

## PATIENT INTERVIEW AGENDA

### **I. Emotional reaction to needing surgery:**

*The intent of this section is to gather information about how the participant's emotional experience prior to surgery, including when they found out they needed surgery, and how they felt right before (and after) and in the days leading up to the surgery. We also want to learn about the patient's general attitudes about their health.*

**Lead question:** "Tell me about how you found out you needed surgery and how you are feeling about it"

**Additional question:** How did you feel, emotionally, when you found out you needed surgery?

**Additional Question:** Have your feelings changed over time as the date of your surgery gets closer?

- (a) Probe: Are there any particular worries or concerns that you have about your surgery or about your health in general?
- (b) In general, how would you describe your attitude or feelings about your health at this time?

### **II. Experience preparing for surgery**

*The intent of this section is to encourage participants to describe anything they did or learned from the about how best to prepare for surgery. This may include recommendations, knowledge they gained, attending pre-op appointments, and interactions with health care providers. Once the participant has made a contribution, ask for brief discussion/clarification, as necessary.*

**Lead question:** "Please tell me about how the clinics prepared you for surgery including any information they shared with you to help you prepare for your surgery."

**Additional question:** What type of specific information did they share with you about how to best prepare for your upcoming surgery

- (a) Health/nutrition
- (b) Behavior
- (c) Activities
- (d) Coping with Stress/Anxiety

**Additional Question:** Did any nurse ask you about/or talk to you about alcohol use, drug use, or smoking?

- (a) Probe: How did you/would you feel about discussing alcohol use, drug use, or smoking with a health care provider (nurse, doctor, or social worker) before surgery?
- (b) What type of professional would you prefer talking to (nurse, doctor, or social worker)?
- (c) What concerns might you have if/when sharing this type of information
- (d) How would you/do you feel about this information going in your medical chart?

Additional Questions: Some patients do not feel comfortable sharing this information with their healthcare providers or may under-report their use. What factors do you think could increase your (or others) willingness to discuss alcohol, smoking, or drug use openly and honestly with providers?

- (a) Probe: If the provider explained why he/she was asking?
- (b) If you knew this information could be used to optimize your surgical outcome
- (c) If you knew this information was important for determining your surgical risk level
- (d) If the person asked in an open and non-judgemental way?

Additional question: How did you feel about your experience interacting with surgical staff before surgery?

- (a) Questions answered?
- (b) Respected?
- (c) Comfortable talking with them in general?

Additional question: What is your previous experience having surgery or other major medical procedures?

### **III. Alcohol use before surgery:**

*The intent of this section is to gather information about how the participant's alcohol use fit in to the surgical process (i.e., did they consider the impact of alcohol use on their surgery? Did they modify their drinking in any way, increase or decrease? Did health or emotional factors related to the surgery influence alcohol use?... etc.). We also want to learn about the patient's general attitudes about alcohol use and health.*

**Lead question:** "Now I'd like to find out more about your alcohol use. Could you tell me about your recent (past 3 month) alcohol use, such as how much/often you drink?"

Additional Question: Has your drinking changed since finding out you needed surgery, increased or decreased?

Probe: How about since experiencing \_\_\_\_\_ health problem (insert health problem if mentioned)?

Additional Question: What are your thoughts/plans related to alcohol use in the days/week before surgery? Any anticipated changes?

Additional Question: Have you ever considered how alcohol use may impact surgery, and if so what thoughts have you had?

Probe: How about how alcohol may affect \_\_\_\_\_ health problem (insert health problem if mentioned)?

Additional Question: If patients mentioned stress related to health/surgery, ask has the stress you mentioned about your health/surgery influence your drinking in any way?

Additional Question: What type of things increase/decrease your drinking?

Probes

- a) Stress
- b) Health
- c) Doctors
- d) Nurses
- e) VA

#### IV. Screening and Brief Intervention Content, Format, and Delivery

*The intent of this section is to gather information about how the participant would feel if they learned that alcohol use could put them at risk for post-operative morbidity/mortality, and how they would feel about participating in an alcohol screening and brief intervention before surgery. This section will also ask participants what information and feedback they feel would be helpful/relevant in a brief intervention that focuses on reducing alcohol use prior to surgery.*

**Lead question:** “If you knew that alcohol use could put you at risk for complications and risk after surgery, how might this influence your drinking?”

Additional Question: If there were an option to discuss alcohol and surgical risk would you be interested in taking part?

Probes:

- (a) How much time would you be willing to commit?
- (b) Would you be willing to schedule/attend a separate appointment?
- (c) Who should deliver such an intervention? – doctor, nurse, social worker?
- (d) Would you be interested in tracking your alcohol use and getting feedback on daily/weekly consumption through text messaging
- (e) Would you be interested in getting preoperative health tips by text?

Additional Question: How would you feel about taking part in a program or treatment to reduce presurgical alcohol use if you spoke with a clinician using a video-messaging service (like a HIPAA-compliant version of facetime or skype)?

Probes

- (a) Would this make taking part easier than an in-person meeting?
- (b) What barriers may get in the way of you doing this?
- (c) How often do you use internet/smart phone?

Additional Question: “If there were an option to discuss alcohol and surgical risk offered what would you like such a program to include?”

Probe:

- (a) What type of information would help you reduce drinking prior to surgery?
- (b) What type of information should such a program NOT include?

Additional Question: What would you tell others who use alcohol regularly as they prepare for their surgery?

SHOW PATIENT SAMPLE FEEDBACK FORM: What do you think about this feedback form?

Probes

- (a) content
- (b) readability
- (c) usefulness
- (d) importance

## V. Study wrap-up and experience

*The intent of this section is to wrap-up and to determine whether there were any barriers to participation in the study itself. This could include things that may have made participating in the study either easier or more difficult.*

**Lead question:** “Is there anything further you’d like to share? Something you thought of afterward? Something you’d feel more comfortable talking about now?”

Additional Question: What do you think are the main things we have learned from this discussion today?

Probes:

- a) What motivated you to participate?
- b) What concerns did you have about enrolling?

**Thank you for your participation!**

## HEALTHCARE PROVIDER INTERVIEW AGENDA

### **I. Provider's Interaction with Patients**

*The intent of this section is to get a sense of the provider's typical interaction with patients and the role he/she plays in preparing patients for surgery or providing post-surgical care.*

**Lead question:** "As a \_\_\_\_\_, what role do you play in preparing patients for surgery?"

Additional question: What education do you provide to patients about the surgical process and how to prepare?

Additional question: What types of policies/requirements are you aware of in the health system regarding patient education/preparation before surgery?

Additional question: Are patients provided with formal written materials? If so, what does this include?

**Lead question:** "What role do you play in helping patients recover post-surgery, if any?"

### **II. Psychosocial Risk Assessment**

*The intent of this section is to encourage providers to discuss the current standard of care for assessing and addressing psychosocial risk factors prior to surgery. Once the participant has made a contribution, ask for brief discussion/clarification, as necessary.*

**Lead question:** What, if any psychological, social, or behavioral factors, do you assess to determine surgical candidacy? *By behavioral I mean behaviors that impact health.*

Additional Questions: How do you assess this information?

- (a) patient chart
- (b) standard assessment (e.g. AUDIT-C)
- (c) talking to patient

**Lead question:** What psychological, social, or behavioral factors, do you think are the biggest risk factors for surgical health?

Additional Questions: Why \_\_\_\_\_? Can you give me an example of how you have seen this factor has impacted surgical outcome?

Additional Questions: What other factors do you consider as risk factors that I haven't mentioned?

### III. Alcohol Risk Assessment

*The intent of this section is to determine if and how providers think about patient alcohol use prior to surgery and how they assess and weigh these factors when determining surgical candidacy. We are trying to determine whether providers consider alcohol use a risk, how they assess it, how and if they address it or discuss it with patients.*

**Lead Question: Do you, or others in your department routinely assess alcohol use among patients prior to surgery?**

Additional Question: Tell me about the official policies (if they exist).

Additional Question: Does it differ for inpatient vs. outpatient procedures.

Additional Question: Does it differ between individual providers?

Additional question: How about smoking or other drugs of abuse?

**Lead Question: What type of information about alcohol use and alcohol use disorders is typically included in patient's medical chart?**

Additional Question: Do you consider or look at this information at any time?

Additional Question: Do you/do you think others consider this information when determining surgical candidacy?

Additional Question: What about smoking, illicit drugs, or opioid use history?

**Lead question: What information, if any, do you *routinely provide* to patients about alcohol use before surgery? (e.g. instructions, education)**

Additional Question: If not routine, have you ever discussed a patient's alcohol use with him/her, and if so what did that conversation involve?

Additional question: Are there any times when patient alcohol use comes up in your discussions with other providers?

Additional question: How about smoking, opioid abuse, or other drugs of abuse?

**Lead Question: In general, what do you perceive as the potential surgical risks related to heavy alcohol use in your patients?**

Prompt if needed: Examples may include drug-interactions, risk of falls, difficulty healing, infections, withdrawal, not following pre-op or post-op care recommendations?

**Lead Question:** If you were aware of patient alcohol use, how much alcohol use would you consider "risky" in terms of surgery? Quantity? Frequency? Timing (day, week before surgery)?

#### **IV. Handling acute alcohol or drug intoxication and withdrawal**

*The intent of this section is to determine how providers handle acute alcohol/drug intoxication (i.e. patients arriving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs) and how they handle withdrawal from alcohol for inpatient surgeries.*

**Lead Question:** What is your experience with or knowledge of patients arriving for surgery under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs?

Additional Question: How do providers know that the patient is under the influence, formal drug/alcohol test, by observation, by patient self-report?

**Lead Question:** What happens when a patient arrives for surgery under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

Additional Question: Is there a standard protocol for handling such situations?

Additional Question: If yes, how effective is that protocol?

**Lead Question:** For inpatient surgical procedures, how does the medical team prepare for, prevent, or treat alcohol *withdrawal* post-surgery?

Additional Question: If yes, how effective is this protocol or these practices?

Additional Question: How well does the health system do in identifying patients at risk for withdrawal?

Additional Question: How could this process be approved?

#### **V. Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment**

*The intent of this section is to gather information about how/if screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment could fit into the pre-surgical appointment "flow" including who institutional readiness to change. This will include an assessment of whether providers know what SBIRT is, whether they think it is necessary, and whether any providers are willing to conduct SBIRT.*

**DEFINE TERMS:** "Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment" also known as SBIRT refers to a public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for people with substance use disorder. Patients are screened and if using at risky levels, they are offered brief advice

*immediately, and sometimes provided with referral for more intensive treatment. The VA primary care program, for example, provides such opportunities for early intervention with at-risk substance users before more severe consequences occur.*

**Lead Question: (Define SBIRT) What would you think about a program to implement screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for alcohol use prior to surgery?**

- (a) importance
- (b) acceptability
- (c) motivation/readiness of the institution?

**Additional Question:** Often times SBIRT is delivered by healthcare providers. In your opinion would 'type' of provider would be best for delivering this program?

- (a) Nurse
- (b) Physician
- (c) Social Worker
- (d) Online/web-based?
- (e) Other?

**Additional Question:** How interested would you be in implementing alcohol screening and brief intervention for your patients, and possibly referring patients for help with their alcohol problems?

**Additional Question:** At what point in the pre-surgical referral/assessment process would screening and brief intervention "fit" best in terms of timing?

**Additional Question:** What "road blocks" could prevent implementation of alcohol screening and brief intervention in this department?

**Lead Question: If you had an ideal program to identify and/or address your patient's preoperative risky drinking, what would you want it to include?**

## **VI. Electronic Communications**

**Lead Question: What is your experience interacting with patients online or through e-mail, if at all?**

**Additional Question:** How do you think a computer-based alcohol/drug screening and intervention would fit in to the clinic, if at all? Has anything like this been done in this clinic?

## **VII. Patient Recruitment**

*The intent of this section is to get ideas about how to recruit patients from the surgical department*



**READ:** *For this research and clinical problem we will need to recruit patients one month prior to surgery. We will either have to partner with surgical clinic(s) where we can screen and recruit patients before or after their medical appointments, or partner with a ‘feeder’ clinic that refers to surgery. Do you have any recommendations for appropriate clinics or other points in the preoperative process when we could access patients?*

## **VII. Study wrap-up and experience**

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**Lead question:** “Is there anything further you’d like to share? Something you thought of afterward? Something you’d feel more comfortable talking about now?”

**Additional Question:** What do you think are the main things we have learned from this discussion today?

Probes:

- a) What motivated you to participate?
- b) What concerns did you have about enrolling?

**Thank you for your participation!**