

Overview of Processes for Screening for Substance Use

Screening can be a one or two-step process:

1. An initial filter to rule out no-risk/ low-risk individuals who do not require further assessment, and
2. A full assessment to stratify the severity of risk for individuals who are identified as at-risk.

The Screening Process

The initial screen can be included in an intake or health behavior questionnaire. It is the minimum that should be completed. The table below includes several examples of how to use initial filters, and how to follow-up with an assessment of risk severity with a full screen. The advantage of a full screen is in the ease of collection of valuable information for entering into a Brief Intervention.

Alcohol			
Initial Screener	Question	Score	Response
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Single Question Screen ¹	<i>How many time in the past year have you had more than (4 for men, 3 for women) drinks in a day?</i>	A total of 1 or greater is a positive risk indicator.	A positive screen should be followed by the US-AUDIT screening tool.
Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT-C) ²	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How often do you have a drinking containing alcohol?</i> 2. <i>How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day you are drinking?</i> 3. <i>How often do you have X (5 for men; 4 for women and men <65) or more drinks on one occasion?</i> 	A total of 7 or greater for women and men over age 65, and 8 or greater for younger males is a positive risk indicator.	A positive screen should be followed by the US-AUDIT screening tool. <i>*The AUDIT-C consists of the first 3 questions of the US-AUDIT.</i>

Drug			
Initial Screener	Question	Score	Response
National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Single Question Screen ³	<i>How many times in the past year have you used an illegal drug or used a prescription medication for non-medical reasons?</i>	A total of 1 or greater is a positive risk indicator.	A positive screen should be followed by the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10) screening tool.

Tobacco, Alcohol, Illicit Drugs, and Prescription Drugs			
Initial Screener	Question	Score	Response
Substance Use Brief Screen (SUBS) ⁴	<i>In the past 12 months, on how many days did you use/have...</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>...Tobacco?</i> 2. <i>...4 or more alcoholic drinks in a day, including wine or beer?</i> 3. <i>...Any illegal drug, including marijuana?</i> 4. <i>...Any prescription medications 'recreationally' (just for the feeling, or using more than prescribed)?</i> 	A response of 1 or greater is a positive risk indicator.	A positive screen should be followed by the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) screening tool.

¹Smith, P.C., Schmidt, S.M., Allensworth-Davies, D., Saitz, R. (2009). Primary Care Validation of a Single-Question Alcohol Screening Test. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 24(7), 783-788. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-009-0928-6>

²Babor, T.F., Higgins-Biddle, J.C., Saunders, J.B., & Monteiro, M.G. (2001). *The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test: Guidelines for Use in Primary Care*, 2nd Edition, Retrieved August 21, 2017, from WHO website. http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/67205/1/WHO_MSD_MSB_01.6a.pdf

³Smith, P.C., Schmidt, S.M., Allensworth-Davies, D., Saitz, R. (2010). A Single-Question Screening Test for Drug Use in Primary Care. *Archives of Internal Medicine*. 170(13), 1155-1160. <http://doi.org/10.1001/archinternmed.2010.140>

⁴McNeely, J., Strauss, S. M., Saitz, R., Cleland, C.M., Palamar, J. J., Rotrosen, J., & Gourevitch, M. N. (2015). A brief patient self-administered substance use screening tool for primary care: two-site validation study of the Substance Use Brief Screen (SUBS). *The American Journal of Medicine*, 128(7), 784.e19. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2015.02.007>