

Screening and brief advice for alcohol and other drugs

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Key points

- ▲ Substances can directly affect some of the challenging experiences typical during adolescence.
- ▲ Building a toolbox of emotional self-regulation tools is a crucial part of adolescent development.
- ▲ Disengagement from environments that promote connection worsens the situation.
- ▲ If a young person fills their toolbox with substance use, it limits their possibilities for further skill acquisition.

This can lead to arrested development.

Adult and youth perspectives can differ

Adult perspective

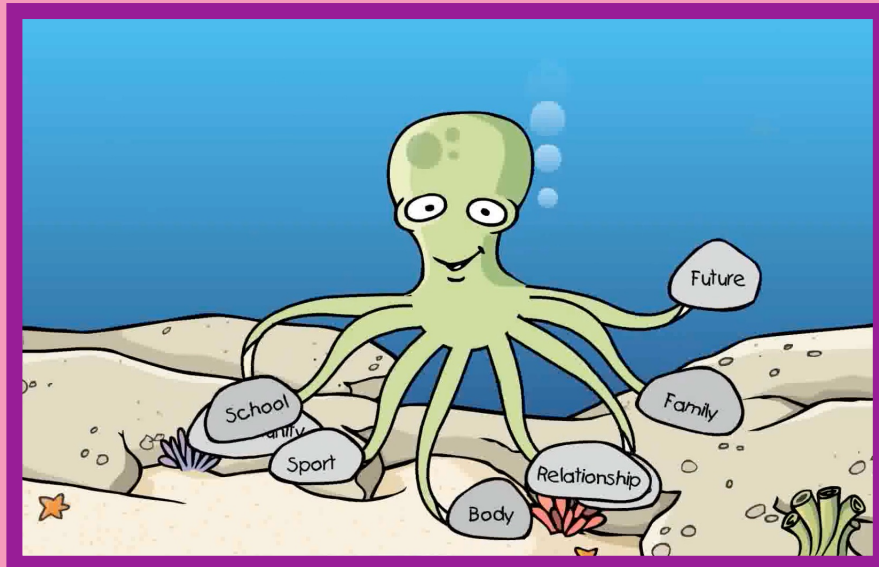
- ▲ Stupid/foolish
- ▲ Easily influenced
- ▲ Acting without regard for the consequences
- ▲ Dangerous
- ▲ Withdrawn

Youth perspective

- ▲ Exciting/fun
- ▲ Sense of belonging
- ▲ Testing limits/not caring/gaining status
- ▲ Thrilling/exciting
- ▲ Needing privacy

The teenage octopus

[Watch on vimeo →](#)



Screening

Screening is about gathering information and making a quick judgement on the next steps.



Conversations can make a difference

These conversations give young people an opportunity to:

- ▲ Think and talk about what is happening and their substance use
- ▲ Gain insight and motivation to make positive changes
- ▲ Identify problem or areas of risk
- ▲ Get personalised feedback on their situation
- ▲ Receive personalised information and advice on how to reduce potential harms



Framing the conversation

Signpost

- ▲ Your role in looking out for their wellbeing
 - ▲ What the flow of questions will be
 - ▲ Confidentiality
-

No assumptions

- ▲ Don't assume they want to use substances
 - ▲ Normalise substance use as something that is in their community
 - ▲ If they are using substances, assume they are ambivalent about changing
-

Evoke curiosity

Reassure and build self-efficacy

Ask what's important to them, so you can tailor your brief advice to them

Ask permission before giving tips

A youth screening tool

The CRAFFT Screen

- ▲ Have you ever ridden in a **car** driven by someone (including yourself) who was high, or had been using alcohol or drugs?
- ▲ Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to **relax**, feel better about yourself, or fit in?
- ▲ Do you ever use alcohol or drugs when you are **alone**?
- ▲ Do you ever **forget** things you did while using drugs or alcohol?
- ▲ Do your **family** or **friends** ever tell you to cut down on your drinking or drug use?
- ▲ Have you ever gotten into **trouble** while you were using alcohol or drugs?



Positive responses to two or more of these questions indicates further assessment is needed.

SACS: A New Zealand youth screening tool

Section B indicates severity

0 - 1

Low concerns

Monitor in the future

2 - 3

Low concerns

Brief advice

4 and above

Moderate to serious concerns

Brief advice and referral

https://wharaurau.org.nz/sites/default/files/Projects/CEP-AOD-Opt/Tools-for-CEP/Resources/PDF/SAC_ABC_MAN_11-17-WEB.pdf

SACS Part B:

Mark one box (on each row), on the basis of how things have been for you in the last month?	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
1. I took alcohol or drugs when I was alone.			
2. I've thought I might be hooked or addicted to alcohol or drugs.			
3. Most of my free time has been spent getting hold of, taking, or recovering from alcohol or drugs.			
4. I've wanted to cut down on the amount of alcohol and drugs that I am using.			
5. My alcohol and drug use has stopped me getting important things done.			
6. My alcohol or drug use has led to arguments with the people I live with (family, flatmates or caregivers etc).			
7. I've had unsafe sex or an unwanted sexual experience when taking alcohol or drugs.			
8. My performance or attendance at school (or at work) has been affected by my alcohol or drug use.			
9. I did things that could have got me into serious trouble (stealing, vandalism, violence etc) when using alcohol or drugs.			
10. I've driven a car while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (or have been driven by someone under the influence).			

Changing safe zone boundaries



Drinking at a mate's place

Drinking at parties, but picked up by a parent

Going to a party, don't care how they get home

Going to multiple parties in one night with no way home

Thank you

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