



Guidelines for Observing Health Professionals (HPs)

Introduction

The purpose is to observe HPs conducting 3 regular checkups with children 0 - 5, to assess their practice regarding psychosocial problems (parental depression, intimate partner (or domestic) violence, substance abuse, food insecurity, harsh discipline and major stress).

Someone in the office should identify children 0 – 5 years of age coming in for a regular checkup – not sick visits - by the SEEK health professional, on the days the observer is available. From those eligible children, a **random** sample of 3 visits should be selected, for example beginning on day 1, the first such patient, followed by day 2 the 2nd patient, and so on. The selection should be by staff NOT directly associated with patient care.

The observer should thus have a list of 3 children (per HP) and the dates and times of their checkups.

General Pointers

Please err on the side of being generous, including practice that's reasonably specific and may reflect on what we are seeking. However, very general statements will not be counted. For example, if the HP enquires "how are you managing with your new baby," we'll consider this as screening for possible stress. However, very general questions, such as "how are you today?" will not be considered a screen for stress or depression.

Please be aware of the schedule for using the **SEEK Parent Questionnaire (PQ)** in the office, and whether the visit is SEEK PQ eligible or not. Eg, is the PQ is administered at 2, 9, 15, 24, 36, 48 and 60 months, the 18-month visit should be documented as SEEK PQ eligible: Y__N X. Use of the SEEK PQ counts as a screen for ALL the targeted problems, even if not completed.

If applicable to the practice, please consider involvement of a social worker or mental health provider – associated with that visit, including contacts within a month. Eg, the screen may have been positive for depression, and the assessment may be done later by a social worker.

Time: We are also interested to examine the time taken to address psychosocial problems. Please document the exact time (to the nearest minute) the HP initiates and ends the visit. Also, document ALL the time spent addressing psychosocial problems, using a stop watch (adding the seconds).

Specific Pointers



1. Screen: Any indication that the HP screened for the problem should be considered a screen, unless it's a really general question. For example, code screen as a "0" if the HP simply asked about people living in home, and "1" or "2" (see next paragraph) if there was more specific info, such as "what's it been like with your new baby?"

If the screen identified a possible problem, "screen" should be coded "2." If no problem was detected, code "1."

0 = No screening done

1 = Screening done, but no problem identified

2 = Screening done, possible problem identified

It can be tricky knowing whether screening pertains to stress. Sometimes the HP just asks who lives in the home or who cares for the child during the day, or whether the father "is involved." Code screen as a "0" if the HP simply listed people living in home, or "grandmother caring for baby while mom at work" or "dad helps with night time feedings." Also, do not consider notations such as "dad not involved, mom has 3 other kids under age 5" as a screen for stress. But "mom has 3 kids under age 5, but is coping well" should be considered as a screen for stress.

2. Assessment: Any effort to assess the possible problem, however brief, will count as an assessment being done. Note, the assessment may be deferred to another professional; code = 3. Also, a problem may be uncovered without screening; codes Assessment = 2.

0 = No assessment done

1 = Assessment done, no problem identified

2 = Assessment done, problem identified

3 = Assessment done by social worker or mental health professional

3. Action: Again, we will err on the side of being generous; any kind of action, including reassurance or arranging a follow-up visit, will count as an action. The action, however, should pertain to the identified problem(s). Offering the WIC food program, for example, does not clearly pertain to being depressed or stressed.

0 = No action

1 = Action taken

4. Type of Action: Note that several codes may apply. For "other," briefly describe the action.