



# Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT):

An evidence-based approach to reinforce healthy behaviors among youth

When teachers, coaches, and other caring adults talk with young people about using alcohol, tobacco and other substances, they strengthen healthy coping skills and help them avoid the negative physical, mental and social costs associated with misuse. Alcohol and substance misuse can have long-term consequences with a negative impact on a young person’s physical and mental well-being, school performance, and their future job prospects.

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based practice used to identify, reduce, and prevent abuse and dependence on alcohol, tobacco and other substances. SBIRT is part of a comprehensive prevention program that schools and healthcare providers can take to reduce and prevent substance misuse.

## SCREENING:



Identify how much and how often a young person used substances with a validated screening tool.

## BRIEF INTERVENTION:



Engage a young person about their behaviors to increase their awareness, insights and motivation to reduce risky behavior.

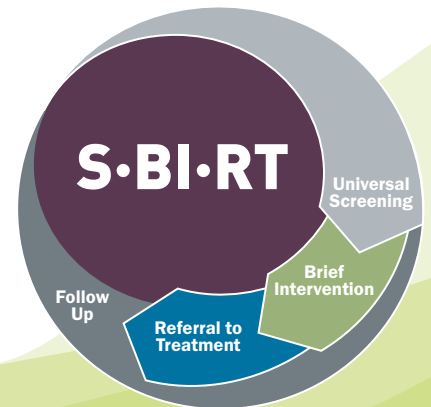
## REFERRAL TO TREATMENT:



Connect youth as needed to health and behavioral health providers.

**FOLLOW UP:** Ensure referrals to outside providers are complete, so youth and families have the support and services they need.

- The brains and bodies of youth are developing through 25 years. Substance use during these years can lead to problems that have a lifelong impact on adolescents’ brains, impacting memory, mood, and motivation.<sup>1</sup>
- It is important to prevent early-stage use or delay use for young people because initiation early in life leads to a greater risk of addiction later in life.<sup>2</sup>
- Starting use early in life is associated with a variety of physical, social and behavioral problems. The younger age of use is associated with faster development of substance use disorders.<sup>3</sup>
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes in the future.<sup>4</sup>



**Working together, we can make sure young people have the knowledge, support and motivation to make healthy decisions. Support SBIRT in your local schools. It makes a difference.**

**For more information, visit  
The Partnership @drugfreeNH.org**

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment>

<sup>2</sup>Hamza, D, Bercov, M, Suen, V, Allen, A, & Cribben, I (2018). School-based screening, brief interventions, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) significantly decreases long-term substance abuse in 6,227 students aged 11–18. *Journal of Addictive Behaviors and Therapy*, 2(1).

<sup>3</sup>Trujillo, C. A., Obando, D., & Trujillo, A. (2019). An examination of the association between early initiation of substance use and interrelated multilevel risk and protective factors among adolescents. *PLOS ONE*, 14(12), e0225384. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0225384

<sup>4</sup>Hair, EC, Barton, AA, Perks, SN, Kreslake, J, Xiao, J, Pitzer, L, . . . Vallone, DM (2021). Association between e-cigarette use and future combustible cigarette use: Evidence from a prospective cohort of youth and young adults, 2017–2019. *Addictive Behaviors*, 112, 106593. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106593