

Development and use of a decision making tool to facilitate alcohol treatment among Veteran medical-surgical patients



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Background

- Alcohol use among Veterans on medical-surgical units is a critical concern as risky alcohol use can exacerbate medical conditions, leading to re-hospitalizations, worsening symptoms, and poor medical-adherence.
- Decision Aids are used as tools to help health care consumers understand and clarify their choices and preferences in regard to a discrete decision.
- A Decision Aid was adapted from similar tools used in primary care settings outside of the VA to be applicable for Veterans with AUDs in VHA medical-surgical inpatient settings.

Methods

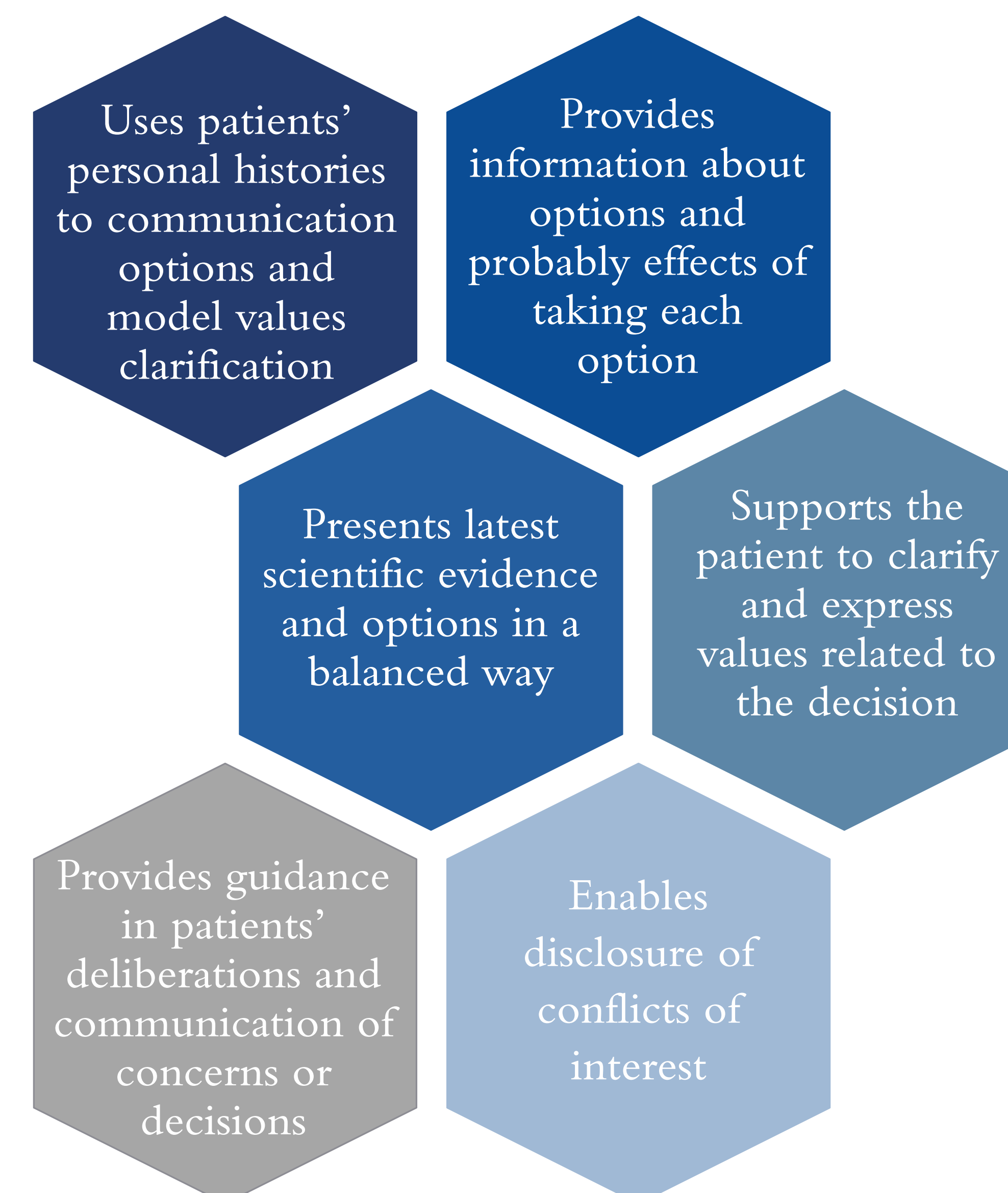
- Alpha testing (qualitative interviews) were done to determine the ease and difficulty of understanding of a Veteran, AUD specific Decision Aid.
- Participants were recruited from two VHA facilities, Ann Arbor and Palo Alto.
 - Feedback on the tool was obtained in face-to face, semi- structured qualitative interviews with medical-surgical patients (n=15) and medical-surgical staff (n=19)(nurses and social workers) as well as presented to the Veterans Research Engagement Council.

Qualitative Interview Results

- Veteran and staff participants thought the Aid was well-worded, helpful, uncomplicated, and non-judgmental.
- Participants also reported the connection of health and wellness with substance use was important.

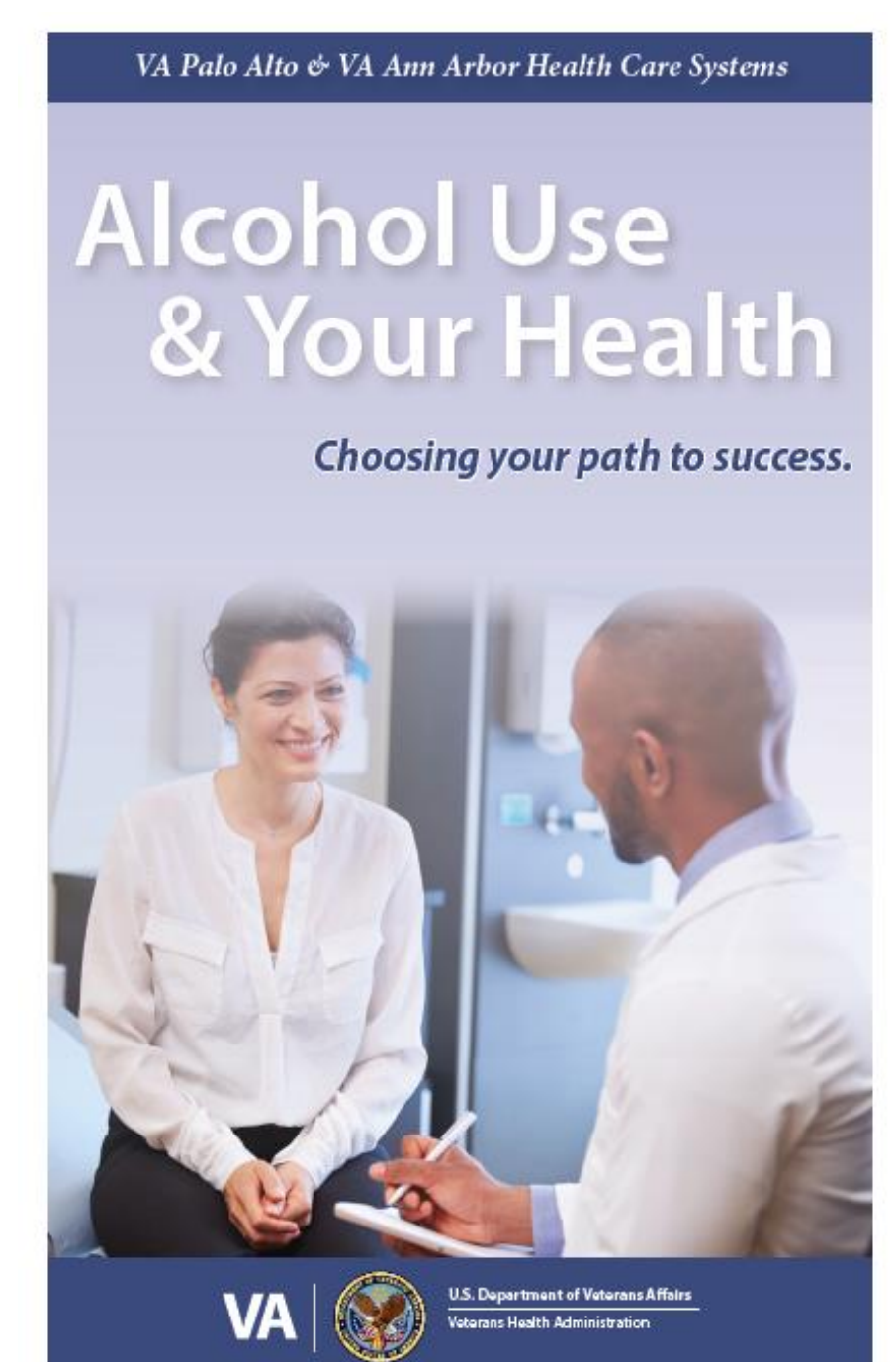
Decision Aid Development

The Decision Aid meets International Patient Decision Aid standards including:



The Decision Aid describes the basic descriptions, length of time, how it helps, and side effects of the following evidence-based treatment options:

- Counseling or psychotherapy
- Medications
- Mutual-help groups



The Aid also discusses health impact, delaying/not engaging in treatment, and outlines next steps.

Impacts

Behavioral health decision aids can be developed in collaboration with Veterans and treatment providers to improve communication about help-seeking with key at-risk groups of Veterans.

Next Steps

The shared decision-making tool is being utilized in a RCT as a potential solution to the critical need for evidence-based strategies to bridge the gap between inpatient medical-surgical care episodes and AUD treatment. The full intervention incorporates Motivational Interviewing, Telemonitoring, and the decision-making tool with a goal to increase Veterans' use of alcohol-related resources and improve drinking and medical outcomes.