occurs when BACs are 0.16% or higher. At this blood alcohol concentration level, problems with judgment, impulse control, decision-making, and attention arise, and this is also when blackouts tend to occur. Pacific Sands says that blackouts are possible at lower BACs as well, though, especially in women, and if medications are involved.

Pacific Sands goes on to describe the different types of alcohol blackouts: fragmentary and en bloc blackouts. Fragmentary blackouts, also known as grayouts or brownouts, are most common, and involve "spotty memories," with the ability to recall some, but not all, events from the time spent drinking. En bloc blackouts, on the other hand, involve complete loss of memory for hours, with the brain not making or retaining any memories during the time spent drinking.

"While experiencing a blackout is not necessarily a sign of an alcohol addiction, frequent blackouts can be associated with an alcohol use disorder," the blog warns. Pacific Sands also recommends people wanting to avoid blackouts avoid alcohol entirely, especially if they're on anxiety medications or sleep aids, as those can make blackouts more likely. Otherwise, the article suggests avoiding drinking on an empty stomach, and only drinking as much alcohol as the liver can keep up with, which is about one drink per hour. That being said, even one drink per hour can be harmful to the body, especially over time.

"A person experiencing an alcohol blackout is conscious and aware of their environment. However, their ability to form new memories is not intact. They can have detailed conversations and perform complex tasks but will not remember the event afterward. This makes it difficult to know if someone is experiencing a blackout," Pacific Sands' blog states. They suggest talking openly about alcohol blackouts to those they love, and encourage treatment when appropriate.

Pacific Sands, located in Santa Ana, California, is a solutions-based recovery center for those suffering with substance use disorders. Pacific Sands is a small facility, ensuring patients receive private rooms and personalized treatment from therapists that are easily accessible. People with disabilities are welcome, and receive equally effective care, alongside any accommodations they may need.

For more information on Pacific Sands and what they offer, visit their website or call them at 949-426-7962.

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Pacific Sands Recovery Center

At Pacific Sands, in Orange County, California, we understand that clients are in addiction treatment to learn how to live their lives differently and we don't expect them to have all the answers.

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