



# Upcoming Study: Improving Outcomes for Emergency Department Patients with Alcohol Problems

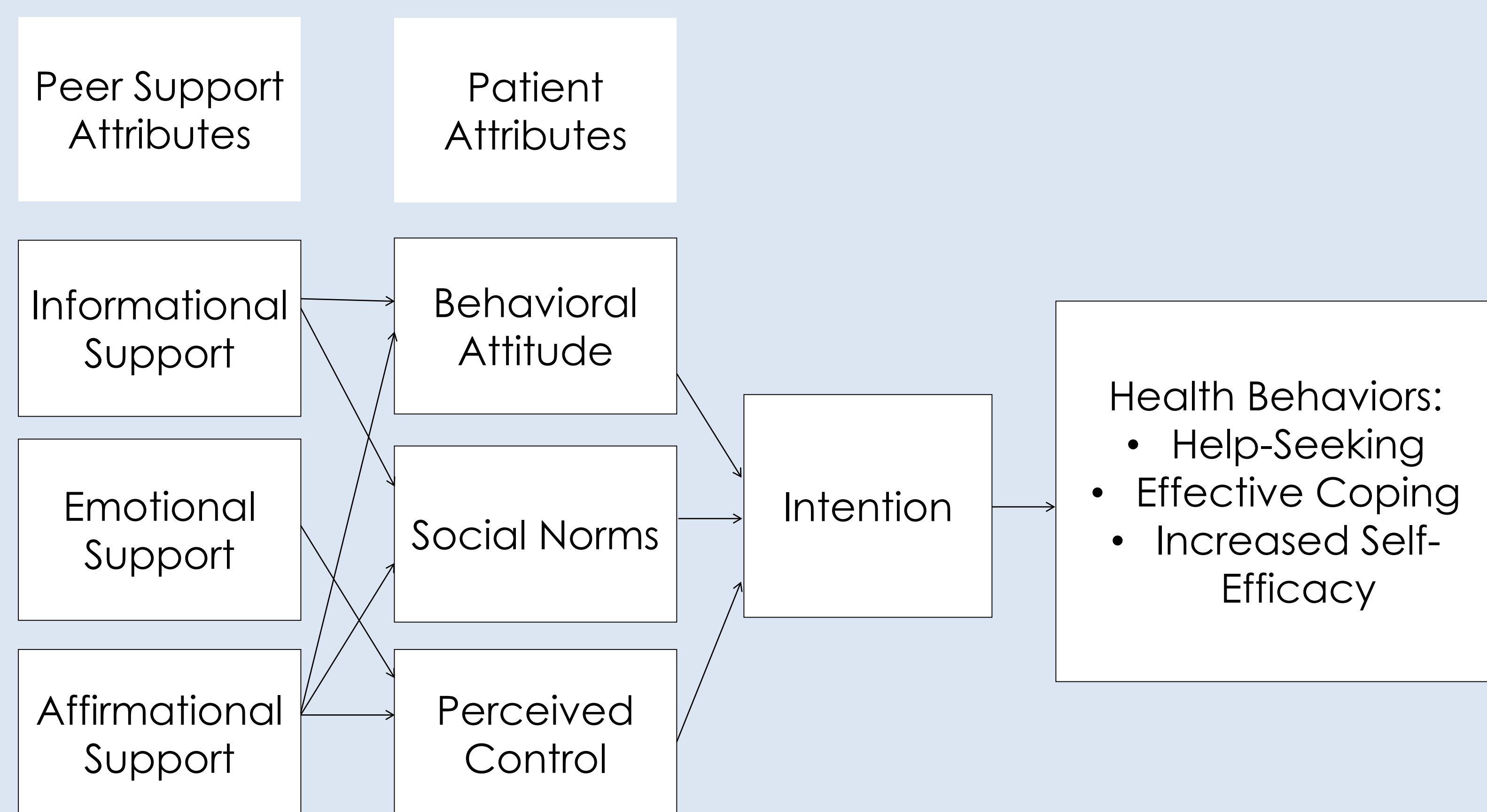
Deborah Manderachia, MSW<sup>1</sup>; Paul Pfeiffer, MD<sup>1,2</sup>; Rebecca Sripada, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>; Amy Bohnert, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>; Maureen Walton, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>; Frederic Blow, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Department of Veterans Affairs, Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) Center for Clinical Management Research, Ann Arbor, MI  
<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, MI



## Background

- Problematic drinking is defined as alcohol use that causes complications (including abuse and dependence). Hazardous drinking is the use of alcohol that increases risk for complications (accidents and consequences).
- A high proportion of patients seen in Emergency Departments (EDs) have problematic or hazardous alcohol use. Problematic drinking is a greater problem in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) EDs compared to other community hospitals.
- Alcohol use affects Veterans of all ages. Despite significant investment in alcohol screening and brief interventions in the VHA, many high-risk Veterans are not changing alcohol use patterns or getting the services they need.
- Recent data shows that telephone monitoring and brief interventions (BIs) are helpful at overcoming barriers to substance use treatment.
- The VHA has a large network of peer specialists across the country. Peer support specialists could serve a vital role in delivering alcohol BIs and monitoring support to Veterans with problematic alcohol use.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Peer and Patient Interactions



### Acknowledgements

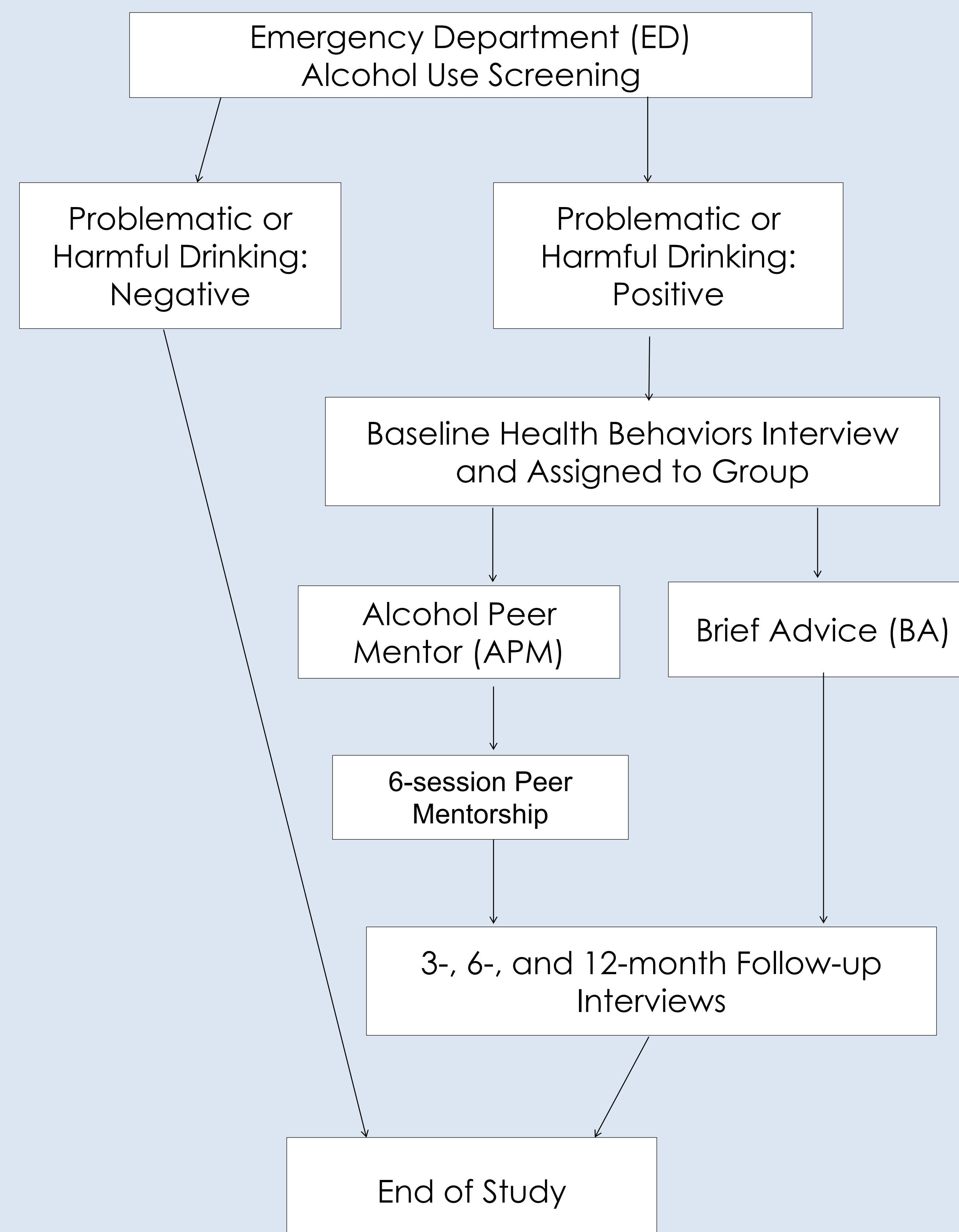
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## Goals

- **Goal 1:** Determine whether or not peer-delivered alcohol intervention and mentorship promotes reduction in problematic drinking.
- **Goal 2:** Determine whether or not peer-delivered alcohol intervention and mentorship improves the rate that Veterans go to primary care or specialty alcohol treatment services, if needed.
- **Goal 3:** Explore what parts of peer-delivered intervention influence change, and what can help or be a barrier to having peer-delivered alcohol interventions be a part of VA care.

## Design

Figure 2: Study Design



## Methods

### Enrollment and Intervention

- Veterans seen at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) will be recruited for the study.
- Participants will complete baseline health behavior interviews and will be randomly assigned to either the Brief Advice (BA) group or the Alcohol Peer Mentor (APM) group.
- **BA Group:** Participants will meet briefly with research staff in the ED to receive enhanced usual care. They will review the recommended drinking guidelines, risks, and available resources.
- **APM Group:** Participants will meet briefly in the ED with a Veteran Peer who has experience with alcohol or other mental health issues. The participant and peer will discuss participant's drinking behaviors, goals, and strengths.
- If in the APM group, participants will continue with the Peer for 6-sessions. Topics discussed include:
  - Session 1: Safety and Situations
  - Session 2: Coping and Quality of Life
  - Session 3: Problem Solving and Overcoming Barriers
  - Session 4: Social Support
  - Session 5: Leisure Activities and Work
  - Session 6: Planning for the Future

### Follow-Up

- At 3-, 6-, and 12-months after enrollment, participants in both groups will complete follow-up health behavior interviews.
- Qualitative interviews with peer personnel, ED providers, and study participants will be completed to understand the best ways to replicate this approach at VHA centers.

## Use of Findings

- This study is one of the first attempts to directly test the effect of peer-delivered alcohol intervention and mentorship.
- Developing this peer mentorship intervention has the potential to have a significant and substantial impact on helping Veterans with more serious alcohol problems treated in the VHA.
- This peer mentorship intervention can be modified and provided to other populations and clinics.