BUILDING CAPACITY
STEP 2 of the Strategic Prevention Framework SPF*

Creating and enhancing capacity begins with creating a community coalition and then, strengthening the coalition's capacity, through membership, leadership, a functioning structure, and training.

What is a Coalition?

A coalition is simply a group of individuals and organizations with a common interest, who agree to work together toward a common goal. A coalition concentrates a community's focus on a particular problem, creates alliances among those who might not normally work together, and keeps the community's approach consistent.
(SAFE Community Playbook/SAFE Project)[1]

Typically, coalitions focus on population level change, whether that population is a school, a distinct neighborhood, a town, a county, or a region. With the right people and essential resources, community coalitions can be one of the most effective agents for solving complex problems. Community coalitions are at the core of creating a local movement and can be a major force for positive and long-term change.

Definition: Coalitions are "formal, voluntary arrangements for collaboration among groups or sectors of a community, in which each group retains its identity, but all agree to work together toward the common goal of a safe, healthy, and drug-free community."

(Community Coalitions Handbook Primer Handbook/CADCA National Coalition Institute, p. 2)[2]

FOUR (4) KEY STEPS to Building Capacity

Both CADCA and SAMHSA identify four (4) key steps to this process of capacity building, all of which involve the coalition.

#1 BUILDING COALITION MEMBERSHIP

#2 CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

#3 DEVELOPING COALITION STRUCTURE

#4 IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

*The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a community-based approach to prevention. (www.samhsa.gov) The SPF consists of 5 steps: 1) Needs Assessment, 2) Capacity Building, 3) Planning, 4) Implementation, and 5) Evaluation. Through all the steps, there is an expectation of Cultural Competence and Sustainability.

Coalition Membership

In preparing for the task of building the capacity of the coalition's membership, the following questions may be helpful to ask:

Q1 Is my community knowledgeable about substance use problems?

Q2 Is there political will to address the problem; or, is there a strategy for generating political will?

Q3 Who are the critical community members I need to educate about the problem(s)?

Q4 Who are the critical community members who will bring the passion of direct experience?

Q5 Who are the critical community members who can provide (or enlist) the political will for change?

Q6 What training to our coalition members need to be effective in our prevention effort?

Q7 What individuals or organizations are already working on this issue.

Q8 What are the risks and benefits of their involvement? The risks and benefits will vary, depending on the mandate of various agencies (enforcement, faith-based organizations, abstinence-only treatment providers).

Membership will vary depending on needs within the coalition and the ability of the coalition's members and leadership to attract meaningful representation from the various sectors. A good example of the categories of members that can bring about change is found in the Drug Free Communities (DFC) program. **The DFC identifies 12 sectors whose expertise and influence should be brought to bear. They are:**

12 SECTORS of Coalition Membership to consider

1. Youth
2. Parents
3. Law enforcement
4. Schools
5. Businesses
6. Media
7. Youth-serving organizations
8. Religious and fraternal organizations
9. Civic and volunteer groups
10. Healthcare professionals
11. State, local, and tribal agencies with expertise in substance use/misuse
12. Other organizations involved in reducing substance use/misuse

Successful coalitions seek members who are leaders within the community, people who have particular expertise and credibility with community members, and people who have a particular passion for prevention of substance use and misuse because of their lived experience.

In particular, the voices of people with a "lived experience" and youth who are the focus of many prevention activities should be included and heard. This is important not just to build capacity, but also to ensure cultural competence of the planning and implementation processes.

Cultivating Leadership and Staff Support

To sustain the involvement of the types of people described in the previous section, coalition meetings and the work of the coalition must be worth their time. This requires leadership and the nurturing of relationships.

To accomplish this, someone is needed with both the time and the skills to ensure that the efforts of the coalition are well-coordinated and strategic. Effective leaders must also attend to the very important issues of the relationships among people and organizations. Making maximum use of the time and interest of coalition members is critical to maintaining their involvement.

Within the coalition, and between coalition meetings, effective leadership includes promoting openness and trust among members, helping meetings run smoothly, and maintaining communications and connections with and between members. External to the coalition, the key role of leadership is to engage and influence activities and resources in the larger community. This is often referred to as "the outer game".

(Community Coalitions Handbook Primer Handbook/ CADCA National Coalition Institute, p. 25)[2]

The definition of capacity building is: **"Increasing the ability and skills of individuals, groups, and organizations to plan, undertake and manage initiatives."** Coalition capacity building enhances the ability of coalition members, individuals, groups, and organizations to deal with current and future issues and substance use problems in the community. Successful coalitions constantly change to do the work necessary to achieve the coalition's vision.

(Community Coalitions Handbook Primer Handbook/ CADCA National Coalition Institute, p. 23)[2]

Developing a Coalition Structure

Coalitions need to have an organizational structure and processes that are clear to all members. As a coalition grows and their work expands, it is important that the structure evolves to support the involvement of members through the periods of hard work. Specific aspects of organization and infrastructure can include:

1. **Clear roles for coalition members and staff;**

2. **Organizational tools: organizational chart, timeline, and by-laws**; and

3. **Coalition Communication.**

   Communication strategies are needed that respond to the needs of coalition members. This may require a variety of media, depending on the age and preference of participants and the content of the message. Communication strategies could include emails, designated web pages, Facebook postings, Instagram, text messages, etc.

4. **Legal and fiscal practices**

   Creating a clear picture of the resources that will be needed generally takes the form of a budget that includes needed cash resources and in-kind resources.

   - **Cash resources:** The money needed to purchase materials, supplies, meeting expenses, and contracting with individuals and organizations that provide the necessary expertise.

   - **In-kind resources:** The skills, technology, office and meeting space, communication, transportation, and other items provided by individual volunteers and partner agencies.

   (Community Coalitions Handbook Primer Handbook/ CADCA National Coalition Institute, p. 24)[2]

   Depending on the amount of available new funding, more in-kind support may be needed. This is particularly true in the critical area of staff support.

Identifying Training Opportunities

Finally, building the capacity for an effective coalition demands attention to the knowledge and skills of the various coalition members. It is important to identify training opportunities that address such things as:

- Assessing their capacity across the SPF (Strategic Prevention Framework)

- Ensuring cultural competence within coalition processes and decisions

- Reviewing data and assessing needs

- Reviewing the evidence base of various strategies for effectiveness, relevance, and cultural responsiveness

Then What?

The next step of the Strategic Prevention Framework **(Step 3: Planning)** involves selecting the strategies that will be implemented to address the priority problem.

After assessing and building on existing capacity, the coalition is ready to begin the planning process. The actions taken during **Step 2: Capacity** help to address the challenges and opportunities of **Step 3: Planning**.

As in **Step 1: Needs Assessment**, and throughout the SPF process, coalition members and project leadership need to consider two more issues:

RESOURCES and READINESS

- **Do we have the resources to do what we want/need to do?**

- **Is our community ready to do this?**
  Do we have support of community members?
  Do we have the will to address resistance?

References:

1   SAFE Project. *SAFE Community Playbook.* https://www.safeproject.us/playbook/

2   Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America National Coalition Institute. *Community Coalitions Handbook Primer Handbook.* https://www.cadca.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/community_coalitions.pdf

Resources:

CADCA National Coalition Academy (NCA) — https://www.cadca.org/nca

CADCA Handbook for Community Anti-Drug Coalitions — https://www.cadca.org/sites/default/files/files/coalitionhandbook102013.pdf

SAMHSA Drug Free Communities Support program — https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grants-management/policies-regulations/drug-free-communities-program

National Interoperability Collaborative Opioid Use Disorder Playbook — https://nic-us.org/the-opioid-playbook/

National Institutes for Health Research Priorities — https://prevention.nih.gov/research-priorities/substance-use

National Institutes for Health Research Priorities — https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/substance-use-in-older-adults-drugfacts

TEAM KENTUCKY