

Alcohol SBI Implementation

Challenges, Successes, and Maintenance Ideas

Alaska Public Health Nursing



"It's not always comfortable to ask but I'm glad we do."

- Alaska Public Health Nurse

PROJECT BACKGROUND & METHOD

As part of evaluation of the alcohol screening and brief intervention (SBI) project, researchers collected information using consultation calls and interviews to understand practice implementation processes, including facilitators and challenges, and develop maintenance strategies. Three pilot public health centers (PHC) participated in:

Consultation calls

Over 14 months, 12-16 consultation calls with staff from each pilot PHC were conducted and implementation progress, challenges, needs, and successes were documented.

Interviews

During October, 2014, 11 interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of PHNs and nurse managers.

An SBI planning team, comprised of PHN staff from a variety of roles plus the research team, used data to guide decisions and refine SBI protocols and practices.

FINDINGS



Nurses faced two main challenges during the practice change:

1. Skill Proficiency
2. Policies and Procedures

Challenge 1: Skill Proficiency

Alcohol SBI skill development revolved around three main issues.

#1

Client-centered care

"...if you hit a roadblock with a client who has a giant drinking problem, but they're not ready to address it, that's probably just the trickiest piece." --PHN

"When I've done it with postpartum women, it's a lot more awkward to use the screening tools that we have, because they've been pregnant for nine months. They may or may not have been drinking... so having that conversation, it feels a little bit funny." --PHN

Time can be a challenge, especially if some other issue becomes more pressing in the appointment. --10/13 consultation call

#2

Challenging scenarios

"...trying to figure out a good way to talk about problem drinking...that can take a little bit of thinking and just trying to figure out the best way to approach it for each person." --PHN

The hardest cases are when a woman finds out she is pregnant and has been drinking. That is the most difficult to talk about. --4/14 consultation call

"...having other people present [in the room] is challenging." --PHN



Challenge 2: Policies & Procedures

Two main questions emerged during the practice change and involved all levels of SOPHN.



How to chart positive cases?



How often to screen?

Charting is a challenge - especially the wording for screening positive. --7/13 consultation call



"The biggest challenge has been figuring out with SOPHN the charting pieces that's going to work for our records." --PHN

"...at Public Health Nursing, we're trying to set policy state-wide." --PHN

"...some people do have some degree of frustration with being asked it every single time they come in for a visit, even if they've been there two days prior." --PHN

"...it's just not necessary to do it as frequently as we do it because as of now, we're doing it with every encounter." --PHN

"Any time you have a practice change that involves documentation, that's a challenge and takes time to work through." --PHN

"We worked with our leaders and they developed a new documentation tool that seems to work better and we seem pretty happy with that at this point." --PHN

"It seems there are some visits that it just fits in really seamlessly. Like when someone comes in for a birth control refill, for an STD exam, or for their annual exam, it's a very natural fit of conversation." --PHN

Successes

Comfort levels are getting stronger with more practice. --12/13 consultation call

"I think we've kind of gotten into a routine at this point." --PHN

"I think as a public health nurse, you need to be very flexible anyway...when things are really important, you can squeeze them in to an office visit." --PHN

By October 2014, a feasible policy and procedure for alcohol SBI was formally established by PHN, based on numerous needs within the health system and fidelity to the research evidence.

Routine alcohol SBI is now integrated into all 22 PHCs and over 280 villages across Alaska.

IDEAS to MAINTAIN SBI SKILLS

"One of the major transition points was just getting comfortable asking, and then counseling. And then, knowing what your community resources [are] and what your follow-up is going to be to a positive score. So having those things in your head, so to speak, before you start asking the questions." --PHN



Sharpen your ability to enhance clients' change talk.

Increase your personal comfort with clients' resistance to change. Regardless of clients' attitude, brief advice from a health professional is important to the behavior change process.

Practice reflective listening.

Adapt SBI strategies as needed.

"What seems to work is to have frequent dialogue with staff, to check in and say, 'What's working? What's not working?' share tips, go over the forms and things like that." --PHN

Discuss various charts to share documented descriptions of different scenarios where SBI is provided and brainstorm potential ways to improve.

FINAL POINTS

Alcohol SBI is a public health approach and provides a low-intensity, low-cost clinical preventive service.

Alcohol SBI is used to identify risky drinking and intervene with people who drink too much.

Many who receive alcohol SBI respond positively and will reduce risks over time.

"...this just brings people back to what is considered normal use, and helps them address how they're using alcohol currently in their lives. So, it's a conversation-starter." --PHN