

VOLUME A

Basics of Addiction, Screening, Assessment, Treatment Planning and Care Coordination

Treat**net**

Module 1

Screening and brief intervention using ASSIST



**Rationale for
screening and
brief
intervention**



**ASSIST
screening
basics**



**ASSIST brief
intervention
basics**



**Planning and
implementation
of ASSIST**



Workshop 2

ASSIST screening basics

Training objectives

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- ▶ Explain the development of the ASSIST
- ▶ Administer and use the ASSIST screening tool in your place of work as part of a comprehensive initial assessment system
- ▶ Score and Interpret the ASSIST
- ▶ Categorise substance use into 1 of 3 risk levels: Hazardous, Harmful or Dependence
- ▶ Use ASSIST Data as part of service improvement needs



Let's reflect!



Before we begin...

- ▶ How do you do screening in your daily work?
- ▶ Do you use screening tools? Which ones?
- ▶ When do you do it? In which opportunities?
- ▶ What has been your experience to date?

Alcohol, Smoking, and Substance Involvement Screening Test

The ASSIST

- ▶ Is a brief screening questionnaire developed for primary care
- ▶ Covers all psychoactive substances including alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs
- ▶ Helps practitioners to identify patients who may have hazardous, harmful, or dependent use of one or more substances

ASSIST development

- ▶ Developed by an international research team in 1997
- ▶ Funded by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing
- ▶ Based on the AUDIT model of screening & brief intervention for alcohol



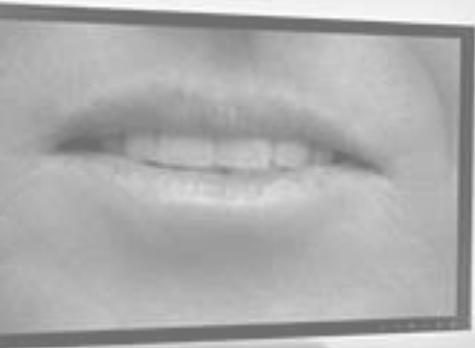
ASSIST

- ▶ ASSIST items are reliable and ASSIST procedure is feasible in primary care settings internationally
- ▶ ASSIST provides a valid measure of substance-related risk
- ▶ ASSIST distinguishes between individuals who are
 - at low risk or are abstainers
 - risky/problem users
 - dependent

Information provided by ASSIST

In general, ASSIST provides information about:

- ▶ Substances used in the patient's lifetime
- ▶ Substances used in the previous 3 months
- ▶ Problems related to substance use
- ▶ Risk of current or future harm
- ▶ Dependence
- ▶ Injecting drug use



**Learning to use
the ASSIST
screening tool**



Introducing the ASSIST

- ▶ Use a non-confrontational approach
- ▶ Describe the purpose of the screening

Many drugs and medications can affect your health. It is important for me to have accurate information about your use of various substances in order to provide the best possible care.

- ▶ Emphasize the time frame

The following questions ask about your experience of using alcohol, tobacco products, and other drugs **across your lifetime** and in the **past 3 months**.



Introducing the ASSIST

▶ Clarify the substances you will record

Some of the substances listed may be prescribed by a doctor. For this interview, we will not record medications that are used as prescribed by your doctor. However, if you have taken such medications for reasons other than by prescription, or taken them more frequently or at higher doses than prescribed, please let me know.



▶ Emphasize Confidentiality

While we are also interested in knowing about your use of various illicit drugs, please be assured that the information on such use will be treated as strictly confidential.



Characteristics of ASSIST

There are 8 Questions, which are asked for all substance groups. At this point make sure that the patient/user is given the response card.

- ▶ Lifetime use
 - Q1 Ever used
- ▶ Last 3 months
 - Q2 Frequency of use
 - Q3 Desire to use
 - Q4 Health, social, legal, financial problems
 - Q5 Failure to fulfil role obligations
- ▶ Lifetime use
 - Q6 Concern by others
 - Q7 Failed attempts to control use
 - Q8 Injecting behaviour

Response card: drug list

Response card - substances

a Tobacco products (cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, etc.)	No	Yes
b Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits, etc.)	No	Yes
c Cannabis (marijuana, pot, grass, hash, etc.)	No	Yes
d Cocaine (coke, crack, etc.)	No	Yes
e Amphetamine-type stimulants (speed, meth, ecstasy, etc.)	No	Yes
f Inhalants (nitrous, glue, petrol, paint thinner, etc.)	No	Yes
g Sedatives or sleeping pills (diazepam, alprazolam, flunitrazepam, midazolam, etc.)	No	Yes
h Hallucinogens (LSD, acid, mushrooms, trips, ketamine, etc.)	No	Yes
i Opioids (heroin, morphine, methadone, buprenorphine, codeine, etc.)	No	Yes
j Other – specify: _____	No	Yes

Response card

Substances list and response items

BOX 3 | Drug list for response card for clients

- a Tobacco products (cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, etc.)
- b Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits, etc.)
- c Cannabis (marijuana, pot, grass, hash, etc.)
- d Cocaine (coke, crack, etc.)
- e Amphetamine-type stimulants (speed, meth, ecstasy, etc.)
- f Inhalants (nitrous, glue, petrol, paint thinner, etc.)
- g Sedatives and sleeping pills (diazepam, alprazolam, flunitrazepam, midazolam, etc.)
- h Hallucinogens (LSD, acid, mushrooms, trips, ketamine, etc.)
- i Opioids (heroin, morphine, methadone, buprenorphine, codeine, etc.)
- j Other - specify: _____

Response card

Substances list and response items

BOX 4 | Frequency responses from response card

Response card

Last 3 months (ASSIST questions 2 to 5)

- | **Never:** not used in the last 3 months.
- | **Once or twice:** 1 to 2 times in the last 3 months.
- | **Monthly:** average of 1 to 3 times per month over the last 3 months.
- | **Weekly:** 1 to 4 times per week.
- | **Daily or almost daily:** 5 to 7 days per week.

Response card

Lifetime (ASSIST questions 6 to 8)

- | **No, never.**
- | **Yes, but not in the past 3 months.**
- | **Yes, in the past 3 months.**

Response card: response items

Responses for questions 2 - 5

Never: not used in the last 3 months

Once or twice: 1 or 2 times in the last 3 months

Monthly: 1 to 3 times in one month

Weekly: 1 to 4 times per week

Daily or almost daily: 5 to 7 days per week

Responses for questions 6 - 8

No, never

Yes, but not in the past 3 months

Yes, in the past 3 months

Question 1: Lifetime use

- ▶ In your life, which of the following substances have you ever tried? (non-medical use only)
 - No
 - Yes
- ▶ Ask for all substances
- ▶ Record any use (even if only tried once)
- ▶ Probe: Not even at a party?
- ▶ If “No” to all substances, end the interview

Question 2: Recent use

Frequency of use over past 3 months

Only ask about substances, which patient/user reported ever used as in Q1.

- ▶ During the past 3 months, how often have you used the substances you mentioned (first drug, second drug, etc.)? Never (0)
 - Once or twice (2)
 - Monthly (3)
 - Weekly (4)
 - Daily or almost daily (6)

Question 3: Strong urge to use

Frequency of experiencing a strong desire or urge to use each substance in the past 3 months

Only ask for those substances, which patient/user mentioned ever used in Q2.

- ▶ During the past 3 months, how often have you had a strong desire or urge to use (first drug, second drug, etc.)?
 - Never (0)
 - Once or twice (3)
 - Monthly (4)
 - Weekly (5)
 - Daily or almost daily (6)

Question 4:

Health, social, legal or financial problems

Frequency of experiencing in the past 3 months

Again, ask according to drugs used as reported in Q2.

- ▶ During the past 3 months, how often has your use of (first drug, second drug, etc.) led to health, social, legal, or financial problems?
 - Never (0)
 - Once or twice (4)
 - Monthly (5)
 - Weekly (6)
 - Daily or almost daily (7)

Q4 prompts - for example...

▶ Tobacco

- breathlessness,
- less fit than usual
- takes longer to recover from illness
- financial problems

▶ Alcohol

- bad hangovers
- GI problems, pain
- arguments
- broken sleep
- relationship tension

▶ Cannabis

- ↓ attention & motivation
- ↓ short term memory
- ↓ problem solving
- depression, anxiety, panic

▶ Amphetamine-type stimulants

- bad come down – depression, anxiety
- anger & aggression
- headaches
- broken sleep
- dental problems (teeth grinding)

Question 5:

Failure to fulfill major role responsibilities

Frequency of experiencing a strong desire or urge to use each substance in the past 3 months

- ▶ During the past 3 months, how often have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of your use of (first drug, second drug, etc.)?
 - Never (0)
 - Once or twice (5)
 - Monthly (6)
 - Weekly (7)
 - Daily or almost daily (8)

Question 6: External concern



Recency of someone else's concern about the patient's substance use

- ▶ Has a friend or relative or anyone else ever expressed concern about your use of (first drug, second drug, etc.)?
 - No, Never (0)
 - Yes, in the past 3 months (6)
 - Yes, but not in the past 3 months (3)

Question 7:

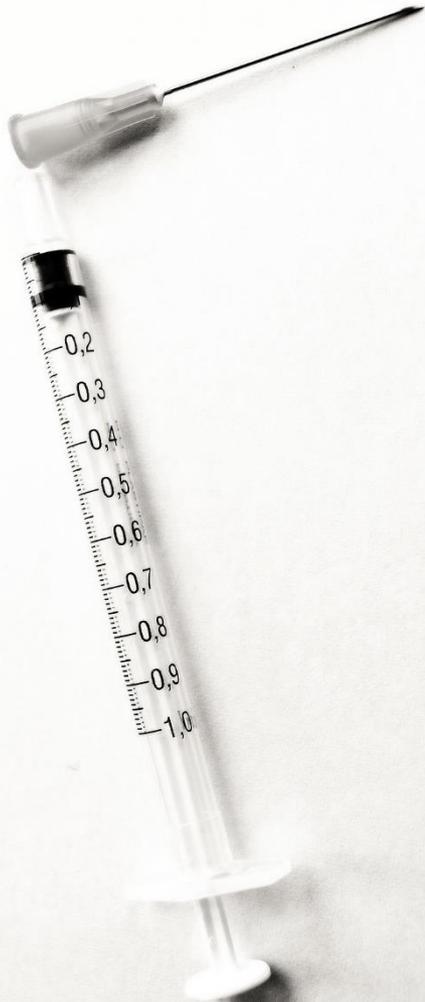
Failed attempts to control substance use

Recency of the patient's failed attempts to control use

According to substance used as in Q1.

- ▶ Have you **ever** tried and failed to control, cut down or stop using (first drug, second drug, etc.)?
 - No, Never (0)
 - Yes, in the past 3 months (6)
 - Yes, but not in the past 3 months (3)

Question 8: Injecting drug use



- ▶ Have you ever used any drug by injection? (non-medical use only)
 - No, Never (0)
 - Yes, in the past 3 months (2)
 - Yes, but not in the past 3 months (1)

If yes, query about pattern of injecting, as follows.

Question 8 looks at high risk behaviour

- ▶ It reflects dependent/high risk use
- ▶ Q8 not included in final ASSIST risk score but helps determine client's risk and treatment
- ▶ For clients who have injected in last 3 months

Pattern of Injecting	Intervention Guidelines
Once weekly or less <i>or</i> Fewer than 3 days in a row	Brief Intervention, including “Risks of Injecting” card
More than once a week <i>or</i> 3 or more days in a row	Further assessment and more intensive e treatment

Scoring the ASSIST

- ▶ For each substance (labelled a. to j.), add up the scores received for questions 2 through 7 inclusive
- ▶ Do **not** include the results from either Q1 or Q8 in this score

Question 2c	Weekly	Score = 4
Question 3c	Once or twice	Score = 3
Question 4c	Monthly	Score = 5
Question 5c	Once or twice	Score = 5
Question 6c	Yes, but not in the past 3 months	Score = 3
Question 7c	No, never	Score = 0
Substance Specific Involvement Score for Cannabis		20

Guidelines for assessing risk level using the ASSIST

Alcohol	All other substances	Risk level
0-10	0-3	Low Risk → provide education
11-26	4-26	Moderate Risk → brief intervention (BI)
27+	27+	High Risk → BI + referral

Note: Be careful! Do not blindly interpret the score. A patient can score in the “Moderate Risk” range because of past use (i.e., answered “Yes, but not in the past 3 months” for questions 6 & 7) and may not be currently using.

Recording the substance specific involvement score

The type of intervention is determined by the patient's specific substance involvement score

	Record specific substance score	No intervention	Receive brief intervention	More intensive treatment*
a. Tobacco	27	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
b. Alcohol	10	0 - 10	11 – 26	27+
c. Cannabis	6	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
d. Cocaine	0	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
e. Amphetamine	0	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
f. Inhalants	0	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
g. Sedatives	3	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
h. Hallucinogens	0	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
i. Opioids	18	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+
j. Other drugs	0	0 – 3	4 – 26	27+

*further assessment and more intensive treatment may be needed

ASSIST questionnaire administration:

Professional judgement

Possible exceptions

- ▶ Your professional judgement...
- ▶ Q2: Daily use of alcohol may not indicate dependence (can still be low risk)
- ▶ Q3: Past history of substance problems may increase craving (even with infrequent use)
- ▶ Q3: Occasional cocaine use can produce strong psychological craving
- ▶ Q3: Injecting drug use produces craving

ASSIST questionnaire administration:

Summary

- ▶ Each ASSIST question has set of responses to choose from (e.g. monthly, weekly etc.) with specific numerical score (e.g. Q2 has scores of 0, 2, 3, 4 or 6)
- ▶ Circle the numerical score for each substance – even if it is zero
- ▶ Scores from Q2 through to Q7 are added together for each substance type (Note: Q1 and Q8 are NOT scored)
- ▶ Record scores in box provided on last page

ASSIST questionnaire administration:

Summary

- ▶ For each substance (labelled a. to j.) add up the scores received for questions 2 through 7 inclusive. For example, a score for cannabis would be calculated as: $Q2c + Q3c + Q4c + Q5c + Q6c + Q7c$
- ▶ Note that Q5 for tobacco is not coded and is calculated as: $Q2a + Q3a + Q4a + Q6a + Q7a$
- ▶ Complete the Patient Feedback Report
 - record ASSIST scores for each substance
 - check off the Risk Level for each substance on the hand out

Patient feedback form

Specific substance involvement scores

Substance	Score	Risk Level
a. Tobacco products	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
b. Alcoholic beverages	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
c. Cannabis	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
d. Cocaine	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
e. Amphetamine type stimulants	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
f. Inhalants	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
g. Sedatives or sleeping pills	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
h. Hallucinogens	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
i. Opioids	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High
j. Other - specify	0-3	Low
	4-26	Moderate
	27+	High

What do your scores mean?

- ▶ **Low:** You are at low risk of health and other problems from your current pattern of use.
- ▶ **Moderate:** You are at risk of health and other problems from your current pattern of substance use.
- ▶ **High:** You are at high risk of experiencing severe problems (health, social, financial, legal, relationship) as a result of your current pattern of use and are likely to be dependent

Are you concerned about your substance use?

Let's practice!



Calculate the ASSIST score

A client has given the following answers on the ASSIST for cannabis (see the worksheet). Calculate the ASSIST score for that substance.



This is how it works

Q2c	In the <u>past three months</u> , how often have you used Cannabis?	Weekly	Score= 4
Q3c	During the <u>past three months</u> , how often have you had a strong desire or urge to use Cannabis?	Once or Twice	Score= 3
Q4c	During the <u>past three months</u> , how often has your use of Cannabis led to health, social, legal or financial problems?	Monthly	Score= 5
Q5c	During the <u>past three months</u> , how often have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of your use of Cannabis?	Once or Twice	Score= 5
Q6c	Has a friend or relative or anyone else <u>ever</u> expressed concern about your use of cannabis?	Yes, but not in past 3 months	Score= 3
Q7c	Have you <u>ever</u> tried and failed to control, cut down or stop using Cannabis?	No, never	Score= 0
Total	Q2c+Q3c+Q4c+Q5c+Q6c+Q7c	SSI Score	Score= 20

Scores are similarly calculated for all other substances with the exception of tobacco which does not include Q5 in the calculation

ASSIST questionnaire scoring: interpretation

▶ Lower Risk

- While these clients may use substances occasionally, they are not currently experiencing any problems related to their use and are at low risk of developing health or other problems related to their use in the future

▶ Moderate Risk

- Clients are at moderate risk of health and other problems and may be experiencing some of these problems now. Continuing use in this way indicates a likelihood of future health and other problems, including the possibility of dependence.
- Risk is increased for those with a past history of substance problems and dependence.

▶ High Risk

- These clients are experiencing severe health and other problems and are likely dependent on the substance(s).

ASSIST questionnaire scoring: interpretation

**Clinical/professional judgment is also required
but in general:**

Alcohol	All other substances ^a	Risk level	Intervention
0 - 10	0 - 3	Lower risk	■ General health advice
11 - 26	4 - 26	Moderate risk	■ Brief intervention ■ Take home booklet & information
27+	27+	High risk	■ Brief intervention ■ Take home booklet & information ■ Referral to specialist assessment and treatment
Injected drugs in last 3 months		Moderate and High risk ^b	■ Risks of injecting card ■ Brief intervention ■ Take home booklet & information ■ Referral to testing for BBVs ^c ■ Referral to specialist assessment and treatment

^a Tobacco products, cannabis, cocaine, ATS, sedatives, hallucinogens, inhalants, opioids and 'other drugs'.

^b Need to determine pattern of injecting – Injecting more than 4 times per month (average) over the last 3 months is an indicator of dependence requiring further assessment and treatment.

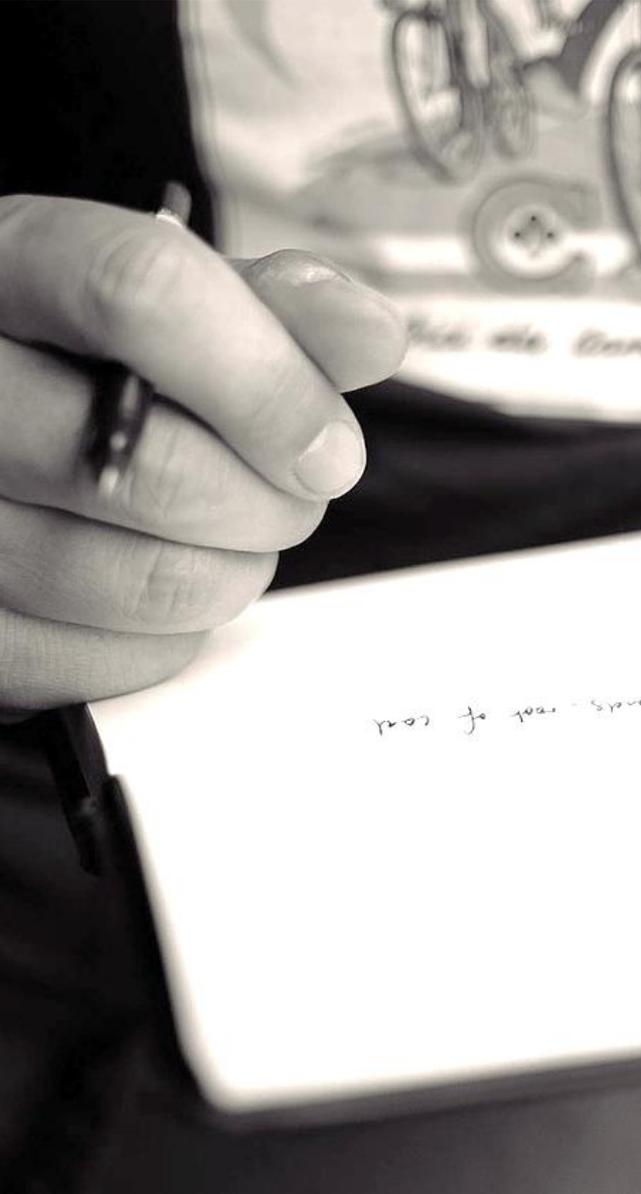
^c Bloodborne viruses including HIV and hepatitis B and C.

Patient feedback report

- ▶ Complete the Patient Feedback Report
 - Record ASSIST scores for each substance
 - Check off the Risk Level for each substance on the hand out
- ▶ Review risks with patient
- ▶ Conduct a Brief Intervention and/or referral



How does it work on practice?



- ▶ Observe how ASSIST is conducted
- ▶ Take note of the time it takes
- ▶ If you have any questions, take notes and we will discuss them after the demonstration

Common mistakes

- ▶ Over-scoring Q 3 and Q 5

These questions reflect dependent use & strong craving (Q3), and loss of control / failure to fulfill obligations (Q5)

- ▶ Forgetting that Q 1 and Q 2 are filter questions

Determine which drug categories to ask about in subsequent questions

- ▶ Including Q 1 in scoring

Q 2-7 constitute the substance-specific scores

Let's practice!



ASSIST

- ▶ Practice ASSIST with a partner:
 - Clinician uses blank ASSIST
 - Patient uses copy with answers
- ▶ Don't forget to score ASSIST at the end!

Questions



Wrap-up



- ▶ How and by whom was ASSIST developed?
- ▶ How can you administer and use the ASSIST screening tool in your place of work?
- ▶ Do you understand how to score and interpret the ASSIST?
- ▶ What are the 3 risk levels?
- ▶ How can ASSIST data be used?

Thank you for your time!

End of workshop 2

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