

Sample Interaction: Screening and Brief Intervention with CRAFFT 2.1 Questions

Setting: A 16-year-old high school junior, was arrested for vandalism of school property when they were caught spray painting graffiti after school. Because this was their first offense, they were instructed to participate in a school-based diversion program for one year. During their first session in the program, they met with the practitioner who conducted a risk assessment to identify any behavioral health issues and to connect them to appropriate services. The practitioner conducted a screening using the CRAFFT 2.1 questions and the adolescent scored positive, indicating the need for further intervention.

The dialogue below presents the brief intervention.

- Practitioner:** *Thanks for bearing with me and answering all of those questions. Now, I'd like to learn a little more about you. What is a typical day like for you?*
- Adolescent:** *It's boring. I wake up, go to school, and sit through very long classes. Then I go home and watch TV. Some days I stay after school for my art class. My mom comes home at some point. After dinner I do my homework. Then it starts all over again the next day.*
- Practitioner:** *That sounds like a typical day for a high school student. What's the most important thing in your life right now?*
- Adolescent:** *My grades. I really want to get into art school. That is why I sometimes stay after school. To continue working on my assignments. My teacher also lets me work on some new projects if I finish the assigned ones early.*
- Practitioner:** *So, you're interested in art. What kind is your favorite?*
- Adolescent:** *My painting and drawing class.*
- Practitioner:** *That sounds like fun. I'm glad you enjoy that. Based on your responses to some of my questions, I was wondering if you'd mind taking a few minutes to talk about your alcohol use? How does your use fit into your typical day?*
- Adolescent:** *Well I don't drink every day. As I said, my days are usually same old same old. I focus on my studies and don't have much of a life outside of school. My mom noticed that something was bothering me and encouraged me to spend time with friends. But I'm not that comfortable socially. So, I went to a party with a couple of friends from my class and there was drinking. I drank as well, so I'd fit in. I met some new friends who showed me some of their awesome graffiti art when I was there. So, I like to drink when I'm with these friends because we have the same interest in art, and we can share ideas.*

Practitioner: *How much do you drink when you're with your friends?*

Adolescent: *Three or four drinks. Just something sweet, like Smirnoff Ice or hard lemonade. Beer doesn't taste good. And, it's just on the weekends, two or three days a week.*

Practitioner: *Is that every weekend, or just on some?*

Adolescent: *Not every weekend! Just 2 or 3 weekends a month.*

Practitioner: *I'd like to understand more about your alcohol use. What do you enjoy about drinking?*

Adolescent: *I'm a whole different person when I drink. I can let loose, and I'm much more fun. It is easy for me to be social when I'm drinking. I'm in the moment, and I'm having fun. I'm not just the studious one anymore. I fit in.*

Practitioner: *What is not so good about your drinking?*

Adolescent: *Oh, I don't know. Sometimes the day after I drink, I have a bad headache and I spend a lot of time sleeping. I've had less time and energy to study and to do my homework. When we drink on a Sunday and I have school the next day, I can be very tired and can't concentrate in class. My grades have dropped a little, but I can get them back up.*

Practitioner: *Anything else?*

Adolescent: *I haven't felt like working on my paintings. I had a good friend in that class, and we used to stay after together to work on assignments. We're not really friends anymore. She doesn't fit in with my group.*

Practitioner: *So, on the one hand you said that drinking relaxes you, makes you feel more social, and helps you to fit in. On the other hand, it is having an impact on you academically. Your grades are dropping because you're less able to concentrate on studying and doing your homework. You also have lost some interest in your painting and drawing and lost a good friend of yours as a result. What do you think about that?*

Adolescent: *If I don't drink, I won't be welcomed in my group of friends. There's not really a choice. My choice is whether I want to have friends or whether I want to do well in school and get into a good college. It's hard not having friends.*

Practitioner: *What about the friend in your painting class? This friendship didn't require you to drink.*

Adolescent: *Right. We spent time after school working on our projects. And we talked. I guess I could be myself. I didn't get into trouble trying to fit in.*

Practitioner: *I have some information on drinking. Would you mind if I shared it with you?*

Adolescent:	<i>What, that I should stop? Okay, what is it?</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Drinking three or four alcoholic drinks at one time is binge drinking. It can impair your judgment. It has been associated with risky behaviors. In fact, teens who drink in excess are more likely to have unwanted pregnancies or to contract a sexually transmitted disease. They have also gotten into car accidents. Of course, drinking also has a negative impact on grades. Not to mention, extended use will put you at risk for illness. What are your thoughts on that?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>I was really just focusing on the fitting in part of drinking. And I didn't think much of the number of drinks I was having. They're just sweet drinks. I guess vandalizing the school was pretty stupid. The drinking must have "impaired my judgment."</i>
Practitioner:	<i>You may be surprised to hear that your peers are drinking less than you think. Only 10% have had three or more drinks at one time. Less than 30% have had any alcohol in the past 30 days. What do you think about that?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Really? I thought most of the people in my school drink. Everyone was drinking at the party. We drink every time my friends and I get together. I drink so that I fit in. But really, most people my age don't drink?</i>
Practitioner:	<i>That's right. Teens often think that their peers are drinking more than they really are. They're always surprised when I provide them this information.</i>
Adolescent:	<i>So, my drinking is actually making me less like my peers?</i>
Practitioner:	<i>That's a good way to look at it. Let's talk a bit about how you want to address your drinking. This Readiness Ruler is like the pain scale that many doctors use in their offices. On a scale from 1 to 10, with one being not at all ready and ten being completely ready, how ready are you to change your alcohol use?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Um, I don't know. Maybe a 5?</i>
Practitioner:	<i>5? That's good. You're 50% ready to make a change. Why a 5 and not a lower number like a 3?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Well my peers aren't really drinking like I thought they were. I am more like everyone else than I thought. Plus, I really did something stupid when I was drinking, and I got in trouble. I never would have done those things if I weren't drinking or hanging out with this group of friends. The only problem is that I was pretty lonely before I started drinking. It's really tough to feel like an outsider.</i>

Practitioner:	<i>I understand what you're saying. But you did have a friend in your painting class – with similar interests. And you could be yourself with this friend. And you certainly have goals and interests – like your grades and getting into art school.</i>
Adolescent:	<i>That's true.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>So, let's make a plan to help you reduce, and possibly stop, your drinking. What will help you reduce the things you don't like about drinking?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Well, not going out to the parties. But I don't know about my friends. They all drink.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Are there alternative things to do? Or places to go? And what about the friend in your painting class?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>I can try to see if she would go to the movies or get something to eat, or just get together to paint.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>That's a good idea. Anything else?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Well, I'm not sure. Maybe I can tell my other friends that I'm not drinking so that I can do well on the SAT and get into my top choice for art school. I could try to do something with my art friend outside of school. I just don't like being alone all the time after school and on weekends.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>These are all good ideas. What can help you to carry out this action plan? Sometimes, looking at what worked well in other situations can help us figure out how to be successful in new ones. Tell me about a time when you overcame a challenge in the past. What kinds of resources did you call upon then?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>When my parents got divorced it was really hard. My dad moved out and then moved across the country to be closer to his brother. He's remarried now and has a whole new family. My mom was very supportive then. So was my aunt, her sister. My teacher at the time was understanding and took extra time with me to make sure everything was okay and to support me in the classwork.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Which of these supports are available to you now?</i>
Adolescent:	<i>My mom is, but she doesn't know about my drinking. She just found out about my getting caught vandalizing school property. She was surprised and very angry. Before, she just thought it was great that I was socializing and had a new group of friends. I don't think she realizes my grades have dropped. My aunt is cool though. Maybe I can tell her. And my painting and drawing teacher is pretty supportive, too. It is usually pretty quiet in the classroom after school.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>So, it sounds like you do have some people you may be able to count on. And your mom may be understanding if you talk openly to her.</i>

Adolescent:	<i>Right...maybe.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Let me summarize what we've been discussing, and you let me know if there is anything else you want to add or change. Your goal is to do well on the SATs and get into the art school of your choice. But you feel that your life is pretty dull, and you don't have friends to socialize with. You feel uncomfortable socializing. You started drinking to make socializing easier and to fit in. However, you got caught vandalizing the school, which you related to your drinking and how it might have impaired your judgement. You said that you'd try to explain to your friends that you're not drinking to improve your chances on the SAT, and to suggest going to the mall or to the movies instead of to parties. You also said you can ask your friend from painting class to do things outside of school.</i>
Adolescent:	<i>That sounds about right.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Good. You're scheduled to attend this program once per week. Let's touch base again in two weeks to see how you're doing.</i>
Adolescent:	<i>Okay, that sounds like a plan.</i>
Practitioner:	<i>Thank you.</i>