



# *Blueprints Promising Programs* FACT SHEET

FS-BPP15

2006 (Updated 08/2006)

## **BASICS** **(Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students)**

BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students) is a selective or indicated alcohol abuse prevention program for college students.

### **Program Targets**

BASICS is aimed at college students 18-24 years old who drink alcohol heavily and have experienced or are at risk for alcohol-related problems such as academic failure, social conflicts, accidents, sexual assault, or violence. The program was not designed to treat alcohol dependence and is unlikely to resolve the disorders of students who are severely alcohol dependent, but can be used for those students in a stepped-care model that provides them with a comprehensive assessment, feedback, advice and referral to specialty care.

### **Program Content**

BASICS is conducted over the course of two structured interviews and is delivered using motivational interviewing, a counseling modality that is empathetic and accepting rather than confrontational or judgmental. Before or after the first interview, the student completes a self-report questionnaire usually online. From the questionnaire and the assessment interview, information is gathered about the student's: 1) typical alcohol consumption and peak drinking episodes, 2) beliefs about the drinking habits of other college students 3) number and type of alcohol-related negative consequences, 4) indices of alcohol dependence, 5) family history of alcohol problems, 6) alcohol outcome expectancies, and 7) perceived level of risk for developing a drinking problem.

The second interview, which occurs 1-2 weeks after the initial interview, provides the student with personalized feedback about each piece of information gathered in the assessment session. Feedback to the student is accompanied by challenges to myths about alcohol's effects, ways to reduce future risks associated with alcohol use, a menu of options to assist in making changes and may also include stepped-care options such as a follow-up session or referral to on or off campus mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

## Program Outcomes

BASICS has been shown to reduced drinking and alcohol-related consequences in two randomized controlled trials conducted at the University of Washington. In the first trial, BASICS was as effective as a 6-week Alcohol Skills Training Program class with results measured in a 2-year follow-up. In the second trial, BASICS was significantly more effective than an assessment-only control group in reducing both drinking and alcohol-related harm with largest effects found for reducing harm. Results were significant through a 4-year follow-up. BASICS was also shown to be "clinically significant" when each subjects outcomes were individually assessed, 67% of students receiving the BASICS intervention "resolved" their problem drinking behavior, meaning that, statistically, their alcohol use was no different from normal or low-risk students or "reliably improved," meaning their alcohol use significantly improved from baseline to follow-up 4 years later, compared to 55% of controls.

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## References

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