

Let's Talk PREVENTION

A Guide to Substance Use Prevention
Education Across Multiple Sectors
for Suffolk County

This guide is published by

The Suffolk County Partners in Prevention

*a Task Group of the Suffolk County Division of Community
Mental Hygiene Advisory Board's Alcohol and Substance
Use Disorder Subcommittee*



SUFFOLK COUNTY
PARTNERS IN PREVENTION



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Mission Statement

The Suffolk County Partners in Prevention supports community-wide initiatives in the prevention of substance misuse to achieve health, wellness and resiliency through collaborative efforts among local government, agencies, coalitions and schools.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Thank you for taking steps to include effective substance misuse prevention programs and strategies in your school, work and community! Whether you are a school principal, police officer, community member, a parent or family member, or an EMT, we know that you desire to create and maintain an environment where individuals can learn, grow, and thrive.

Please use this guide to learn about substance use prevention, and to discover ways you can incorporate effective prevention strategies in the work you do. We look forward to building stronger partnerships, and working together to make Suffolk County a safer place!

WHAT IS PREVENTION?

PREVENTION, by definition, is the action of stopping something from happening or arising. It requires consistent monitoring to help maintain the desired result.

As substance use prevention professionals, we work to assist individuals, families, and communities in developing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make healthy choices; to promote wellness, and to prevent or reduce the risk of developing a behavioral health problem.

The overarching goals of the programs and services we provide are to:

- ◆ Prevent any alcohol and other drug use by youth under the age of 21
- ◆ Prevent the use of any illegal drugs by all individuals
- ◆ Delay the age of first use of harmful substances for as long as possible, with a particular emphasis on drugs of first use (alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana)

KEY TERMS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND PREVENTION:

PROTECTIVE FACTORS are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society which help them deal more effectively with stressful events and lessen the likelihood of negative consequences from exposure to risk. These increase the opportunities for positive outcomes.

RISK FACTORS are conditions or attributes in the individual, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.

EVIDENCE- BASED PROGRAMS (EBPs) are sets of prevention activities, strategies, and curricula that thorough evaluation research has shown to be effective. Some help youth and families develop the intentions and skills to make healthy, informed decisions, while others focus on creating an environment that supports healthy behaviors and choices.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES are prevention activities seeking to establish or change community standards, social norms, codes, and attitudes, thereby influencing the incidence and prevalence of drug misuse in the general population.

REFERENCE SHEET:

CONTINUUM OF CARE:

An integrated system of care that guides and tracks a person over time through a comprehensive array of health services appropriate to the individual's need. A continuum of care includes prevention, early intervention, treatment, continuing care, and recovery support.



STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK:

The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a comprehensive and evidence-based approach developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the United States. The SPF is designed to guide the assessment, capacity, planning, implementation, and evaluation of effective substance misuse and mental health prevention efforts, while also integrating cultural competence and sustainability into each step.



12 SECTORS OF A COALITION:

Sectors, also called partners or stakeholders, are groups or organizations in your community. Engaging these sectors so that the coalition can appropriately use members' skills and resources is essential to creating and maintaining a strong coalition. A coalition should have all 12 sectors at their table.



7 Strategies For Community Change

Individual Strategies

1. Provide Information
2. Enhance Skills
3. Provide Support

Environmental Strategies

4. Change Access & Barriers
5. Change Consequences
6. Change Physical Design
7. Modify/Change Policies

-CADCA

7 STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE:

There are seven strategies typically used by coalitions to change individual behaviors and community conditions. These are commonly referred to as CADCA's Seven Strategies for Effective Community Change.

What can **SCHOOLS** do?

Schools can proactively and systemically work to prevent academic underperformance and behavioral challenges. Schools can also assist in preventing substance misuse disorders through successful partnering with prevention providers and community coalitions and with SUD prevention efforts.

- **Update or Create Policies**

- Ensure they include prevention efforts to increase protection and responses for underage gambling, drinking, or vaping that supports getting help towards wellness for students and staff.

- **Provide Comprehensive Prevention Programs**

- The evidence-based curricula delivered are specifically designed to build on knowledge gained from previous years as well as consistently introduce new, more complex concepts and ideas
 - Many EBPs encompass grades K-12.
- Prevention is a **multi-pronged approach** that spans the lifetime of students. One-time presentations and speakers are not effective, unless coupled with a prevention program.

A Note on One-Shot Presentations
One-time presentations can indeed supplement, but should not be seen as a replacement for a comprehensive K-12 prevention plan for your students!

Comprehensive prevention programs implemented across the grades spectrum promote developmentally- appropriate, solution-focused, healthy alternatives to risky behavior by teaching:

- *Knowledge of the short and long-term effects of substance use and misuse*
- *Cognitive and behavioral competencies*
- *Greater self-esteem and self-confidence*
- *Skills to resist internal and external pressures to drink, smoke, use drugs, and gamble.*



What can **COMMUNITIES** do?

Substance misuse is a public health concern, one requiring an approach that goes beyond primary prevention, individual intervention, or treatment. A **collaborative effort** is needed by all community members to create a healthier community. This effort includes representative from **religious organizations, businesses, media outlets, volunteer organizations and other community members.**

- **Maximize The Power of Individuals**

- Create a community coalition to integrate and align resources in the community and engage multiple sectors in prevention efforts including schools, law enforcement, local/county government, youth agencies, parents, youth, businesses, and more.

- **Community Coalition Work**

- Coalitions utilizes evidence-based approaches such as the **Strategic Prevention Framework** and environmental strategies to address substance misuse from the community perspective.

- **Coalition Strategies**

- Coalitions mobilize local talent, and allow for problem identification, data collection and collaborative solutions to be citizen driven.

DON'T HAVE A COALITION IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

START ONE!

For **local** coalition development support, and a complete listing of active coalitions, services, and trainings in Suffolk County visit: www.LIPRC.org or email info@liprc.org

For **general** information about coalitions, visit Community-Based Advocacy-Focused Data-Driven Coalition-Building Association at www.CADCA.org

Examples of Coalition Strategies Include:

- ✓ Activities which assess the community's needs and resources
- ✓ Activities which increase overall knowledge of substance use and misuse
- ✓ Informative trainings for professionals and community members
- ✓ Campaigns to address underage drinking
- ✓ Advocacy and policy work to change or improve laws and regulations

What can PARENTS/GUARDIANS do?

At some point before your child reaches adulthood, they may feel pressured to use alcohol and other drugs. It will not be a stranger offering it to them; most likely they will be offered by a friend, neighbor, or older sibling. The question is not *if* this person will come into your child's life, but *when*.

Discussing unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol and other drug use right now is critical to give your child the tools to prevent underage substance use.

- Have open and honest conversations with your child about substance misuse.
- Create a non-judgmental environment so your child is comfortable sharing issues with you.
- Have continuous discussions about substance misuse and the consequences. One conversation is not enough.



Check out these resources for starting a conversation with your child

[Talk They Hear You](#) - Tips from SAHMSA to help you start—and keep up—the conversation about the dangers of drinking alcohol and using other drugs at a young age.

[Tips For Communicating With Your Teen](#) - Tips for how to talk to your teen.

[OASAS Talk To Prevent Campaign](#) - NYS OASAS' webpage on prevention education with tips for talking to teens and resources for parents/caregivers.

What can YOUTH do?

Effective substance misuse prevention encompasses efforts from all community members, including youth. Youth have unique perspectives and knowledge on substance misuse that should be utilized. Don't just listen to youth, include them in the decision making conversations.

- **Be a Role Model To Their Peers**
 - Choose to be substance free and choose friends and peers who make the same choice to be substance free.
 - Don't forget, **what you do is more important than what you say!**
- **Speak Out/Speak Up**
 - Youth can speak up about what alcohol and drugs are doing to their friends, their community and encourage others to do the same.
 - The more people who speak up about substance misuse issues within their community, the more attention that is brought to the issue.
 - Showing your community that you care about an issue is important. It shows those struggling with substance misuse that people care.
- **Reach Out To People In Power and Ask For Support**
 - Talk to school administrators, local government and town officials and ask for **Policy Changes** to support prevention.
 - Identify key stakeholders in your community who are decision makers. Get a group together or like-minded youth and present your concerns about substance misuse in your community.
- **Join, or Start, a Youth Coalition**
 - If your community already has a youth coalition, attend a meeting and see if you want to join.
 - If your community does not have a youth coalition, reach out to a teacher or trusted adult about getting support to start a youth coalition.



What can **FIRST RESPONDERS** do?

First responders often see the effects of substance misuse within the community. Firefighters, paramedics, police officers and other first responders have the ability to help prevent substance misuse within their community through collaborative efforts, and using prevention techniques, such as the [7 Strategies for Community Change](#).

- **Enforce Existing Policies/Laws**

- Often there are laws in place that already address substance use within communities. Enforcing existing laws, such as The Social Host Law, is an important effort in preventing substance misuse.
- Perform compliance checks of local retailers to ensure they are not illegally selling products to underage individuals.

- **Collaborate with Community Agencies**

- Attend your local coalition meeting.
- Take part in coalition activities, like Sticker Shocks (or Pizza Box Tops).

- **Share Substance Misuse Data**

- Provide substance misuse data to prevention providers and coalitions so that they can support prevention efforts related to the trends you are seeing.

- **Participate in Trainings To Further Understanding**

- Substance misuse and mental health issues can often be co-occurring. Find and utilize trainings that offer knowledge on mental health issues, and how to see the signs of potential substance misuse.



What can **TREATMENT/RECOVERY/HARM REDUCTION PROVIDERS** do?

Mental and behavioral health services encompass both preventative, harm reduction and recovery, which frequently collaborate to strengthen community resilience. The [Continuum of Care](#) for substance misuse disorders includes both the recovery movement and educational prevention programs. All community members, including clinical providers, prevention practitioners, community representatives, and those with lived experience, should be involved in both movements to create a healthier community.

- **Create Partnerships in Your Community**

- Attend your local coalition meeting.
- Form partnerships with other agencies/organizations that are addressing substance misuse.

- **Offer To Participate in Local Coalition Projects & Events**

- Many coalitions take part in prevention activities like Red Ribbon Week which is a great opportunity for folks in treatment or recovery to get involved in.

- **Share Substance Misuse Data**

- Share the data with prevention providers and coalitions so that they can support prevention efforts related to the trends you are seeing.

- **Become a Referral Source**

- Treatment/Recovery providers can partner with school districts seeking speakers, tables, Narcan trainings, or other referrals as part of their spectrum of services.

- **Advertise Prevention Events to Clients**

- Share upcoming events with your clients, such as Red Ribbon Week or Medication Take Backs.

A Note on Harm Reduction
Harm reduction techniques, such as Narcan trainings or fentanyl test strips, are practical strategies used to reduce negative consequences associated with drug misuse. Although important, harm reduction is **not** a form of prevention.

What can **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS** do?

Healthcare providers may see patients who are using substances or are at a high risk for substance misuse. Healthcare providers can promote substance misuse prevention within their community through collaborative efforts, and being aware of the **risk and protective factors** of substance misuse.

- **Collaborate with Community Agencies**
 - Attend your local coalition meeting.
 - Join efforts with substance use agencies to increase awareness and partner on projects.
- **Co-Sponsor Prevention Events**
 - Collaborate with your local coalition and other substance misuse agencies to hold prevention related events.
- **Adopt Policies that Align with Substance Misuse Prevention**
 - Encourage your workplace to adopt policies, such as “tobacco-free campus,” to promote prevention efforts.
- **Share Substance Misuse Data**
 - Provide substance misuse data to prevention providers and coalitions so that they can support prevention efforts related to the trends you are seeing.
- **Participate in Trainings To Further Understanding**
 - Substance use and mental health issues can often be co-occurring. Find and utilize trainings that offer knowledge on mental health issues, and how to see the signs of potential substance misuse.

Risk Factor Examples:

- ◆ Family history of substance misuse
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Community norms around substance misuse
- ◆ Easy access to substances in a community
- ◆ Poor school climate

Protective Factor Examples:

- ◆ Family involvement
- ◆ Availability of faith-based resources and after-school activities.
- ◆ Policies limiting the availability of substances
- ◆ Positive school climate
- ◆ Community norms that communicate expectations about substances

How can we help the **SENIOR** Community?

Older adults are a vulnerable population that can be susceptible to developing a substance misuse disorder. Community collaboration can aid prevention and early intervention strategies to mitigate negative social and health outcomes in older adults.



- **Provide Screenings and Brief Interventions**
 - Screening and motivational brief interventions delivered in a variety of healthcare and social service settings can effectively reduce substance misuse, particularly for at-risk and problem users.
- **Provide Education on Substance Safety for Seniors**
 - Disseminate materials on the risks of substance misuse and how to properly handle medication.
- **Meet Them Where They Are At**
 - Reduce barriers for seniors to dispose of unused, unwanted, and expired medications.
 - Ex. Organizations that serve the elderly can provide free medication disposal supplies for seniors who can't get to take back events (Such as Detera Bags or Dispose Rx)
- **Be Aware of the Signs:**
 - Changes in behavior
 - Falling a lot.
 - Not being able to make it to the toilet in time (incontinence).
 - Having more headaches and dizziness than usual.
 - Having legal or money problems.
 - Not keeping themselves clean.
 - Having changes in what and how they eat. For example, they may not eat as much as they used to.
 - Ignoring and losing touch with their family and friends.



Additional Resources to Learn More about Substance Use Prevention:

[New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports \(OASAS\)](#)

The New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) oversees one of the nation's largest Substance Misuse Disorder systems of care with approximately 1,700 prevention, treatment and recovery programs serving over 730,000 individuals per year.

[Long Island Prevention Resource Center \(LIPRC\)](#)

The Prevention Resource Center is a valuable resource for many agencies and community groups. Community coalitions have looked to the PRC for training, guidance and support in forming and sustaining their community coalitions to best address the detrimental social issues posed by alcoholism and substance misuse.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

The SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) leads federal efforts to promote the prevention and treatment of mental disorders. SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) aims to develop comprehensive systems through providing national leadership in the development of policies, programs, and services to prevent the onset of substance misuse.

[OASAS Evidence Based Programs List](#)

Registry of programs approved for use by providers in the delivery of prevention services.

[Suffolk County Substance Abuse Resource Center](#)

Suffolk County's Substance Abuse Resource Center offers resources on warning signs of substance misuse, additional guidance, and the RESPONSE Hotline which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be reached at (631) 751-7500.

[Talk 2 Prevent](#)

A resource for parents, families, and coalition members to talk and share ideas about how to raise alcohol and drug free children and teens - (Sponsored by New York State OASAS).

[Washington State Department of Health and Social Services: Prevention Tools](#)

From the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services this publication covers some of the top things that work in prevention, as well as some of the strategies that have been proven to be counterproductive.

[Long Island Addiction Resource Center \(LI-ARC\)](#)

The Long Island Addiction Resource Center, powered by HUGS, Inc., provides easy-to-use access to invaluable information about providers of education, prevention, treatment, recovery and peer services in Nassau and Suffolk counties. This bi-county, collaborative effort is aimed at all populations – community members, substance misuse disorder and problem gambling field professionals.

To Find Prevention Providers or Community Coalitions Near You:

[List of Suffolk County Community Coalitions](#)

Thank you for making Suffolk County a safer place for all!

