

Brief Negotiated Interviews (BNI)

Patients attending the ED for issues related to alcohol use may be uniquely receptive to interventions regarding their drinking. Brief interventions have been shown to decrease alcohol consumption and alcohol-related consequences and increase client readiness to change when delivered to patients who screen positive for or present with clinical signs related to alcohol use.¹ Brief negotiated interviews (BNIs) can be delivered by any health care provider. Ideally, BNIs should be delivered in a private space after the person's presenting concerns have been addressed.

THE BNI HAS FOUR MAJOR COMPONENTS:

1. Establish rapport and ask permission to discuss alcohol consumption and its possible consequences.
2. Provide feedback on the patient's drinking levels and make a connection to the ED visit.
3. Enhance motivation to reduce drinking by asking how ready on a scale of 1–10 the patient is to change any aspect of their drinking.
4. Negotiate goals and advise a plan of action.

The elements of the BNI can be distilled to the following sample script:

- Is it okay with you if we take a few minutes to talk about your alcohol use? We routinely ask all patients with *<patient's presentation>*. Do you drink alcohol? (*If no, the conversation can be ended.*)
- On average, how many days per week do you drink alcohol?
- On a typical day when you drink, how many drinks do you have?
- Do you see any connection between your drinking and your visit here today?
 - *If patient sees connection, reiterate what patient has said.*
 - *If patient does not see connection, make one using facts.*
- Given what we've discussed, what's the next step with respect to your drinking? *Present options:*
 - Would you consider reducing your drinking? To what amount?
 - Are you interested in hearing about medication that can help people reduce their drinking?
 - Would you be open to a referral to a clinic that can provide additional supports?
- *Provide handouts and suggest follow-up with primary care or an addictions clinic.*

In addition, people with lived experience of alcohol use and ED attendance recommend offering help, engaging with the patient's family, and referring to a safe place to stay. They found the following language helpful to them:

- Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired?
- Give it 30 days and see how you feel.
- There is always hope.

¹ [https://www.jsatjournal.com/article/S0740-5472\(15\)00202-0/fulltext](https://www.jsatjournal.com/article/S0740-5472(15)00202-0/fulltext)

