**ABC tool**

**Practitioner……………………………… Date………………… Assessor……………………………**

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| **STEP** | **CRITERIA** | **√ =done** **X =not done****NA = not applicable** |
| **ASK**Ask about risk behaviour | Asks if the risk behaviour is present (i.e. Do you smoke) |  |
| Asks about the risk behaviour (i.e. How much do you smoke) |  |
| Asks what the patient already knows / wants to know about the risk behaviour. |  |
| Asks permission to provide further information. |  |
| **ALERT**Alert to risks of behaviour / benefits of change | Provides information related to what the patient already knows / wants to know about the risk behaviour.  |  |
| Provides additional information in a neutral way. |  |
| Asks for the patient’s response to the information provided. |  |
| **ASSESS**Assess readiness to change | Assesses importance of change for the patient. |  |
| Assesses the patient’s confidence to change. |  |
| Confirms the patient’s state of readiness.  |  |
| Respects their choice. |  |
| **ASSIST**Provide practical assistance.Remember to mark as not applicable items that are not relevant to the person’s readiness to change | Asks about or acknowledges the patient’s concerns or challenges regarding change. |  |
| Asks the patient to think of realistic ways to overcome these concerns or challenges |  |
| Offers relevant, practical assistance e.g. supportive material, prescription |  |
| Helps the patient identify social support for change. |  |
| Clarifies the specific goal for change. |  |
| Agrees on what action the patient will take. |  |
| **ARRANGE**Arrange appropriate follow up.Remember to mark as not applicable items that are not relevant to the person’s readiness to change | Emphasise that help is available when ready / Emphasise your on-going commitment to support change. |  |
| Refer for expert or additional help if appropriate. |  |
| Arrange a follow-up contact to provide ongoing support and review progress. |  |

**Scoring**

Give one point for each tick to create a score. Convert this to a percentage by dividing the score by the total number of possible ticks and multiplying by 100. The total number of possible ticks is 20. This number can be reduced if some items are marked NOT APPLICABLE.

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| --- | --- |
| Score | Percentage |

**Feedback to practitioner**

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**Notes on the criteria**

**ASK:** It is assumed that only one risk behaviour will be discussed. It may be necessary to ask if the risk behaviour is present (e.g. Do you smoke?), but if this is already known then this question is not applicable. When asking about the risk behaviour an assessment of severity is done (i.e. How many cigarettes do you smoke?). This could also be done by using some of the questions in the manual.

**ALERT:** Information should alert the patient to the risks of their behaviour or benefits of change and be related to what the patient already knows or wants to know. Other information may be given, for example relating their behaviour to known health problems. Being neutral implies that the information is shared, without also advising or telling the patient what they must do.

**ASSESS:** Importance and confidence to change should be assessed or acknowledged by using a scale, open questions, reflective listening statements or summaries. The practitioner should confirm the patient’s readiness to change and demonstrate their willingness to respect the patient’s choice.

**ASSIST:** Clarify the goal in terms of what, when, who and where: What exactly are you going to do? What might be some of the challenges? What could you do to overcome these challenges? When will you start? Who can support you? Where will this happen? An attainable action plan should be brainstormed and agreed on. If the patient is not ready for change, care should be taken to explore their ambivalence or concerns, without any advice or pressure.

**ARRANGE:** If ready to change, organise a future contact via phone, email or clinic visit. Referral may be to expert counselling (e.g. dietician, social worker) or additional help (e.g. community health worker). If the patient is not ready to change, then keep an open door for when they are ready.

Further information: <http://www.ichange4health.co.za/healthcare-professionals/>