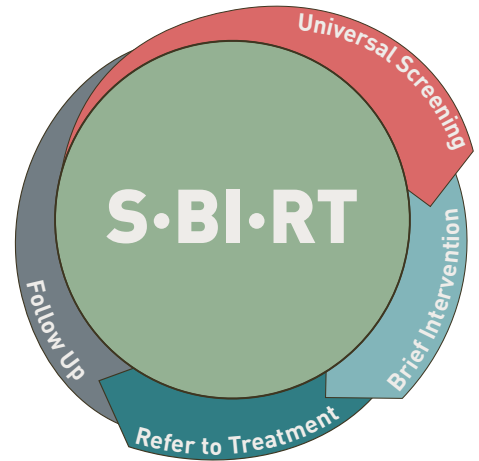


REFERRAL TO TREATMENT

In the context of S•BI•RT, referral to treatment is short-hand for a well-planned process through which a healthcare professional provides an active referral to specialty treatment for patients who screen positive AND indicate a willingness/desire for such services during the brief intervention conversation. Whether the process includes internal behavioral health providers and/or external referral sources; an established relationship, referral protocol, and family involvement are key components.



Active Referrals

Managing the referral process and ensuring that the patient receives the necessary chronic disease management and follow-up support is critical to the recovery process.

Internal Behavioral Health Providers

Warm Handoff:

Practices in which behavioral health practitioners are available on-site through co-located or integrated service provision can create a flow that incorporates a warm handoff. This approach includes a physical introduction provider to provider and increases the likelihood of participation in further assessment, motivational counseling, or brief treatment. In some cases, a treatment option that is not available on-site will be necessary and the patient is then referred to a higher level of care. Depending on flow decisions, integrated behavioral health staff may also be responsible for such external referrals to specialty care.

External Substance Use Disorder Specialists

Established Relationships and Protocols:

In order for the referral to external specialty care to be efficient and successful, primary care practices must initially establish and cultivate relationships with specialty providers for all levels of care. Release of information mechanisms should be established to confidentially share and receive pertinent patient information with the referral provider prior to the need to refer a patient.

Parent and Family Involvement:

It is important to note that many youth with severe substance use problems know that there is a problem and accept a referral to treatment. Parents are often already concerned about the problematic drug or alcohol use and therefore youth are often open to involving their parents in the conversation without further motivational conversation on the part of the provider. Parent involvement is crucial as patients with family involvement have better treatment outcomes.



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Levels of Care

Treatment for substance use problems includes services at different levels of care appropriate to the particular patient's diagnosis and circumstances.

The majority of patients requiring specialty care for substance use problems can be effectively provided treatment through services they participate in while remaining at home, in their own community.

- Outpatient Services: *Individual; Group*
- Intensive Outpatient Services (IOP)
- Partial Hospitalization
- Opioid Treatment Programs (Methadone prescribing/dispensing)
- Office Based Medication Assisted Treatment (Buprenorphine/Suboxone prescribing/dispensing)

Patients with the severe substance use problems may be assessed as requiring the highest levels of care.

- Residential Services
- Medically Managed Inpatient Hospital-Based Services
- Transitional Living

Access to Treatment

In New Hampshire, timely access to the higher levels of care for severe substance use problems can be difficult, particularly for adolescents. The need to expand treatment capacity for substance use disorders has been widely recognized and there are many efforts underway to expand access to specialty substance use disorder care. This has been facilitated by the inclusion of specific provisions in the Affordable Care Act such as the essential health benefits inclusion of mental health and substance use disorders care. These and other changes in the healthcare landscape in New Hampshire are creating an environment in which treatment access is expanding.

NH Treatment Locator

The NH Alcohol and Drug Treatment Locator is an online directory of existing substance use disorder services across NH. This easy to use tool, nhtreatment.org, can be searched by location and service type. Importantly, it can also be updated by providers to ensure that the information it contains continues to be accurate and helpful over time.



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