

What is SBIRT

- Screening (S) quickly assesses the severity of substance use and identifies the appropriate level of treatment.
- Brief intervention (BI) focuses on increasing insight and awareness regarding substance use and motivation toward behavioral change.
- Referral to treatment (RT) provides those identified as needing more extensive treatment with access to specialty care, and/or ongoing follow up and counseling given the readiness of the client to seek treatment (or not).

Introducing the Topic and Screening for Substance Use

While clients may feel comfortable talking with you about their sexual health, they may be more hesitant or afraid to be honest about their substance use. Here are some tips to help you introduce the topic and conduct substance use screening:

- Before starting the conversation, explain that you're trying to assess various aspects of their overall health including asking them a few questions about their substance use.
- If a client answers "yes" to one or more of the screening questions, this is an indication of possible substance use and shows a need for further evaluation or brief intervention.
- Depending on your clients' goals and readiness to change, you may want to make a referral to a SUD specialist.
- If a client is not ready to seek treatment and/or it does not seem necessary, you may still want to schedule a follow-up appointment to continue counseling the client in FP care.

Initiating a Referral

Here's some suggested language for initiating a discuss referral:

- Substance use is a medical condition we can address together. Can I provide you with some educational materials? Or, can I refer you to a provider who can help address your substance use?
- Would you like to talk about counseling and/or recovery support services? I can refer you to educational materials or a provider who can help support you to make the best decision
- Are you interested in receiving medical services to address your substance use? These services may be beneficial for you. I can refer you to a provider who can help support you to make the best decisions for you.

If the client says no, leave the door open: "If you ever change your mind, please let me know and I can connect you to resources or refer you to a provider."

Practice

Take turns practicing:

- Starting the conversation and introducing the topic
- Implementing the screening tool
- Conducting the brief intervention
- Discussing a referral

Be mindful of body language, verbal and non-verbal communication, and person-centered techniques, such as asking open-ended questions, practicing reflective listening, encouraging self-motivation, affirming, and summarizing statements, to have an effective, nonjudgmental conversation.