At-a-Glance Sample Workflow for Alcohol Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

This simplified model shows the general elements in an alcohol SBIRT workflow using an alcohol use disorder (AUD) symptom checklist as an assessment tool. Your health system may use different tools for screening and assessment.

SCREEN: HEAVY DRINKING?
USPSTF recommends the **AUDIT-C** or the NIAAA **single question** about **heavy drinking days** -- 4+ for women, 5+ for men drinks in a day

70% of U.S. adults aged 18+ drank alcohol in the past year*

No

Yes: Heavy drinking

26% of U.S. adults had heavy drinking days in the past month*

ADVISE:
Stay within the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. Some, including pregnant women, should not drink alcohol at all.

ASSESS: AUD?
Get the typical weekly drinking pattern for a fuller picture, then assess for alcohol use disorder (AUD). For a direct diagnosis of AUD and the level of severity, use an AUD symptom checklist.

No: 0-1 AUD symptoms

Yes: 2+ AUD symptoms

6% of U.S. adults had AUD in the past year*

ADVISE & ASSIST
Brief Intervention for Heavy Drinking
Advise staying within the Dietary Guidelines or abstinence as warranted. Negotiate individualized drinking goals to include "no heavy drinking days" as needed.

ADVISE & ASSIST
Brief Intervention for AUD
Advise to abstain by cutting back gradually and consider the need for medically managed withdrawal. Negotiate individualized drinking goals as needed. Discuss evidence-based professional treatment as well as mutual help options. Consider support in primary care with AUD medications and regular follow-ups. Consider referral to specialty care, especially for those with mental health comorbidities or more severe AUD.

AT FOLLOW-UP, CONTINUE SUPPORT
Revisit drinking goals, acknowledge change is difficult, affirm progress, and explore challenges and strategies to surmount them.

*NSDUH 2019 detailed tables