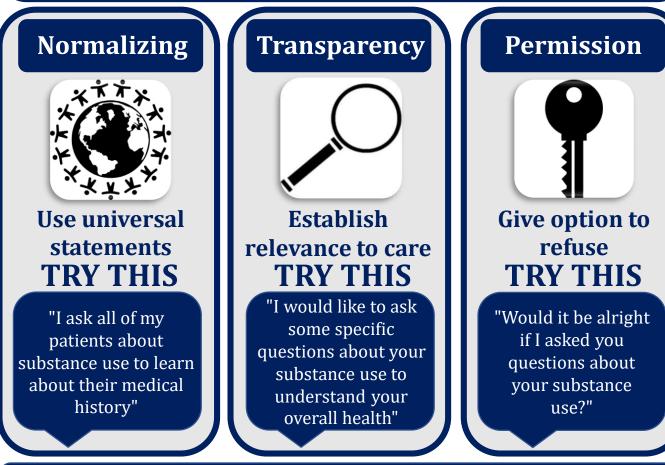
PA SBIRT Pennsylvania Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment

Talking To Patients About Substance Use

Techniques to introduce substance use screening to determine type, quantity, and frequency of substances used



"Many patients find it difficult to talk about their substance use, but asking a few very specific questions will help me get a better picture of your health. Is it okay if I ask some questions about your substance use?

How You Ask

- Ask for facts, not opinions (behavioral incidents)
- Use specific, close-ended questions
- Offer response choices on the screening tool (ex. always, sometimes, never)
- **Emphasize confidentiality**
- Clarify time periods (ex. past 30 days, month, year, etc.)
- Use visual aids (ex. standard drink sizes)





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Work Cited: McBride, R. (2010). *Talking to Patients about Sensitive Topics: Techniques for Increasing the Reliability of Patient Self-report* [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from: https://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed/centers-excellence/resources/talking-to-patients-about-sensitive-topics-communicationscreening-techniques-increasing