Catherine Chichester, MSN, APRN, BC
Eric Haram, LADC
Quality Counts Substance Abuse Consultants
Communicating Positive Substance Use Screening Results to Patients
Learning Objectives

• Learn effective talking points to address substance use screening and treatment

• Identify strategies to engage individuals in care discussions

• Learn tips to empower individuals in their own care planning and management
So How Do We Start?

- Universal Screening
  - Increases clinicians’ awareness of substance use issues
  - Offers clinicians more systematic approach to addressing substance use (less of a “judgment call”)
How do we define risk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At-Risk Alcohol Use</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Older Adults (65 +)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per occasion</td>
<td>&gt;4</td>
<td>&gt;3</td>
<td>&gt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per week</td>
<td>&gt;14</td>
<td>&gt;7</td>
<td>&gt;7</td>
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In the past year, have you used or experimented with an illegal drug or a prescription drug for nonmedical reasons? If = Yes
How do we define risk?
What's a “drink”? 

The percent of “pure” alcohol, expressed here as alcohol by volume (alc/vol), varies by beverage.
Elizabeth Vargas: 'I Am. I Am an Alcoholic,' Says ABC News Anchor

- "I started thinking 'Well, you know, I'll only drink, you know, on weekends," she said, laughing. "I'll only drink, you know, two glasses of wine a night. I won't drink on nights before I have to get up and do 'Good Morning America.' But those deals never work."

- 'You Can't Tell Anyone What's Happening'

- She called her drinking a "staggering burden" to carry.

- "You become so isolated with the secret and so lonely, because you can't tell anyone what's happening," she said.
Never Asked, Never Told

- Ninety percent of surveyed patients said they would give an honest answer if asked about their drinking.
- Over 90 percent of surveyed patients reported that their primary care physician should ask about their drinking and advise cutting down if it is affecting their health.
- Eighty-six percent of patients disagreed that they would be embarrassed if asked to discuss their drinking patterns.
- Seventy-eight percent of patients disagreed that they would be annoyed if asked about their drinking.
How to Set the Stage for the Questions

- Routinely at medical appointment
- Provide for confidentiality
- For youth, start by asking about peers and family use
- In a nonjudgmental manner
- Normalize the conversation
- Via effective screening tools
- Imbed questions about alcohol and drug use in general health questions (e.g., wearing seat belts, taking vitamins, smoking, etc)
- Reinforce the message of health
- Show that you care about them

Consistent messaging over time!
For the Older Patient

✔ Address the patient by last name, using the title the patient prefers (Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.).
✔ Begin the interview with a few friendly questions not directly related to health.
✔ Don’t rush, and try not to interrupt; speak slowly, and give older patients a few extra minutes to talk about their concerns.
✔ Use active listening skills.
✔ Avoid jargon, use common language, and ask if clarification is needed, such as writing something down.
✔ Introduce sensitive topics with the “common concern” approach: “As we age, many of us have more trouble with . . .” or “Some people taking this medication have trouble when they mix . . .”
✔ Ask the patient to say what he or she understands about the problem and what needs to be done.
Pregnancy Patient

- Be aware of your own feelings
- Don’t be judgmental: asking about substance use should convey the message “We care about you and your baby”
- Recognize that mother and fetus are one unit and our goal is to protect them as they move along the recovery continuum
- Complete abstinence from substance use during pregnancy is a goal which may or may not be attainable. Every step towards abstinence is a positive
- Accentuate positive steps or beliefs.. Your concern for your baby is helping you think about what you might want to do about your use.
SBIRT

SCREENING: VERY BRIEF SET OF QUESTIONS THAT IDENTIFIES RISK OF SUBSTANCE USE RELATED PROBLEMS.

BRIEF INTERVENTION: BRIEF COUNSELING THAT RAISES AWARENESS OF RISKS AND MOTIVATES CLIENT TOWARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PROBLEM.

REFERRAL: PROCEDURES TO HELP PATIENTS ACCESS SPECIALIZED CARE.
“I had a vague idea on how to assess substance use, but now I think I have a lot more knowledge in these other areas. I know what to look for and it is a way to give me a gauge to see if the person is at risk and how to approach them [about that risk].”

Mental health clinician, UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services
I am going to ask you some personal questions about alcohol (and other drugs) that I ask all my patients. Your responses will be confidential. These questions help me to provide the best possible care. You do not have to answer them if you are uncomfortable.
What Are Brief Interventions?

“BRIEF OPPORTUNISTIC INTERVENTIONS ARE SHORT, FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS REGARDING DRINKING, MOTIVATION TO CHANGE, AND OPTIONS FOR CHANGE WHICH ARE PROVIDED DURING A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY OR POTENTIALLY TEACHABLE MOMENT OCCASIONED BY A MEDICAL EVENT.”
The Key to Successful Interventions

BRIEF INTERVENTIONS ARE SUCCESSFUL WHEN CLINICIANS RELATE PATIENTS’ RISKY SUBSTANCE USE TO WHAT THEY SEE AS THE ISSUES
A SHIFT IN OUR THINKING

FROM

“Why isn’t this person motivated?”

TO

“For what are they motivated?”
Goal of Brief Interventions

- Awareness of problem
- Motivation
- Behavior change

Presenting problem

Screening results
Brief Interventions for Patients at Risk for Substance Use Problems
Brief Intervention Effect

- BRIEF INTERVENTIONS TRIGGER CHANGE.
- A LITTLE COUNSELING CAN LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE, E.G., 5 MIN. HAS SAME IMPACT AS 20 MIN.
- RESEARCH IS LESS EXTENSIVE FOR ILLICIT DRUGS, BUT PROMISING.
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

by Dik Browne

IT NEVER USED TO HAPPEN TO ME - BUT LATELY I'VE SUFFERED FROM HANGOVERS - WHAT CAN YOU GIVE ME FOR THEM, DOCTOR?

SOME GOOD ADVICE! STOP DRINKING!

IF I WANTED THAT KIND OF ADVICE, I'D JUST ASK MY WIFE!

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Where Do I Start?

WHAT YOU DO DEPENDS ON WHERE THE PATIENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGING.

THE FIRST STEP IS TO BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHERE THE PATIENT IS COMING FROM.
“People are better persuaded by the reasons they themselves discovered than those that come into the minds of others”

Blaise Pascal
Feedback- Listening/Understanding -Options:
The 3 tasks of a BI

F
Feedback

L
Listen & Understand

O
Options Explored

W
Warn

AVOID WARNINGS!
(that’s it)
All change contains an element of ambivalence.

We “want to change and don’t want to change”

PATIENTS’ AMBIVALENCE ABOUT CHANGE IS THE “MEAT” OF THE BRIEF INTERVENTION.
Reflective Listening

- LISTEN TO BOTH WHAT THE PATIENT SAYS AND TO WHAT THE PERSON MEANS

- SHOW EMPATHY AND DON’T JUDGE WHAT PATIENT SAYS

- You do not have to agree

- BE AWARE OF INTONATION

- Reflect what patient says with statement not a question, e.g., “You couldn’t get up for work in the morning.”
Open Ended Inquiry

- Requests a story “tell me about”
- Searches for meaning “help me to understand”
- Asks what and how questions “what would it be like if”

- Not why questions “why do you continue to”
- Not questions that can be answered in one word
How Does It All Fit Together?

Feedback

Setting the stage

Tell screening results

Listen & understand

Explore pros & cons

Explain importance

Assess readiness to change

Options explored

Discuss change options

Follow up
The 3 Tasks of a BI

Feedback

Listen & Understand

Options Explored
What do you say?

1. **Range of score** and **context** - Scores on the AUDIT range from 0-40. Most people who are social drinkers score less than 8.

   **Results** - Your score was 18 on the alcohol screen.

3. **Interpretation of results** - 18 puts you in the moderate-to-high risk range. At this level, your use is putting you at risk for a variety of health issues.

4. **Norms** - A score of 18 means that your drinking is higher than 75% of the U.S. adult population.

5. **Patient reaction/feedback** - What do you make of this?
The 3 Tasks of a BI

Feedback

Listen & Understand

Options Explored
The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Task: Listen & Understand

Strategies for Weighing the Pros and Cons

- What do you like about drinking?
- What do you see as the downside of drinking?
- What else?

Summarize Both Pros and Cons

“On the one hand you said..., and on the other you said....”
Listen for the Change Talk

- Maybe drinking did play a role in what happened.
- If I wasn’t drinking this would never have happened.
- Using is not really much fun anymore.
- I can’t afford to be in this mess again.
- The last thing I want to do is hurt someone else.
- I know I can quit because I’ve stopped before.

Summarize, so they hear it twice!
The 2nd Task: Listen & Understand

Importance/Confidence/Readiness

On a scale of 1–10…

- How important is it for you to change your drinking?
- How confident are you that you can change your drinking?
- How ready are you to change your drinking?

For each ask:

- Why didn’t you give it a lower number?
- What would it take to raise that number?
The 3 Tasks of a BI

F
Feedback

L
Listen & Understand

O
Options Explored
What now?

- What do you think you will do?
- What changes are you thinking about making?
- What do you see as your options?
- Where do we go from here?
- What happens next?
Offer a Menu of Options

• Manage drinking/use (cut down to low-risk limits)
• Eliminate your drinking/drug use (quit)
• Never drink and drive (reduce harm)
• Utterly nothing (no change)
• Seek help (refer to treatment)
During MENUS you can also explore previous strengths, resources, and successes

• Have you stopped drinking/using drugs before?
• What personal strengths allowed you to do it?
• Who helped you and what did you do?
• Have you made other kinds of changes successfully in the past?
• How did you accomplish these things?
The 3rd Task: Options for Change

CLOSING THE CONVERSATION ("SEW")

- **S**ummarize patients views (especially the pro)
- **E**ncourage them to share their views
- **W**hat agreement was reached (repeat it)
Encourage Follow-Up Visits

AT FOLLOW-UP VISIT:
• INQUIRE ABOUT USE
• REVIEW GOALS AND PROGRESS
• REINFORCE AND MOTIVATE
• REVIEW TIPS FOR PROGRESS
Videos

SBIRT Online for at risk marijuana abuse
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRUHv6_cRpE&feature=youtu.be

SBIRT Online marijuana dependency
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2CEsBC5UyU

SBIRT Online low risk alcohol brief intervention
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcGCRJcfl4w

SBIRT Online high risk alcohol intervention
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVsBq3lZUZk&feature=youtu.be

SBIRT pediatric brief intervention: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX90j4jD9Sc
Referral to Treatment for Patients at Risk for Substance Dependence
“Warm hand-off” Approach to Referrals

DESERIBE TREATMENT OPTIONS TO PATIENTS BASED ON AVAILABLE SERVICES AND WHAT THE PATIENT WANTS OR IS WILLING TO DO

DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH SPECIALTY ADDICTION SERVICES AND WILL LOCAL RECOVERY COACHES

FACILITATE HAND-OFF BY:

- Calling to make appointment for patient/student
- Providing directions and clinic hours to patient/student
- Involving and linking to recovery supports and people
- Coordinating transportation when needed