



Primary Care Substance Use Disorder Toolkit

Enclosed is a packet of supporting tools proven to be effective in the identification and treatment of Substance Use Disorder. The goal of MHS Health Wisconsin's Behavioral Health Toolkit is to support the screening for, recognition of and treatment of mental disorders at the primary care level. According to the National Institute of Mental Health 26.2 percent of the population ages 18 and up suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. That is approximately 57.7 million people. This is important because mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada.

MHS Health recognizes that many of our health plan members feel most comfortable with their Primary Care Physician (PCP) as the initial point of contact for all health concerns. With that in mind, the significance of the role that PCP's play in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness cannot be understated. We hope you will have the opportunity to utilize and share this information with your patients.

This toolkit is intended to provide a basic understanding of substance use disorders by assisting PCPs in recognizing signs of these disorders in patients. The utilization of a reliable screening tool or a symptoms list will assist in initiation of treatment and/or referral of the member for additional treatment and support.

What are Substance Use Disorders?

Substance Use Disorders encompass a pattern of behaviors that range from misuse to dependency or addiction, whether it is alcohol, legal drugs or illegal drugs. It is a progressive and chronic disease, but also one that can be successfully treated. People with substance use disorders often don't recognize or seek help for the problem and may not be screened for substance use when they seek treatment for other health conditions, which means that substance use and dependence disorders are often under-recognized and undertreated.

Who is Affected by Substance Use Disorders?

Substance Use Disorders can affect anyone regardless of age, occupation, economic circumstances, ethnic background or gender. However, certain factors can affect the likelihood of developing an addiction:

- *Family history of addiction.* Drug addiction is more common in some families and likely involves the effects of many genes. If a blood relative, such as a parent or sibling, has alcohol or drug problems, then a greater risk of developing a drug addiction exists.
- *Being male.* Men are twice as likely to have problems with drugs.
- *Having another psychological diagnosis.* If someone has psychological diagnosis, such as depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder, they are more likely to become dependent on drugs.
- *Peer pressure.* Particularly for young people, peer pressure is a strong factor in starting to use and abuse drugs.
- *Lack of family involvement.* A lack of attachment with one's parents may increase the risk of addiction, as can a lack of parental supervision.
- *Anxiety, depression and loneliness.* Using drugs can become a way of coping with these painful psychological feelings.
- *Taking a highly addictive drug.* Some drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, cause addiction faster than do others.

Types of Substance Use Disorders

Substance Dependence

A pattern of substance use that leads to significant impairment or distress in three (or more) of the following ways:

- Tolerance, as defined by either a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve the desired effect, or a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance
- Withdrawal symptoms characteristic for the substance, or increased use to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
- Increased use - the substance is taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended
- A persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use
- Much time is spent in activities to obtain the substance, use the substance or recover from its effects
- Important social, occupational or recreational activities are given up or reduced
- The substance use is continued despite it causing a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem (e.g., current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression)

Substance Abuse

A pattern of substance use that leads to significant impairment or distress in one (or more) of the following ways:

- A failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school or home
- Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
- Recurrent substance-related legal problems
- Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or worsened by the effects of the substance

Screening Tools & Resources

Despite the high prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders, too many Americans go without treatment — in part because their disorders go undiagnosed. Regular screenings in primary care and other healthcare settings enables earlier identification of mental health and substance use disorders, which translates into earlier care. Screenings should be provided to people of all ages, even the young and the elderly.

- SBIRT is a comprehensive, integrated public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for persons with substance use disorders, as well as those who are at risk of developing these disorders for use in community settings. Please refer to your individual provider contract for information about whether or not SBIRT is a covered service in your area.
- CAGE AID is a commonly used, five-question tool that screens for drug and alcohol use. It is a quick questionnaire to help determine if an alcohol assessment is needed. If a person answers yes to two or more questions, a complete assessment is advised.
- AUDIT is a 10-item questionnaire that screens for hazardous or harmful alcohol consumption. The AUDIT is particularly suitable for use in primary care settings and has been used with a variety of populations and cultural groups. It should be administered by a health professional or paraprofessional.

Best Practices

Treatment must address the individual needs of the person seeking treatment and recovery. The current research-based best practices tend to merge the bio-psychosocial, theoretical perspective of addictive disorders. This includes supportive counseling, motivating client readiness for change, and coping-skills training techniques.

For additional information about substance use disorders or other mental health screening tools go to any of the following websites:

- www.nami.org
- www.nimh.nih.gov
- www.mentalhealth.samsha.gov
- www.cenpatico.com
- www.iccmhc.org

