

Timeline Followback — TLFB — Booster

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Training Objectives

- Learn the purpose of the TLFB
- Describe the benefits of this particular assessment of substance use behavior
- Learn how to prepare, introduce and guide participants through the assessment
- Learn how to increase skill through practice and administration

Why the TLFB?

- Flexible
 - Timeframe
 - Substance type
 - Wide range of information about use
- Provides relatively accurate portrayal of substance use
- Use with a range of substance use severity
- Good psychometric properties
- Interview format
- Use with adolescents and adults

TLFB Basics (1)

- Method using calendars to help people retrospectively estimate recent, daily alcohol and drug use
 - Alcohol: quantity per day (standard drinks)
 - Drugs: yes/no use per day, route of administration
- Administered by a trained facilitator
- Guide participants step by step (systematically) through recall of use during a specified period of time
- Use of memory aids to help with recall

TLFB Basics (2)

- Used in clinical and research settings
- Validated (reliability and validity) measure with alcohol, marijuana and other drugs (Sobell et al., 1979; 1996)
 - From 1 week to 2 years
 - With clinical and non-clinical populations

Preparation

- Confirm time period and ready calendars for data collection
 - Baseline calendar generation
 - Study calendar generation
- Reminder: black ink
- Note standard holidays and other major events

Introducing the TLFB to Participants

- What is the purpose?
 - Explain the use of calendars – to help people remember their daily substance use over a specified period of time
 - Research vs Clinical
- How much time will this take?
 - Approximately 15 minutes for 90 days
- Is this information confidential?

Encouragement & Reassurance

- What would be your reaction if someone asked you to do this exercise?
 - There is a standard process we use that aids accurate recollection
 - “We will use a number of memory aids to help with recall [help you remember] and reconstruct this period of time...”
 - “We realize you won’t have perfect recall – that’s okay!”
 - “We’ll work through this together.”

Interview Logistics

- Write directly onto the calendar; the calendar is the source document
- Complete each day individually
- Data should be collected for each day of the assessment time period

Memory Aids

- Think about starting a conversation about what's been happening in the participant's life
 - Holidays and events (4th of July, Memorial Day, super bowl, election, major news story, religious holidays)
 - Key personal or significant dates (starting new job, seeing a new person, start or end of school, anniversary, birthday, death, self-help meetings)
 - Anchor dates (vacation, incarceration, inpatient treatment, hospitalization)
 - Black and white days – days of known abstinence and days of known use

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Shopping w/ Son	2 AA Mtg Worked	3 Day Off Son's Birthday Dr. Appt	4 Worked	5 Worked	6 Payday Worked	7 Partied w/ Friends
8 Partied w/ Friends	9 AA Mtg Worked	10	11	12	13	14

Interview Technique

- Choose to start from yesterday and work backwards or vice versa
- If someone is very hesitant about the task, it may be helpful to begin with yesterday
- Make use of standard weeks/regular Patterns
- Consult a date book if available
- "Give it your best guest"

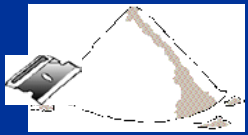
Alcohol Use



- Goal = number of standard drinks each day
 - "0" for days without alcohol use
- Standard Alcoholic Drinks
 - Promotes consistency across assessments / participants
 - Utilize visual aid to define a standard drink; share the Standard Drink Card with participant
 - Standard Drink Conversion
 - 1 SD = 12 oz beer
 - 1 SD = 5 oz wine
 - 1 SD = 1 oz hard liquor/spirits

Interview Strategies for Alcohol Data

- Establish alcohol use boundaries
 - What is the least/most you drank during this period
- Exaggeration technique for challenging situations – was it 12 beers or 1 beer
 - Use with vague estimates (e.g., “I drank a lot on Saturday, who knows how much”)
 - “Does a lot mean 12 beers or 2 beers?”



Drug Use

- Yes / No for use on a given day
 - This can be for drugs in general or each specific substance
- Marijuana and cigarettes – estimate the number of joints/cigarettes per day

Drug Use

Route of Administration

- Often, studies will want to know the route of administration for a given drug
 - Note a number for the route or write it out
 - E.g., ASI notation: 1=oral; 2=nasal; 3=smoking; 4=non-IV injection; 5=IV injection
 - If more than 1 route; list most invasive/extreme

Order of Data Collection

- Depending on the participant's pattern of use, you can start with alcohol and move to drugs or collect simultaneously
 - Often depends on patterns – e.g., if a participant only drinks when they use cocaine

Calendar Example

August-2010						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Alcohol Use: (N) (Y) ____ (SD) Drug Use: (N) (Y) Co, Op, Am, Me, Ec Bz, Ba, Ox, Md, Mj	10	11	12	13	14

Demonstration

- Introduction
- Memory aids
- Recent use

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>1</p> <p>SD: 3</p> <p>MJ, BZ</p> <p>Family Picnic</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Abstinent</p> <p>Started Treatment</p> <p>1/2 day wk</p>	<p>3</p> <p>SD: 0</p> <p>MJ</p> <p>Work</p> <p>AA Mtg</p>	<p>4</p> <p>SD: 0</p> <p>MJ</p> <p>1/2 day wk</p> <p>Tx Group</p>	<p>5</p> <p>SD: 3</p> <p>MJ</p> <p>Counselor</p>	<p>6</p> <p>SD: 8</p> <p>Cocaine MJ</p> <p>payday, Out with friends</p>	<p>7</p> <p>SD: 10</p> <p>Cocaine MJ, BZ</p> <p>Party</p>
<p>8</p> <p>SD: 3</p> <p>MJ, BZ</p> <p>Saw Mom/Son</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Abstinent</p> <p>1/2 day wk</p> <p>AA Mtg</p> <p>Group / counselor</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>

TLFB Summary Form

- Generate a variety of variables
- Summarizes information from the TLFB Calendars
 - Tailored to match research study objectives
 - Drug Use: days of use; routes of administration; frequency of use; amount; dollar amount spent
 - Alcohol Use: days of use; standard drinks per drinking day; number of heavy drinking days; dollar amount spent

Common Errors

- Wrong data collection timeframe
- Illegible handwriting
- Use of uncommon abbreviations or symbols
- Skip part of the interview process or techniques
 - Rush through introduction or memory aids

TLFB Administration Summary

- Prepare calendars
- Confirm data collection timeframe
- Orientation & introduction
- Dates, events, & memory aids
- Substances used during the time period
- Abstinent periods
- Recent use (as far back as possible)
- Standard/typical weeks
- Summary and check-in

Practice

- Competent administration of the TLFB comes with practice
 - No substitute for actual administration of the assessment
- In preparation for studies, multiple practice administrations should be completed with an observer (or a supervisor reviewing an audio recording) providing feedback

Thank you!

Question or comments?

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References

- Sobell, L. C., & Sobell, M. B. (1995). Alcohol Timeline Followback Users' Manual. Toronto, Canada: Addiction Research Foundation.
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- Sobell, L. C., et al. (2001). Cross-cultural evaluation of two drinking assessment instruments: Alcohol timeline followback and inventory of drinking situations. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 36(3), 313-31.
- Vinson, D. C., Reidinger, C., & Wilcosky, T. (2003). Factors affecting the validity of a Timeline Follow-Back interview. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 64(5), 733-40.

TLFB instructional materials are available through Nova Southeastern University:
http://www.nova.edu/gsc/online_files.html