

Connecticut DCF

SBIRT Training Materials Guide

Purpose of This Guide

This guide provides a high-level overview of the SBIRT training and supervision materials developed by Manu Singh-Looney, Ph.D., SBIRT Trainer for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). The purpose of this document is to help trainers, supervisors, program managers, and other users understand the purpose of each training component and how the resources can be used to support implementation of SBIRT within their organization.

Detailed training content, facilitator notes, participant materials, supervision tools, and implementation resources are contained within the individual slide decks, manuals, worksheets, and supporting documents referenced throughout this guide.

Sections of this Guide:

1. Overview of the SBIRT Training Program
2. Component 1: Foundational SBIRT Training
3. Component 2: Motivational Interviewing Refresher Trainings
4. Component 3: Supervisor Training and Supervision Resources
5. Inventory of Training Materials and Supporting Resources

Overview of the SBIRT Training Program

Training Philosophy

The Connecticut SBIRT training program is designed to build provider confidence and competence in conducting Brief Interventions (BI) and Referral to Treatment (RT)

The training approach emphasizes:

- Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- Client-centered communication
- Practical application
- Skill-building through practice
- Ongoing reinforcement over time

Component 1: Foundational SBIRT Training

This SBIRT foundational training provides participants with a comprehensive introduction to Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) as a public health

approach to addressing substance use among adolescents and adults involved in child welfare and other social service systems. Participants will learn practical strategies for implementing SBIRT in real-world settings and how to engage individuals using a compassionate, client-centered approach. Through case examples, video demonstrations, and skill-building practice, the training equips attendees with the knowledge and tools to respond effectively to early signs of risky substance use and promote wellness and recovery.

Training Details	Description
Purpose	Provides participants with the core knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to conduct Brief Interventions (BI) and Referral to Treatment (RT) conversations as part of the SBIRT process.
Audience	Direct service providers and other staff responsible for conducting Brief Interventions and facilitating referrals.
Prerequisites	Participants should have completed agency-required screening training, as screening is not covered in detail within this training.
Recommended Duration	Approximately 3 hours
Delivery Format	Live virtual or in-person training
Key Topics	• Overview of SBIRT • Adolescent brain development and the impact of substances • Overview of motivational interviewing • Steps to conduct a BI using the Brief Negotiated Interview (BNI) • Best practices for making referrals to treatment • Reviewing a video demonstration • Practice Exercise
Training Methods	Presentation Facilitated discussion Video Demonstration Role plays
Learning Objectives	By the end of this training, participants will be able to:

	• Define the components of the SBIRT model and describe its relevance for adolescent and adult populations involved in child welfare or social services. • Identify key risk factors and developmental considerations related to adolescent substance use. • Demonstrate core motivational interviewing (MI) skills, including OARS (Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflective Listening, and Summarizing). • Explain the stages of change and how they inform brief interventions. • Implement the steps of a Brief Negotiated Interview (BNI) to support youth and adults in identifying their own motivations for change. • Describe how to make effective and developmentally appropriate referrals to treatment, including strategies for engaging caregivers. • Recognize red flags for acute safety risks and substance use disorders requiring immediate intervention.
Associated Materials	Training slides with facilitator notes and participant handouts: case scenarios, BNI Algorithm
Recommended Follow-Up	Participation in supplemental Motivational Interviewing Refresher trainings, coaching, observation, and ongoing supervision.

Component 2: Motivational Interviewing Refresher Trainings

The Motivational Interviewing (MI) Refresher Training Series is designed to reinforce and expand upon the communication skills introduced during the Foundational SBIRT Training. While the foundational training provides participants with the core knowledge and skills needed to conduct Brief Interventions and Referral to Treatment conversations, ongoing practice and reinforcement are essential for building proficiency and confidence in using Motivational Interviewing techniques.

This series consists of eight brief MI Refresher training modules, each focused on a specific MI skill or concept commonly used during Brief Interventions.

The training modules are designed to be delivered as stand-alone learning opportunities, incorporated into staff meetings or supervision sessions, or used as part of a broader professional development plan. Together, the modules provide practical strategies and examples that help providers strengthen client engagement, navigate challenging

conversations, support behavior change, and enhance the quality and effectiveness of Brief Interventions over time.

The following sections provide an overview of each refresher training topic.

Training Details	Description
Purpose	Reinforces and strengthens Motivational Interviewing skills introduced during the foundational training through focused microlearning sessions.
Audience	Staff who have completed the foundational SBIRT training.
Prerequisites	Completion of the Foundational SBIRT Training.
Recommended Duration	Approximately 15 minutes per module.
Delivery Format	Staff meetings, supervision sessions, learning communities, virtual training sessions, or independent refreshers.
Number of Modules	8
Key Topics	Specific MI skills and implementation challenges, such as ambivalence, resistance, OARS skills, change talk, sustain talk, confidence and importance, change planning, and advanced application. *Each Module is Described below in more detail
Training Methods	Brief presentation and discussion questions
Learning Objectives	Participants will deepen their understanding of MI principles and improve their ability to apply specific communication skills during Brief Interventions.
Associated Materials	Individual module slide decks, facilitator notes
Recommended Follow-Up	Application of skills during client interactions, coaching conversations, peer consultation, and ongoing supervision.

Description of the MI Refresher Topics

Topic 1. Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is one of the core communication skills used in Motivational Interviewing (MI) and serves as a foundation for effective Brief Interventions. This training

focuses on how reflective listening helps providers demonstrate empathy, build rapport, and encourage clients to explore their own thoughts, feelings, and motivations for change. Participants will learn different types of reflective listening, including repeating, rephrasing, paraphrasing, and reflecting feelings, as well as strategies for avoiding common communication roadblocks such as advising, judging, or persuading.

Topic 2. Clients Not Ready for Change

Many individuals are not immediately ready to change their substance use or other health-related behaviors. This training focuses on Motivational Interviewing strategies for working effectively with clients who express ambivalence, resistance, or pushback. Participants will learn how to recognize common forms of pushback, understand the role of ambivalence in behavior change, and respond in ways that reduce defensiveness and strengthen engagement. The session introduces practical techniques such as reflective listening, reframing, shifting focus, emphasizing personal choice, and exploring both sides of ambivalence.

Topic 3. Change Talk

Change Talk refers to client statements that express a desire, ability, reason, need, or commitment to make a change. Because individuals are more likely to act on ideas and motivations they express themselves, learning to recognize and strengthen Change Talk is a key Motivational Interviewing skill. This training introduces practical strategies for eliciting Change Talk, including the use of evocative questions, readiness rulers, exploring ambivalence, discussing goals and values, and helping clients envision both future possibilities and consequences. Participants will learn how to identify opportunities to reinforce Change Talk and guide conversations toward increased motivation, confidence, and commitment to change.

Topic 4. Understanding Readiness and the Stages of Change

The Stages of Change model, describes the 5 stages you may go through when modifying behavior: Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, and Maintenance. Understanding these stages is important because it allows you to tailor interventions based on your client's readiness for change. By identifying where your client is in this process, you can use specific MI techniques to guide them to the next stage, helping to build their motivation and support sustainable change. This personalized approach is key to addressing ambivalence and increasing commitment to change.

Topic 5. Asking Permission, Giving Advice, and Generating a Menu of Options

Asking Permission, Giving Advice, and Generating a Menu of Options are Motivational Interviewing (MI) techniques to engage clients and support their autonomy. We'll review best practices for Asking Permission, which helps to build trust and reduce resistance. Next, we'll explore Giving Advice in a way that respects the client's preferences and aligns with their goals. Finally, you'll learn how to create a Menu of Options, providing clients with a range of actionable choices, empowering them to select the approach that best suits

their path toward change. By the end, you'll have practical tools to foster client motivation and commitment.

Topic 6. Affirming

Affirmations are a core Motivational Interviewing (MI) skill used to recognize client strengths, efforts, values, and successes. This training focuses on how affirmations can build rapport, increase confidence, and support self-efficacy, particularly for individuals who may feel discouraged or uncertain about their ability to change. Participants will learn how to provide genuine, strengths-based affirmations that reinforce positive behaviors and personal resilience without sounding judgmental or insincere. The session emphasizes identifying opportunities to affirm effort, progress, values, and past successes in ways that promote engagement and strengthen motivation for change.

Topic 7. Supporting Healthy Choices: MI-Informed Positive Reinforcement for Low-Risk Clients

In SBIRT practice, evidence shows that brief, strengths-based reinforcement can significantly deter future use for individuals who report no substance use or score as low risk on a screening tool. This session provides training on how to use Motivational Interviewing (MI) techniques to provide positive reinforcement with low-risk clients to strengthen protective factors, validate healthy choices, and reinforce autonomy. This approach helps clients feel seen, respected, and confident in maintaining low-risk behaviors.

Topic 8. Supporting Healthy Choices: Beyond the First BI: Applying Motivational Interviewing in Follow-Up Sessions

This training focuses on applying Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills beyond the initial Brief Intervention (BI), helping providers effectively navigate follow-up conversations with clients. Participants will learn how to build on prior discussions, revisit goals, assess progress, and respond to setbacks while maintaining a collaborative, non-judgmental approach. The session emphasizes practical strategies for deepening motivation, reinforcing change talk, and adapting MI techniques across multiple contacts to support sustained behavior change over time.

Component 3: Supervisor Training and Supervision Resources

Effective SBIRT implementation requires more than initial provider training. Supervisors play a critical role in reinforcing Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills, supporting fidelity to the Brief Negotiated Interview (BNI) model, addressing implementation challenges, and promoting continuous quality improvement. Component 3 includes a set of resources designed to help supervisors support provider skill development and sustain high-quality SBIRT implementation over time.

SBIRT Supervisor Training Slide Deck

The SBIRT Supervisor Training slide deck provides an introduction to the supervisor's role in supporting SBIRT implementation and provider development. The training emphasizes a coaching-oriented approach to supervision and introduces practical strategies for monitoring fidelity, supporting Motivational Interviewing skill development, and using data to improve service quality.

Topics covered include:

- The role of supervisors in SBIRT implementation
- Supporting fidelity to the BNI and MI models
- Modeling the spirit of Motivational Interviewing during supervision
- Coaching and feedback strategies
- Observation and fidelity monitoring tools
- SMART goal development for provider skill-building
- Supporting SBIRT workflows and logistics
- Monitoring implementation outcomes
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approaches

This slide deck is intended to provide supervisors with a high-level understanding of their responsibilities and introduce the tools available to support provider growth and program quality.

SBIRT Supervision Guidance Manual

The SBIRT Supervision Guidance Manual serves as a companion resource to the Supervisor Training and provides more detailed guidance on implementing effective SBIRT supervision practices. The manual expands upon concepts introduced in the training and provides practical recommendations, examples, tools, and worksheets that supervisors can use during routine supervision activities.

Topics covered include:

- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
- Supporting fidelity to the BNI and MI models
- Developing Motivational Interviewing competency
- Conducting coaching sessions
- Observation and feedback strategies
- SMART goal development and action planning
- Supporting SBIRT logistics and workflow integration
- Monitoring outcomes and implementation performance

The manual also includes several appendices and tools to support supervision activities, including:

- Guidance for recording sessions for supervision

- Guidance for observing sessions
- BNI Algorithm Scoring Tool
- Motivational Interviewing observation tools
- SMART Goal examples and worksheets
- Sample coaching scripts
- Reflection prompts for supervision sessions

Supervisors may use the manual as a reference guide when conducting observations, providing feedback, supporting skill development, and implementing quality improvement activities.

Motivational Interviewing Practice Exercises

The Motivational Interviewing Practice Exercises provide structured opportunities for supervisors, trainers, and providers to practice and reinforce key Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills through realistic client scenarios.

These exercises can be used as stand-alone learning activities or integrated into supervision and coaching sessions to reinforce concepts introduced in the Foundational SBIRT Training and Motivational Interviewing Refresher Trainings. They provide a practical way for participants to apply MI concepts, receive feedback, and build confidence in using these skills during client interactions.

The resource includes the following practice activities:

Exercise 1: Identifying Strengths and Developing Affirmations

Participants review client scenarios, identify client strengths, and practice developing affirming statements that reinforce resilience, positive behaviors, values, and personal goals.

Exercise 2: Recognizing and Eliciting Change Talk

Participants review common client statements that may reflect ambivalence or resistance and practice identifying opportunities to elicit change talk, explore motivations, and redirect conversations using Motivational Interviewing techniques.

Exercise 3: Practicing Reflective Listening

Participants work in pairs to practice reflective listening by responding to a speaker using only reflective statements rather than questions, advice, or problem-solving. The exercise helps participants strengthen their ability to listen for meaning, emotion, values, and ambivalence, while developing skills that support deeper client exploration and engagement. Participants experience both the speaker and listener roles to better understand how reflective listening can foster insight, evoke change talk, and strengthen therapeutic conversations.

Inventory of Training Materials and Supporting Resources

- Foundational Training PowerPoint Slides
 - Brief Negotiated Interview (BNI) Algorithm
 - Brief Negotiated Interview (BNI) Scoring
 - Role Play Cases Youth and Young Adult
 - BI Feedback- Alcohol and Marijuana Fact Sheet
- MI Refresher Topic 1–8 PowerPoint Slides
- MI Practice Exercises PowerPoint Slides
- Supervisor Training Slides
- Supervision Guidance Manual