



Listening to children and youth  
is the first step to help them  
grow healthy and safe

Photo: UNICEF Ethiopia / Tuschman

# FACTS FOR HEALTH WORKERS

Health workers can have a **positive** and **crucial influence** on children and youth and their risk behaviour, helping them grow **happy and resilient**.

Attentive health workers can use easy tools to identify substance use and **intervene early, simply and effectively**.

## LISTEN FIRST

It takes only few minutes to ask non-judgemental and non-confrontational questions to understand whether there might be a substance use problem.



Photo: UNODC

## LISTEN FIRST

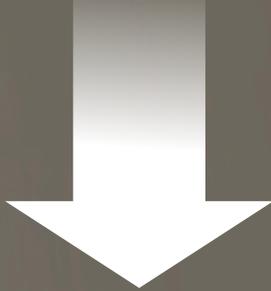
The first step towards an effective therapeutic relationship between health workers and patients is based on listening with sensitivity and empathy.



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# LISTEN FIRST

Clarify the confidential nature of the health care discussion.



Encourage a change in the adolescent's environment and activities, rather than focusing on their behaviour as being a "problem".

Besides **reducing substance use, brief interventions and motivational interviewing**, combined with referral to further services, can yield many other **positive outcomes**, such as:



**The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test: Interview Version**

Read questions as written. Record answers carefully. Begin the AUDIT by saying "Now I am going to ask you some questions about your use of alcoholic beverages during this past year." Explain what is meant by "alcoholic beverages" by using local examples of beer, wine, vodka, etc. Code answers in terms of "standard drinks". Place the correct answer number in the box at the right.

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? (0) Never [Skip to Qs 9-10] (1) Monthly or less (2) 2 to 4 times a month (3) 2 to 3 times a week (4) 4 or more times a week	6. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily
2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking? (0) 1 or 2 (1) 3 or 4 (2) 5 or 6 (3) 7, 8, or 9 (4) 10 or more	7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily
3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily <i>Skip to Questions 9 and 10 if Total Score for Questions 2 and 3 = 0</i>	8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily
4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily	9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking? (0) No (2) Yes, but not in the last year (4) Yes, during the last year
5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking? (0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily	10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down? (0) No (2) Yes, but not in the last year (4) Yes, during the last year

Record total of specific items here

If total is greater than recommended cut-off, consult User's Manual.

Photo: ILO in Asia and the Pacific





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## LISTEN FIRST

If a child or adolescent has only started to use psychoactive substances, brief psychosocial interventions can prevent further substance use and transition to substance use disorders.



### Outcomes on marijuana use

Young patients at emergency care, identified as marijuana users, who receive a brief intervention, were twice as likely not to be using marijuana after 12 months than those not receiving the intervention.

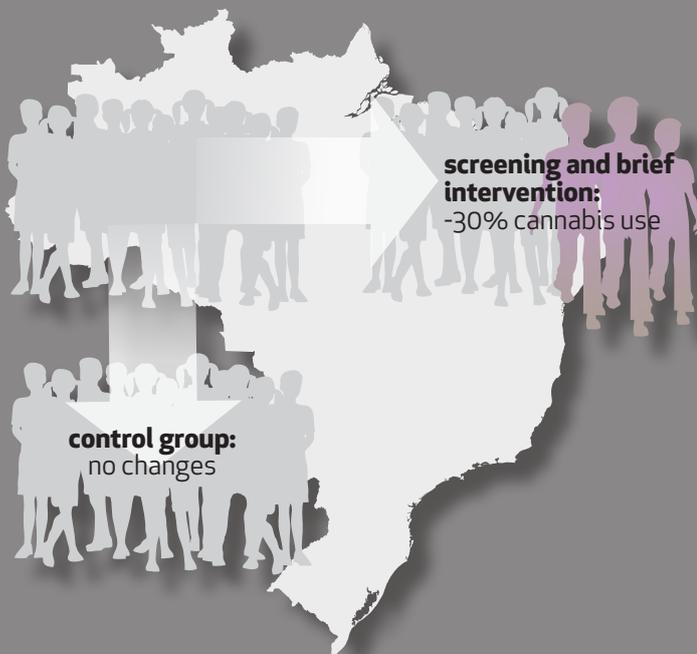
## SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE?

Health workers worldwide have an important role in implementation of science-based prevention programs and preventing substance use among general population.

These simple tools work in diverse contexts. For example brief interventions within a primary health care, utilising open domain ASSIST tool for screening substance use related problems and providing brief intervention when needed, significantly reduced substance use in:

**Brazil:** those who received screening and brief intervention decreased their risky patterns of cannabis use with 30 %.

**India:** those who received screening and brief intervention decreased their risky patterns of cannabis use with 17%.





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Support evidence-based prevention programmes:



[www.unodc.org/listenfirst](http://www.unodc.org/listenfirst)

## Get informed

Ask your community leaders and policy makers to support evidence-based prevention programmes.

### ALREADY INVOLVED

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Chile, China, CICAD, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, EMCDDA, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mentor International, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Peru, the Philippines, the Pompidou Group, Portugal, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, UNODC, Uzbekistan, WHO.



Government Offices of Sweden  
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs



UNODC  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



World Health  
Organization