

Dear Colleague,

Patient-centered care requires active partnerships between Veterans and their health care providers. Unfortunately, Veterans are often reluctant to discuss misuse of substances during their health care encounters. This prevents offering them help for substance abuse as well as taking into account use of non-prescribed drugs in making decisions about medications for the presenting problem.

We created the brochure “Drug Use: Get the Whole Picture” to encourage Veterans to discuss possible use of substances of abuse. The brochure is available at <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/providers/sud/>. Feel free to modify the brochure to tailor it to the needs of your patients. You can replace the text on “Home Town VA Medical Center” with information specific to your facility.

Please place copies of the brochure in locations where Veterans might easily pick them up, for example, in PACT waiting areas or your Patient Education Resource Center. Because we wish to reduce the stigma of discussing substance abuse problems, you might also include it in your New Patient Orientation Program. You may download free wall posters which support the information in the brochure on the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s website, <http://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed/screening/>. The posters are available in the “Patient-Physician Conversation Poster” tab. This website also includes a variety of other free materials which address drug misuse in primary care and similar clinical settings.

We also invite you to give us feedback on the brochure so that we can make it more effective.

Thank you,

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