

Making changes to prevent cancer: A summary guide to brief interventions for General Practitioners

Up to 50% of cancer deaths can be prevented through utilizing available screening programs and making changes to lifestyle behaviours (Colditz, Sellers & Trapido, 2006). This card is designed to assist GPs working with patients on the lifestyle factors of smoking, alcohol, nutrition (including overweight or obesity), physical activity and sun exposure, and help GPs and patients decide when and how to intervene. This card is a summary, for the full versions of the guidelines and recommendations please refer to the 'FURTHER INFORMATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' section on the back of this card.

The 5 As

Successful interventions begin with identifying where patients need to make changes and developing appropriate interventions based upon their willingness to change. At the practice level there are five steps for assisting patients;

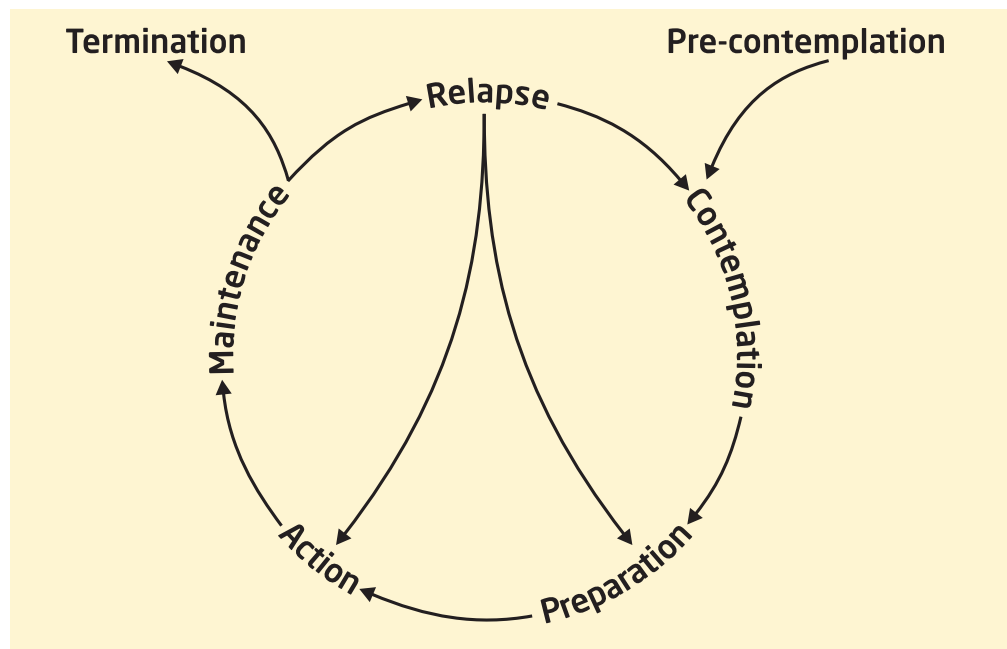
- 1. ASK** - identify patients with risk factors
- 2. ASSESS** - level of risk factor and its relevance to the patient in terms of health and the patients willingness to change
- 3. ADVISE** - provide resources, lifestyle prescriptions as well as brief intervention and motivational interviewing
- 4. ASSIST** - prescribe pharmacotherapies and support for self-monitoring
- 5. ARRANGE** - referrals to special services, social support groups, counselling services and a follow up appointment

In 2007-08, the median GP consultation length was 13 minutes (Britt et al, 2008). If, due to time constraints, it is not possible to carry out all five steps in a consultation, consider addressing at least two of the above steps - ASK and ADVISE. Evidence suggests that even minimal advice from a GP has some impact on patient behaviour.

ASSESS

Patients willingness to change

The Stages of Change Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982) highlights that behaviour change does not happen in one step. People tend to progress through different stages on their way to successful change. Remind patients that people progress through the stages at varying rates. Relapses are a normal part of the change process and not failures.



ADVISE

Brief intervention

GPs are particularly well placed to provide brief interventions to their patients. A brief intervention is 'any intervention that involves a minimum of professional time in an attempt to change [behaviour]... Any intervention requiring a total of between five minutes and two hours' (Heather, 1990).

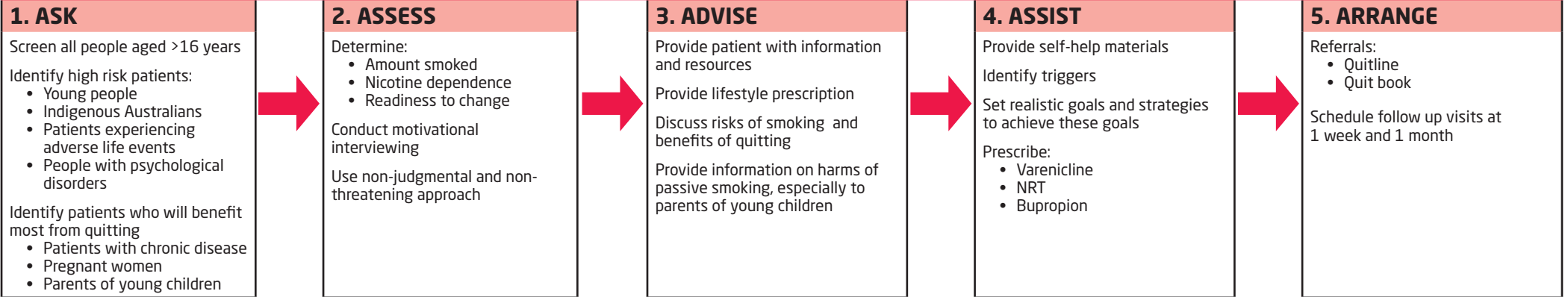
Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing is non-confrontational, non-judgmental & non-adversarial. It attempts to increase the patients awareness of the consequences experienced, potential problems caused and risks faced as a result of certain behaviour. It has four main principals: express empathy, develop discrepancies, roll with resistance and support self-efficacy.

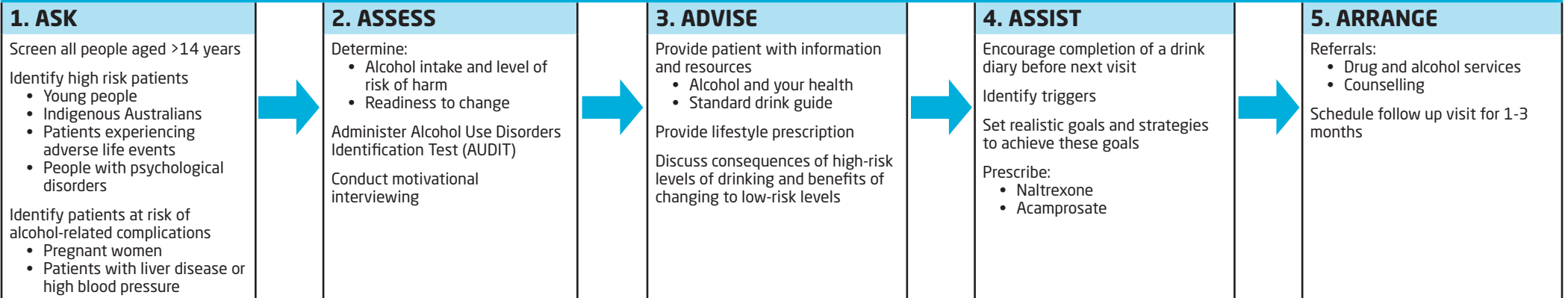
A systematic approach to motivational interviewing (SNAP, 2004)

- Examine the good things about improving lifestyle (eg nutrition or physical activity) and self management by the patient
- Ask about the not so good things and compare these with the good things. Explore if these not so good things really are a negative
- Ask the patient: How does this concern you? Why does it concern you?
- Look to the future: Is the good/not so good balance going to change?
- Highlight any discrepancies
- Get the patient to rate their motivation and confidence on a scale of 1-10
- Summarise
- Identify strengths and barriers to lifestyle change and self-management

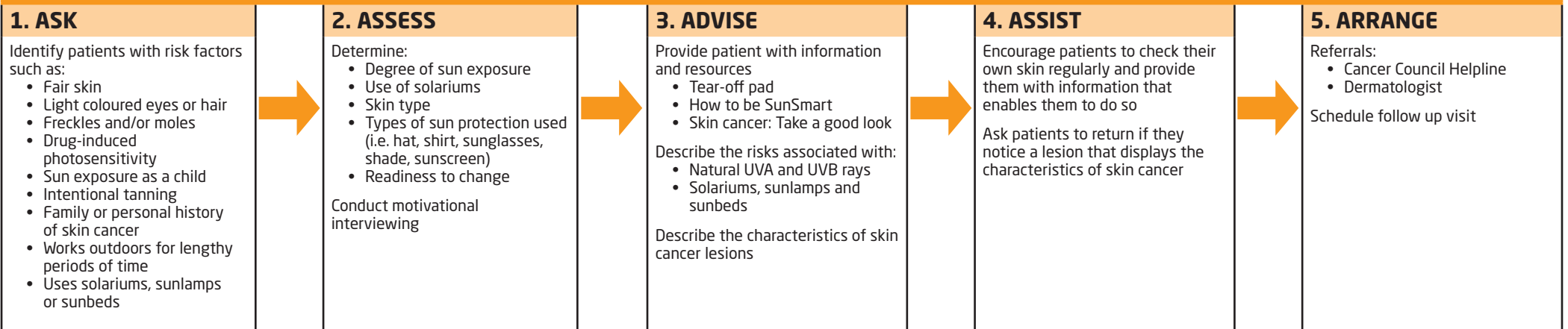
SMOKING



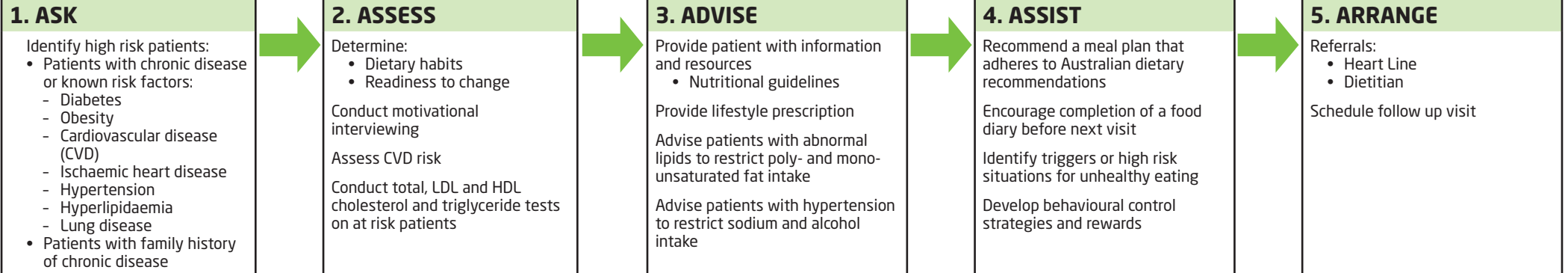
ALCOHOL



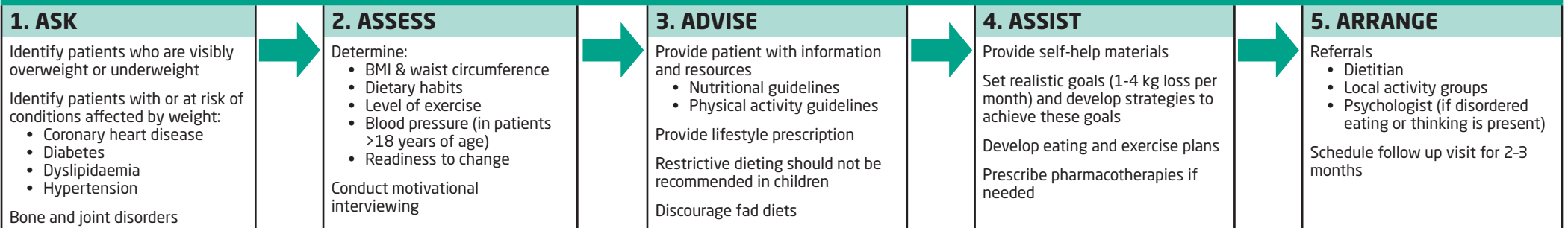
SUN EXPOSURE



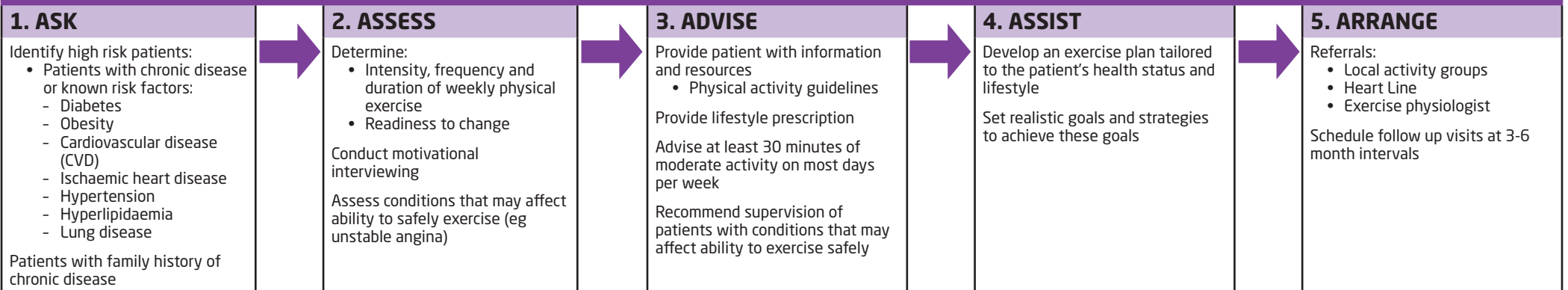
NUTRITION



HEALTHY WEIGHT



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



FURTHER INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Cancer Council Australia: Lifestyle and prevention fact sheets for patients
<http://www.cancer.org.au/Healthprofessionals/patientfactsheets.htm>

Cancer Council Helpline: 13 11 20
www.cancer.org.au

Quitline: 131 848
<http://www.quitnow.info.au/>

Self-help Quit booklet
<http://www.quitnow.info.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quitters-booklet>

Australian alcohol guidelines
<http://www.alcohol.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/guidelines>

Heart Line: 1300 362 787
www.heartfoundation.com.au

Physical activity guidelines for children and adults
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines>

Australian guide to healthy eating
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-publth-strateg-food-guide-index.htm>

CANCER COUNCIL HELPLINE

Cancer Council Helpline: 13 11 20
Local call cost from anywhere in Australia
Available 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
www.cancer.org.au

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

SNAP: a population health guide to behavioural risk factors in general practice
<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/snap>

Putting prevention into practice - Green Book 2nd Edition
<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/greenbook>

Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice - Red Book 6th Edition
<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/redbook>

Smoking cessation guidelines for Australian general practice
<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/smokingcessation>

Lifestyle prescriptions: Lifescripts
<http://www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts>

Drug and Alcohol Office
<http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au/>

Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective
<http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/>

FIND AN ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Dietitians Association of Australia: Find an accredited practising dietitian
<http://www.daa.asn.au/>

Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science: Find an exercise physiologist
<http://www.aaess.com.au/>

The Australian Psychological Society Ltd: Find a psychological service
<http://www.psychology.org.au/>

