

## Substance Use and Suicide Prevention Programming

The Prevention and Promotion Branch supports a comprehensive array of training and technical assistance to support services targeting prevention of the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) throughout the commonwealth.

The program works with community partners through the Regional Prevention Center system to develop prevention policies, programs and services focused on substance use/misuse prevention. The 14 Regional Prevention Centers provide technical assistance and training on evidence-based prevention strategies.

Prevention services are funded through State General Funds, the Federal Block grant for substance use as well as discretionary grants as they become available. Services are based on SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's (CSAP), six prevention strategies: information dissemination, education, alternatives, problem identification and referral, community-based process, and environmental change.

### The Strategic Prevention Framework

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Community stakeholders are often called upon to implement prevention strategies to address urgent needs of substance use and misuse in their communities. In order to select strategies that will have the greatest impact on the identified problem, communities must understand the behavioral health problems within their environmental context. The Strategic Prevention Framework is a five-step comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing substance misuse and related behavioral health problems in specific communities.

The SPF includes these five steps:

1. **Assessment:** Identify local prevention needs based on data (e.g., What is the problem?)
2. **Capacity:** Build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs (e.g., What do you have to work with?)
3. **Planning:** Find out what works to address prevention needs and how to do it well (e.g., What should you do and how should you do it?)
4. **Implementation:** Deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended (e.g., How can you put your plan into action?)
5. **Evaluation:** Examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices (e.g., Is your plan succeeding?)

The SPF is also guided by two cross-cutting principles that should be integrated into each of the steps that comprise it:

- **Cultural competence.** The ability of an individual or organization to understand and interact effectively with people who have different values, lifestyles, and traditions based on their distinctive heritage and social relationships.
- **Sustainability.** The process of building an adaptive and effective system that achieves and maintains desired long-term results.

For more information on the SPF, please see <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>

## The Six CSAP Strategies

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Primary prevention activities are those targeted to individuals who do not require treatment for substance abuse. Research shows that in order to effectively implement primary prevention in a community, efforts must be comprehensive. Single strategies, such as an education delivery to students, have been found to not be effective in changing the substance use rates for a community. For that reason, SAMHSA and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention require that prevention services funded through Block Grant and discretionary grant funding include multiple approaches in order to increase the likelihood of effective outcomes. The six CSAP Strategies provide the framework through which strategies should be selected.

The strategies include:

- **Information Dissemination:** This strategy provides awareness and knowledge of the nature and extent of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine products, and drug use, misuse, and addiction and their effects on individuals, families, and communities. Information dissemination is characterized by one-way communication from the source to the audience, with limited interaction between the two.
- **Education:** This strategy involves two-way communication and is distinguished from the Information Dissemination strategy by the fact that interaction between the educator/facilitator and the participants is the basis of its activities. Activities under this strategy aim to affect life and social skills, including decision-making, refusal skills, and critical analysis (e.g., of media messages). Education always includes use of an established curriculum.
- **Alternative Activities:** This strategy includes constructive and healthy activities that offset the attraction to substance use/misuse and prevent related consequences.
- **Environmental:** This strategy establishes or changes written and unwritten community standards, codes, norms, and attitudes that influence the misuse of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine products, and other drugs.
- **Community-Based Process:** This strategy aims to enhance the ability of the community to provide behavioral health promotion, prevention, and treatment services.
- **Problem Identification and Referral:** This strategy aims to identify individuals who have used substances and may have experienced consequences but whose behavior can be changed through prevention education. This strategy is used for screenings performed by prevention specialists, not for assessments by clinical staff. Do not use this strategy for screenings performed as part of curriculum delivery.