

Tips for service providers

Questions to ask youth with opioid use disorder

Use this list of suggested questions when you have your first encounter with a youth who identifies or is believed to have an opioid use disorder. This document is to help you to understand how to open a discussion with youth and what questions you may want to ask either yourself or your patient. Please feel free to choose a few questions that directly relate to you and your client's situation or reflect on them all.

Set up the environment and assess:

- [Formal paperwork for substance use and mental health assessment]
- Have you used any substances?
- Are you concerned about substance use? Or if identified yes in the previous question; are you concerned about that substance?
- (If a concern is identified): What are you worried about?
- If a friend was in the room, what would they tell me? // if a loved one knew about what you're experiencing, what would they say about it? (Sometimes, it's harder to use "I statements" to admit your own concerns and is sometimes eased by talking about someone else's concerns).

Assess substance and poly substance use:

- Are there any other substances you are using?
- How long have you been using for?
- How much and how often would you say you are using?

Assess mental health:

- What are you going through currently?
- How are you managing emotionally?
- Has there ever been a time when you felt you could not manage your emotions? If so, how did you cope?
- Have you ever seen a mental health professional? How did they help you?
- What are the things you commonly struggle with?

Assess daily life:

- Where do you live? Do you plan on moving?
- Do you need supports for basic needs? (For example, food and shelter?)
- Do you have social support in place? (For example, friends and family/loved ones?)

Provide support and refer:

- Would you like me to provide you with more information on receiving support for your substance use? (Offer your patient several different options and try to explain what each option means; ensure they are aware of services (if any) available to them within your office and refer out when appropriate).
- (Educate) What are supervised consumption sites? - do we have one - what services do they provide?
- (Educate) What is naloxone? What does it do? How do you use it? And where to access it?
- Would you like me to refer you to some different psychosocial supports available locally?
- Provide printed/tangible resources, if available. (It is important to keep in mind that some information may become outdated with printouts – if possible, provide online resources as well.)

Confidentiality and trust:

- Do you feel we share a similar perspective or belief about/regarding substance use?
- What information are you comfortable sharing, and what would you like to keep confidential? (Assess scope)
- Do you have any questions about confidentiality or who might have access to your information? – For example, what information (if any) would be shared with other professionals and/or available to your family? Sometimes addressing this will ease some concern and allow the youth to feel safe to ask questions.

Guidelines and expectations:

- Do you have any questions about the different rules or expectations with what we have discussed today? (Whether that be a treatment plan, options, program's etc.).
- Ensure the youth is aware of all abstinence-based rules or expectations with any of the services offered or referred and has access to supports for withdrawal management through detoxification.

Other questions / my plan / notes:

- Can we plan together? – “Can I help you write down your next steps?”
 - Other questions:
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