



Parenting for Prevention:
SBIRT
Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment

What is SBIRT?

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is a validated screening tool commonly used in a school setting. School health teams, including school nurses, use SBIRT to build relationships and share information with students, and to help detect risk for substance use related problems. If a higher risk is detected, they then use brief intervention strategies and if deemed necessary, they can refer the student for further assessment or treatment. The goal is to help address concerns regarding high risk behaviors in adolescents at the earliest possible stage. Overall, SBIRT focuses on prevention, early detection, risk assessment, brief counseling, and referral for assessment.



The administration of SBIRT in Massachusetts schools is mandated by the March 2016 Massachusetts Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention (STEP Act) which outlines the requirements for public schools in the Commonwealth to engage in substance use screening and education.

Screening (S):	A UNIVERSAL screening using a validated tool to identify substance use in the past year. Universal screening assessments are brief, conducted with all students at a specified grade level, and followed by additional testing or follow up as needed.
Brief Intervention (BI):	Students with a negative screen receive positive reinforcement for healthy decisions and behaviors. Students with a positive screen are engaged in conversations that are non-judgmental, empathic, and solution-focused.
Referral to Treatment (RT):	Individuals identified as needing additional supports or services are referred to school-or community-based resources.

- SBIRT is ...***
- Evidence-based
 - A UNIVERSAL health screening
 - Proactive and preventative
 - Used to identify substance use and discuss risks
 - Administered using Motivational Interviewing principles and practices to model strengths-based communication and support to students
 - Focused on **prevention, education, risk reduction & relationship building**

- SBIRT is not ...***
- Targeted screening
 - Drug “testing”
 - A treatment program
 - Used to get students into trouble

How can I support SBIRT at home?

Research shows that parent and/or guardian influence is a primary reason young people decide not to drink alcohol or use other drugs. One way to prevent youth substance use is to talk with your child about your family's expectations regarding substance use. Together, schools and families **can** make a difference for students in Ashland.

Talking with your Tween (ages 9-12)

Pre-teens are figuring out their place in the world. While their friends' opinions are gaining power, parents and other caregiving adults in their lives still have the most influence on their decisions. That's why it is important to keep talking with them about making healthy choices, especially about alcohol and other drug use.

- Set rules and establish consequences if those rules are broken. Make sure your child understands them. Be consistent with follow through. This goes for homework, bedtimes and curfews, as well as no-use rules about tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Base drug and alcohol messages on facts, not fear. Scare tactics don't work.
- Help your child with refusal skills. Have them practice responses if someone offers them alcohol or other drugs. Saying "No, thanks. I've got a big game tomorrow" shows that they care about being healthy. Let them know they can use you as an excuse and say: "No, my parents will kill me if I smoke a cigarette."
- Kids at this age are not concerned with long-term consequences. Keep discussions focused on the immediate negative effects – cigarettes make your clothes and hair smell; alcohol can make you do something embarrassing; marijuana will make it hard to play in the basketball tournament.
- Help them separate reality from fantasy. Watch TV and movies with them. Ask questions to help them make the distinction between the two. Include advertising in your discussions and explain that magazines create enticing images to sell products to young consumers.



Talking with your Teen (ages 13-18)

The average age kids try drugs for the first time is 13. This is a critical time in helping youth make positive choices when faced with drugs and alcohol. Through the teen years, young people will have to make plenty of choices about drug use and whether they should give in to peer pressure or their own curiosity. Your clear and consistent messages about not using alcohol and other drugs, and your reasons why, can help prevent teen use.

- Let your younger teen know you respect them as an individual. They need to hear a lot of positive comments about who they are, not just what they do. Positive reinforcement establishes a strong sense of confidence and can lower the risk of drug and alcohol use.
- Check in with your teen every day – celebrate their successes and support them through the tough times. You'll earn your child's trust, develop strong communication habits, and pave the way for honest discussions about alcohol and other drugs.
- Talk with your teen about what they are learning in school about drugs and alcohol and continue the conversations at home. This is a great opportunity to share your values, expectations and concerns about alcohol and other drugs, and to learn what your teen is thinking.
- Older teens need to hear factual, detailed, and reality-driven messages. Substance use can put them in dangerous situations, cause serious permanent health consequences, or lead to addiction.
- Emphasize that substance use can interfere with your teen's future goals and plans. Discuss how drug use can ruin your teen's chance of getting into college or landing their dream job.



RESOURCES

KidsHealth

www.kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/alcohol.htm

MA SBIRT

<http://www.masbirt.org/schools>

NIH/National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Addiction

http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm

The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

<http://www.drugfree.org/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/parents-educators>

Parenting for Prevention is a Decisions at Every Turn Coalition educational series for parents and other caring adults to increase awareness and knowledge about important issues and to encourage dialogue about making healthy choices.

Please visit <http://www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html> for our complete library of tip sheets.

Decisions at Every Turn Coalition • 65 Union Street, Ashland MA 01721

www.AshlandDecisions.org • CoalitionInfo@AshlandDecisions.org • 508.881.0177 x8284