

Brief Treatment Guidelines. Some steps (and questions to ask)

- When the patient comes into the office (or you go into the examination room) go over the results of the AUDIT or DAST first (That FRAMES model is in your RED notebook) and is a good guide for this type of approach.
- **Next** ask if the patient is concerned about his/her use of alcohol/drugs? If yes, ask him/her to share the concerns.
- **Next** you could ask if these are new concerns or concerns the patient has had for a while?
- **Next** ask what the patient wants to do about his/her use of substances (cut down, stop, etc.)
- **Ask** if the patient has ever tried before to reduce or stop his or her usage (if yes, ask the patient to tell you about this? When, how, and what the patient believes worked and didn't work about this approach). Again, you can educate at this point about the STAGES of CHANGE so that the idea of "relapse" is normalized.
- **Ask** about the patient's current level of motivation to change (ask on a scale of 1 to 10) and what barriers might get in the way of reducing or discontinuing his/her use of the substance(s)?
- **Then, if appropriate**, provide education about the particular drug or alcohol (just as you would in Brief Intervention)
- **Identify yourself** as a person to help support, encourage the patient to successfully navigate through his/her change in behavior related to his/her use of alcohol or other substances. Suggest that the patient set a reasonable goal (and you may need to challenge a goal that is likely to not be attainable) about his/her use of substances/alcohol.
- **Write out the goal**...including how the person is going to achieve this (example: reduce times he or she might go to Happy Hour, or not purchasing alcohol that is in the home; or starting an exercise program; doing an extra activity daily with the children or family, or spouse, etc.).
- **Discuss** who might be supportive of this goal. If the patient has no one then setting a goal is great but could be really difficult because of the need for support.

- **Give a copy** of the written goal to the patient and if you can keep one for yourself.
- **Then set a time to meet again** to discuss how the patient did with the goal. Emphasize before the client leaves that change is a process and this goal is great but sometimes achieving a goal is difficult. Your role is to help the patient get to his/her goal and so when he/she returns to the clinic you both will just review how it went with regards to reaching the goal set by the patient.
- **Summarize** what was discussed and what the patient set as his/her goal.
- **Set up another time to meet**—give it at least one week; maybe more.

Next session:

- **Go over the goal**...what worked; what didn't and ask how the patient is feeling about his/her progress towards the goal?
- **Provide encouragement and support** and ask the patient what he/she would like to modify about this goal in order to fully reach it (if he/she hasn't reach it).
- **If the patient has reached his/her goal**, then what, if any goals does the patient want to set for him/herself at this time.
- **If none**, then you have the option to set up another time about 4 or 5 weeks from now to see how things are going (remember if a patient cancels or misses an appointment you can always call to touch base).
- **If the patient has another goal related to reducing or discontinuing his/her use** of substances you can work with the patient to set another goal and then set another time to meet regarding those goals.
- **If other issues come up that are secondary to the alcohol/drug use then you can encourage the client to go to counseling and offer options through his/her insurance or through the Guidance Center.**

Remember: Brief Treatment is really helping a patient to set goals for changing his/her behavior about use of substances. I would think you would see someone maybe 3 or 4 times at the most but most people probably only once or twice. If the person really wants to stop his/her use and can't seem to make progress towards that goal, then suggest the option of treatment and then you could refer him/her to the nearest Treatment Center. **USE**

Motivational Interviewing when doing Brief Treatment.