

Supporting Youth in Custody with Concerns around Substance Use: A Training for Child Welfare Professionals

Substance Use among Youth in Custody

Youth in custody...

- Are at **significant risk for substance use and mental health concerns** and **higher risk** for developing a substance use or mental health disorder.
- Use substances at rates similar to or **higher** than their peers who have not been in custody.
- Begin using substances at **earlier ages** than their peers who have not been in custody.
- Often enter the foster care system due to **parental substance use**.

SBIRT can help break this cycle!

Child welfare professionals can play a key role in providing care management for youth in custody who may be using alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other substances.

How can child welfare professionals identify substance use concerns and support youth in custody?

1. Identify warning signs of alcohol, tobacco, or other substance use:

Behavioral signs:	Physical signs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoiding eye contact• Loss of interest in things they once enjoyed• Changing friend groups• Missing school or work• School challenges• Getting in trouble• Stealing• Asking for money• Sleeping more• Making excuses or lying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety/paranoia• Poor hygiene• Sudden weight loss/gain• Runny nose or nosebleeds• Glazed/bloodshot eyes• Mood changes• Mental changes• Mouth sores• Headaches• Puffy/swollen face• Shakey hands• Really tired or very hyperactive

2. If you have identified warning signs of substance use risk and are worried about young person:

Express Concern	<p>“What I’m hearing is that……”</p> <p>“As your caseworker, I care about your health and wellbeing, and I’m worried about you.”</p>
Ask questions in a caring, non-judgmental way	<p>“How did your visit with [CHECK clinical staff person] go when you last met?”</p> <p>“How is your plan going to [cut back or stop] your use of [substance]?”</p>
Offer support and resources	<p>“How can I support you at this time? Who else in your life can support you?”</p> <p>“Before you leave today, I want to share some crisis resources that you can add to your contacts and call at any time if you are in need of additional support.”</p>
Ask permission to share update with CHECK clinical staff	<p>“Would it be okay if I shared this information with [CHECK clinical staff person] to make sure that we can work together to support you in the best way possible?”</p>
Plan for follow up	<p>“I’d love to check in soon to see how you’re doing. How would next week work?”</p>

What is SBIRT?

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is one of the leading ways to help reduce the impact of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco/vaping, and other substance use.



Screening

Process of identifying youth who are at risk of negative consequences due to their substance use, including risk of a substance use disorder.



Brief Intervention

A conversation that is intended to prevent, stop, or reduce substance use.



Referral to Treatment and Follow-up

Linking the youth to specialized substance use disorder treatment and other services, resources, and supports and regularly checking in to facilitate sustained access.

Why SBIRT with youth in custody?



1. Promotes health and wellbeing both in the short- and long-term as youth transition to adulthood and/or out of foster care.

Prevents or reduces risk of:

- Harmful effects on the developing brain
- Alcohol, tobacco, or other substance use disorders
- Social problems
- Physical & mental health concerns
- Risky sexual behaviors
- Injuries and accidents
- Financial and legal issues
- Job challenges

2. Promotes placement stability.

Preventing substance use before it begins or motivating youth to reduce or stop their use increases their chance of remaining at their current placement.

3. Promotes educational outcomes and employment stability in the long-term.

Increases the likelihood of:

- Remaining in and finishing high school as well as attending or graduating from college
- Job opportunities and employment stability



Supporting Youth in Custody with Substance Use Concerns

A Resource for Child Welfare Professionals

If you are not worried about substance use...

Offer praise and affirm their choice to not use substances.

- *It's great you've decided not to use alcohol, tobacco, or other substances. This means you are at lower risk for a substance use disorder.*
- *I can tell you really care about your health.*
- *What else is important to you in your life? (e.g., school, sports, friends)...*
- *Respond with: Staying at lower risk will help decrease the likelihood of experiencing negative outcomes related to substance use.*

Share Crisis and Support Resources

SAMHSA National Help Line: Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Dial 988

- <https://988lifeline.org/>

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

- <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Trevor Project: Text START to 678-678 or call 1-866-488-7386

- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

If you are worried about substance use...

Express concern.

- *I care about your health and wellbeing, and I'm worried about you.*

Ask questions in a caring, non-judgmental way.

- *How did your visit with [CHECK clinical staff person] go?*
- *How is your plan going to [cut back or stop] your use of [substance]?*
- *Have you experienced challenges reaching your goal?*
- *How has [treatment, counseling, or other services] been going for you?*

Offer support and resources.

- *How can I support you? Who else in your life can?*
- *Before you leave today, I want to share some crisis resources. You can add these to your contacts list and contact at any time if you need additional support.*

Plan to follow up.

- *I'd love to check in soon to see how you're doing. How about next week?*

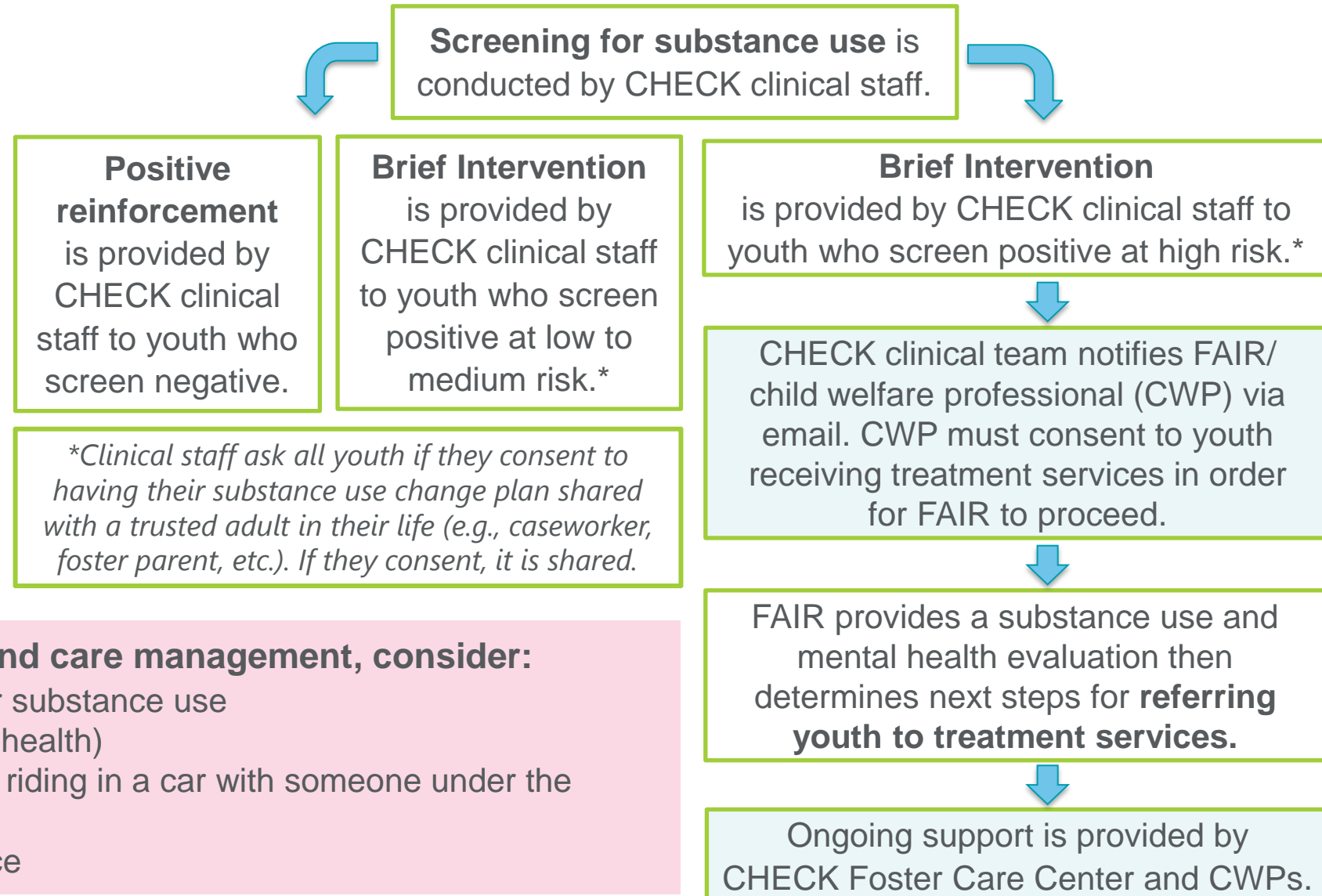
What is SBIRT?

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based practice used to identify, reduce, and prevent use of alcohol, tobacco/vaping, and other substances.

When providing ongoing support and care management, consider:

- Age of the patient/age of first drink or substance use
- Medical history (physical and mental health)
- Safety concerns (history of driving or riding in a car with someone under the influence of alcohol/drugs)
- Significant drop in school performance

Additional SBIRT Resources for CHECK Foster Care Center can be found at:
<https://www.sbirteducation.com/CHECKfostercare>



References



1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Identifying mental health and substance use problems of children and adolescents: A guide for child-serving organizations (HHS Publication No. SMA 12-4670). Rockville, MD: Author. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Identifying-Mental-Health-and-Substance-Use-Problems-of-Children-and-Adolescents-A-Guide-for-Child-Serving-Organizations/SMA12-4700>
2. Braciszewski, J. M., & Stout, R. L. (2012). Substance use among current and former foster youth: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 2337–2344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2012.08.011>
3. Greeno, E. J., Lee, B. R., Tuten, M., & Harburger, D. (2019). Prevalence of substance use, housing instability, and self perceived preparation for independence among current and former foster youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 36, 409–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-018-0568-y>
4. Kim, H. K., Buchanan, R., & Price, J. M. (2017). Pathways to preventing substance use among youth in foster care. *Prevention Science*, 18, 567–576. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-017-0800-6>
5. Siegel, A., Benbenishty, R., & Avi Astor, R. (2016). A comparison of adolescents in foster care and their peers in high school: A study of substance use behaviors and attitudes. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 25, 530–538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1067828X.2016.1139481>
6. Administration for Children and Families. (2020). National Youth in Transition Database report to Congress. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/nytd-report-to-congress>
7. Children's Bureau. (2020). Preventing, Identifying, and Treating Substance Use Among Youth in Foster Care. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/bulletins_youthsud.pdf
8. American Psychological Association. (2019). More kids in foster care. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/11/numbers-foster-care>
9. Youth.gov. 2023. Warning Signs. Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/substance-abuse/warning-signs-adolescent-substance-abuse>
10. Hazelden Betty Ford. 2019. Early Warning Signs of Teen Substance Use. Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/articles/warning-signs-teen-substance-use>
11. McPherson, T., Cohen, H., Storie, M., Harris, B., Calabrese, G., Drymon, C., Avripas, S., DeBroux, C., & Sublett, F. (2023). Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Learner's Guide. Bethesda, MD: NORC at the University of Chicago.
12. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alcohol Use and Your Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>
13. Julia Wedeles. Practice and Research Together (PART): Placement in Stability in Child Welfare. Retrieved from <https://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PARTicle-Placement-Stability-in-Child-Welfare-FINAL.pdf>
14. Barth., R. P., Lloyd, E. C., Green, R. L., James, S., Leslie, L. K. & Landsverk, J. (2007). Predictors of placement moves among children with and without emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 15(1): 46-55.
15. Stott, T. (2012). Placement instability and risky behaviors of youth gaining out of foster care. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Social Work*, 29: 61-83.
16. Wells, R. & Chuang, E. (2012). Does formal integration between child welfare and behavioral health agencies result in improved placement stability for adolescents engaged with both systems? *Child Welfare*, 91(1): 79-100.
17. US Department of Education. 2016. Students in Foster Care. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/index.html>
18. Casey Family Programs. (2018). What impacts placement stability? Retrieved from: <https://www.casey.org/placement-stability-impacts/#:~:text=Children's%20behavioral%20challenges%20are%20often,being%20separated%20from%20their%20families.>