

Facilitator Guide

The adolescent module is intended to be used as part of a class or as an at-home exercise. If the module is being used as a component of a class exercise, the facilitator's guide may provide structure to allow participants to become more comfortable with and focused on the goals and skills addressed in this module.

Below is a suggested format that can be adjusted depending on the experience and training level of your learners. The following format can be used for a 1–2 hour session. Learners should review the learning goals and the module prior to meeting:

1. Describe risk factors that predispose children and adolescents to experience substance abuse and addiction.
2. Describe protective factors that lead to resilience and limit substance abuse and addiction among adolescents.
3. Demonstrate the skills necessary to conduct a primary inquiry with an adolescent patient that includes substance use.
4. Demonstrate the skills necessary to conduct a substance use history in the adolescent patient.
5. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to recognize substance abuse in adolescent patients.
6. Demonstrate skills in engaging adolescent patients in preventive strategies and treatment for substance abuse or addiction.

Discussion

Ask your learners about their experiences with children and adolescents who have had problems with substance use or abuse.

- What was the nature of the interaction?
- How did the patient make you feel?
- How did your feelings about the patient affect your care of them?
- What was the outcome of the interaction?
- In retrospect, what would you change about the interaction?

If you are working with a small group, ask each member about his or her experiences.

- How have experiences from your childhood and adolescence affected your sensitivity to detecting substance abuse and addiction among adolescents?
- What are your attitudes and feelings concerning “normal adolescent experimentation” with substances?
- How comfortable are you that you can recognize substance abuse or addiction in a pediatric or adolescent patient?
- Do you ask about substance use in every interview of a pediatric or adolescent patient? If not, why?
- Are you comfortable with regulations governing consent and confidentiality concerning adolescent patients and substance use?

- Do you worry about “what to do” in the event that you discover substance abuse or addiction affecting an adolescent patient? If so, how does that worry affect your interviews with adolescent patients?
- How does the age of an adolescent patient affect your questioning about substance use?

Role-play

Two role-plays are provided below, one on screening and one on intervention.

Preparation: Trainees can divide into triads where the first is playing the physician, the second is playing the patient, and the third is acting as an observer. Learners can use the scenarios provided or they can role-play patients with whom they are familiar.

Role-play instructions: The individuals who are playing the physician and the patient can role-play an interaction for 5 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of giving feedback to one another. The observer can then provide observations and feedback regarding the interaction for another 3 to 5 minutes. After the role-play, feedback and observations have been completed, the large group can re-form and discuss what has been learned. What challenges were experienced? What techniques were successful? Ask each member to share his or her experiences.

Scenario 1: Screening

Physician role:

The task is to obtain a history from the patient. All components of the routine history are benign prior to addressing substance use.

Patient role:

You are a 16-year-old male who is in his doctor’s office for a sport’s physical. You are trying out for football this season. You are in good health and have no medical problems. You live with your parents and have one older sister, age 19. Over the past year, you have started to smoke marijuana several times per week. You also have taken your mom’s sleeping medications on a few occasions. You are always with friends when you smoke or take pills. You’ve never gotten into trouble when using, but your grades in school have dropped over the past year. You have developed a cough when you exercise, which was not present last year. You are also finding it harder to be motivated to work out in the gym on a daily basis. You think you might be losing interest in sports, but you enjoy the camaraderie of your team and want to try out this year.

Scenario 2: Brief Intervention

Physician role:

The task is to obtain historical information from the patient and encourage the patient to recognize the problem, hear your concern, and attempt to change behavior.

Patient role:

You are a 19-year-old female who recently lost your job as a cashier in a local grocery store because you were regularly late to work after staying out partying with your friends. You previously smoked marijuana regularly and used pills on occasion to relax, but now you’re smoking methamphetamine, too. You work sporadically as a babysitter and spend most of your income on methamphetamine. You now need to smoke to feel energized. You have not looked for a regular job in over a month and have recently been told by your parents that you need to either go back to school or get a job and contribute money for rent. When you are home, you stay in your room and do not interact with your parents.

After the Role-plays

If you are working with a small group, ask each person about his or her experiences, what he or she has learned, and how he or she will approach taking histories and implementing interventions in the future. If you are working with a large group, ask trainees to turn to each other in small groups to describe their experiences for 5 to 10 minutes. Afterwards ask each group to contribute some of their best lessons learned. Next, read the following questions for reflection, one by one, and ask individual trainees to respond, and allow time for others to provide their input.

- Can you identify common risk factors associated with adolescent substance use?
 - Family factors: parents or siblings who are alcoholics or drug users; family history of criminality; parental involvement in child's life; clear limits and consistent enforcement of discipline
 - Peer factors: association with drug-abusing peers
 - School factors: poor classroom behavior or social skills; academic failure
 - Community factors: drug availability
- Name some protective factors associated with adolescent substance use.
 - Family factors: parental involvement and monitoring of child; family communication; anti-drug parental attitudes
 - Peer factors: peer support for abstinence
 - School factors: academic competence;
 - Community factors: anti-drug use policies; community attitudes discouraging substance use
- What skills are necessary to take a substance abuse history?
 - A nonjudgmental attitude in questioning and in hearing the answers given by an adolescent patient
 - Knowledge of screening tools such as the CRAFFT and CAGE
- What skills do you think are most effective to identify substance use in adolescents?
 - An understanding of what questions to ask an adolescent patient
 - Capability to reflect back discussion in a straightforward, nonjudgmental way
 - Ability to provide empathetic counseling
 - Recognition of how adolescent drug use differs from adult drug use (in both how drugs are used and what drugs they use) [adolescents often take the drugs that are at hand and may do so in more of an exploratory fashion than adults]

Open-ended questions to ask learners:

- How physician attitudes can facilitate or hinder screening, assessment, diagnosis, and referral of patients with substance use disorders?
- What other perspectives or comments do you have?
- Do you feel more comfortable and capable in conducting a screening interview for substance use with an adolescent patient?
- Do you feel that you have acquired a better understanding of factors necessary in making an assessment of the severity of substance use in an adolescent patient?
- Are you more likely to include substance abuse screening in your interactions with adolescent patients as a result of this module?
- What are the major learning points that you took away from the module?