



Promising Practice

Screen Callers Live on First Call

Problem

There are delays in screening during the window of opportunity when clients need immediate assistance.

Solution

Screen callers live on the first call.

Featured Stories

[CAP Quality Care](#) of Westbrook, Maine connected callers to a live counseling aide who completes a phone screening [Intake Phone Screening](#) for clients calling about their Opioid Treatment Program immediately, resulting in an increase in the number of completed screenings from 54% to 84%. After the screening, clients who need Opioid Treatment can come in for an Intake appointment on a walk-in basis and clients who need other treatment are directed appropriately. Previously, callers who wanted to complete a phone screening were sent to voicemail, which instructed them to leave a message and expect a call back within 48 hours.

Lessons Learned

- Immediate screening provides clients with encouragement and support about the benefits of treatment and gives them the sense that they've taken a positive step toward getting help, even if they do not enter treatment immediately.
- Screening clients immediately allows for an instant response, including making a call to emergency services if the caller is in crisis.
- Screening clients immediately allows for referrals to treatment that best suits their needs.

Tracking Measures

Cycle Measure

Number of completed screenings

Data Collection Form

None

Action Steps

- Plan**
1. Collect baseline data for the number of screenings that are completed.
 2. Decide how staff will cover phones to answer screening calls live.
- Do**
1. For the next two weeks, screen callers live.
 2. Track the number of clients who are screened on the first call.

- Study**
1. Check the fidelity of the change. Was the change implemented as planned?
 2. Evaluate the change.
 - Did all clients who needed screenings talk to a live person the first time they called?
 - Were more clients screened?
 - Did admissions increase?
- Act**
1. If necessary, adjust the way that staff covers phones to screen clients.
 2. Repeat this series of steps until you have refined the process for getting clients screened live on the first call. Expand this practice to all clients who need to be screened.

Related Promising Practices

- [Make Appointments during the First Call](#)
- [Combine Multiple Intake and Assessment Appointments](#)
- [Offer Telephone Support](#)