

Steven McCluskey, Julie Dowds, Joanne Winterbottom, Niamh Fitzgerald
Create Consultancy Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Create Consultancy Ltd. were commissioned to design and deliver a one-day Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI) training course with the aim of addressing the needs of a wide range of practitioners who come across alcohol issues as part of their practice with their clients/service users.

The one-day multi-disciplinary training was developed to build upon practitioners' existing skills in raising and responding to alcohol issues with their clients/service users within the context of an ABI approach. The course was designed to develop practitioner knowledge and skills in the following key areas:

- The health effects of alcohol.
- Units of alcohol and the alcohol content of common drinks.

- Recommended drinking limits.
- Different types/levels of alcohol use/misuse.
- Brief interventions as a means of preventing/reducing alcohol problems.
- Motivational interview techniques.
- Tools for assessing risks associated with alcohol use.
- Services for referral of people affected by alcohol problems/dependency.

This poster presentation provides an overview and summary of the approach undertaken as well as participant evaluation responses and notes from trainer observations and reflections.

METHODS



A total of 45 one-day ABI training courses were delivered across one of Scotland's largest health board areas, involving a total of 426 practitioners.

A post-course questionnaire was designed to capture participant knowledge, confidence and skills in being able to raise and respond to alcohol issues as part of an Alcohol Brief Intervention approach.

Numbers of participants present at the ABI training courses ranged from three to eighteen with an average of eleven participants in attendance. Participants were recruited from a wide and diverse range of professional groupings which included the following-

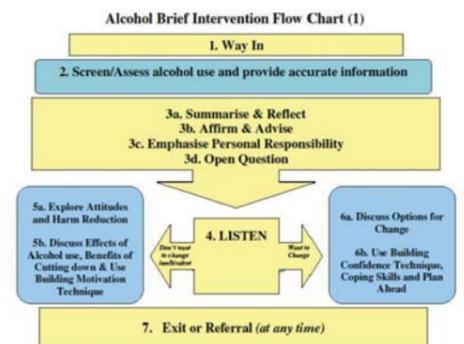
- Police - Learning Disability Practitioners - Housing Staff - Physiotherapists - Social Work Staff - Youth Workers - Community Safety Officers - Voluntary Sector Staff - Youth & Criminal Justice Workers - Culture & Sport Staff - Dieticians - Health Visitors - Older People's Workers - Occupational Therapists - Health Improvement Practitioners - Pharmacy Staff - School and Community Nurses - Family Support Workers - Drug & Alcohol Service Staff - Mental Health Practitioners inc. CPNs, Consultant & Clinical Psychologists

The Alcohol Brief Intervention one-day multidisciplinary training programme was designed to enable

practitioners to competently, confidently and appropriately manage and deal with the following key situations as part of the delivery of an evidence-based brief intervention on alcohol:

- Explain what alcohol is and the impact it has on individuals and wider society.
- In terms of units, explain the alcohol content of common drinks and recommended drinking limits.
- Raise the issue of alcohol in an appropriate way.
- Encourage clients to take personal responsibility for their drinking/behaviour.
- Choose and use the appropriate screening and assessment tool to explore current levels of alcohol use.
- Be able to respond appropriately to the results of assessment/screening including giving information on associated risks.
- Describe the health and social risks associated with different levels of drinking.
- Choose and put into practice the most effective brief intervention approach depending on the response of the client/service user.
- Understand and deliver an Alcohol Brief Intervention.

The content and focus of the training programme is reflected in the ABI Flow Chart (1). This highlights the key stages and components of an evidence based brief intervention approach. Participants were taken through each of the stages with opportunities to develop knowledge and key skills.



RESULTS

- Following training a majority of participants indicated a level of knowledge, understanding and confidence that would be considered necessary for effectively responding to alcohol issues with clients/service users as part of a brief intervention on alcohol approach.
- Participants were asked whether they would integrate ABIs, as advocated by training, into their daily practice: 317 practitioners indicated 'Yes'; 17 responded 'No'; and 46 indicated that it was 'not relevant to their role' (total responses 380).
- When asked whether they would recommend the training course to a colleague 339 participants responded 'Yes'; and 5 responded 'No' (total responses 344).
- A total of 341 participants indicated that they found the ABI training course to be either 'Very useful' or 'Useful' with only 15 participants finding the training course to be either 'Not very useful' or 'Not useful'.
- A wide range of positive views were expressed by those who indicated the course as being very useful/useful and who indicated that they would integrate an ABI into their practice. These comments included:

Brief intervention is user friendly, client centred, facilitative, non directive and non judgemental approach to help clients and raise awareness."

"Builds on communication skills. Gives a new set of tools to engage with people to promote and enable change."

"It is something which can be easily done opportunistically within the pharmacy setting, but which I haven't been doing. This course has given me the confidence and skills to integrate these interventions in my daily practice."

"I now realise how useful a BI can be, even a short discussion can prompt an individual to question or change habits."

"It has re-affirmed my practice in relation to addressing alcohol related issues and has increased my knowledge base."

"Raised awareness of alcohol issues, how to address them and to be confident when using model. Also my knowledge of my own personal alcohol intake."

"I was impressed with how brief an intervention could actually be."

"I enjoyed exploring all aspects of the course. My confidence in doing a brief intervention will grow with practice."

"I come into contact and work with service users who have problems related to alcohol misuse and this will help me to assess their motivation to change."

"A recognisable, systematic and focused tool for the 'skills kit' in work with young people."

- Practitioners highlighted additional training and learning needs required to implement ABIs into their practice as :
 - The need for more in-depth and specialist training on alcohol (inc health effects) particularly for participants whose practice was concerned with special needs or vulnerable groups such as young people, those with learning disabilities, older people and those with alcohol dependence.
 - Developments to enhance and build upon learning in relation to ABIs, including opportunities for networking and the sharing of information and practice, the provision of online learning resources and materials and ABI demonstration video resources.

CONCLUSIONS

Responses from practitioners to training was very positive and encouraging and would indicate a high level of confidence and relevance in ABIs as an effective approach for dealing with alcohol issues by a wide range of professional groups across varied health and non-health care community settings.

Responses from practitioners indicated that the multi-disciplinary focus to training design and delivery was a valuable approach for the sharing of cross agency and cross sector experiences and for promoting an integrated health and social care approach to the delivery of ABIs.

A majority of social care practitioners were not supportive of using a formal health screening tool such as FAST. These tools and approaches were not viewed as being particularly appropriate for many of the non-health and informal settings in which social care practitioners would have contact with clients/service users. Health care practitioners who operate within health settings were more familiar with the concept of screening and were more open to the potential benefits of using a validated screening tool.