

Environmental Prevention Strategies



What are they?

Environmental strategies are evidence-based and promising substance abuse prevention activities that are designed to complement the programs and services that aim to target individuals' knowledge, attitudes and skills. Rather than targeting individual/ peer or internal risk factors such as early initiation of drug use or rebelliousness, these strategies target community domain risk factors such as laws and norms favorable toward drug use and/or availability of drugs. Many years of research in the area of substance abuse prevention has identified three main environmental strategies that are shown to influence the levels of consumption and negative social consequences of alcohol and drug use. These strategies are:

1. Enhancing compliance with existing laws, regulations and policies to reduce the availability of illegal substances.
2. Improving public and private laws, regulations and policies to reduce substance abuse and its negative consequences;
3. Changing the social norms that support illegal substance use

These strategies are based on the fact that while individuals' behaviors and attitudes are strongly influenced by family and friends it is also determined by the broader social influences in the community. The influence of providing programs and activities to increase a youth's knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding substance abuse can be lost when the larger environment does not support what is being taught. One of the most influencing factors in a community's level of substance use is a community's social norms. Social norms can be defined as a pattern of behavior expected within a particular society in a given situation. The shared belief of what is normal and acceptable shapes and enforces the actions of people in a society. The very fact that others in one's society follow the norm may give them a reason to follow it. Social norms are expressed through formal laws and regulations that govern acceptable behavior but also through media messages, advertising of products and also by community members' tolerance and acceptance of certain behaviors such as underage drinking.

Research has shown that reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertising, enhancing enforcement of laws and regulations and creating a social atmosphere of disapproval of underage drinking reduces the prevalence of teen drinking and drug use.

What does this mean for Livingston County?

Through the Genesee Valley Health Partnership's Healthy Communities that Care (HCTC) Initiative extensive research on risk and protective factors present in Livingston County youth as well as prevalence of substance use and other antisocial behaviors. The findings show that some of the most prevalent risk factors are in the Community Domain (i.e. laws and norms favorable toward drug use) and the most prevalent risky behavior is underage drinking. As a result one of the goals of HCTC is to develop and implement environmental prevention strategies in Livingston County Communities. Specifically HCTC will be implementing three strategies: Parents Who Host Lose the Most, Project Sticker Shock, Reducing Underage Drinking Social Marketing Campaign. Each community involved in HCTC is encouraged to implement at least one of these three strategies. An overview of each of these strategies is listed below.

Parents Who Host Lose the Most

This is a public awareness campaign developed by the Drug-Free Action Alliance in 2000. The objectives are to educate parents and adults about the health, legal and safety risks of serving alcohol at teen parties in order to increase awareness of and compliance with New York Alcoholic Beverage Control Laws. Implementation of this campaign can take place through public forums, public service announcements (PSA's), newspaper articles and/or dissemination of fact sheets.

Project Sticker Shock

This campaign is designed to reach adults who might purchase alcohol legally and provide it to minors. Stickers warning consumers about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors are placed on all multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, and other alcohol products that might appeal to underage drinkers. The impact of the stickers is increased by media coverage and by longer lasting signs and window clings to be displayed in the participating stores. This project brings together law enforcement, youth, retailers and adults to raise awareness and change attitudes regarding underage drinking.

Social Marketing Campaign to Reduce Underage Drinking

This strategy is designed to use the same techniques that commercial marketing uses with the purpose of changing human behavior in order to improve health or benefit society. Social marketing targets people who have a reason to be concerned and who are ready for change. It also reaches a large number of the population who are ready for behavior change. A campaign designed to address underage drinking will be designed specific to each community based on live research conducted such as focus groups and interviews to assess attitudes and perceptions. The campaign can target one or multiple audiences such as youth and adults. The materials used such as PSAs (public service announcements), posters, brochures and signs will be different for each target audience.

On the following pages you will find more detailed information on each of these three strategies:

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Page 5: Project Sticker Shock

Page 7: Social Marketing Campaign to Reduce Underage Drinking

Parents Who Host Lose the Most



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How to Implement: Many of the materials are already developed so it is up to your community to decide the method that you want to use the distribute materials and increase awareness. Implementation kits are available to communities that include:

- Posters
- Fact Sheets
- Fact Cards
- Parent Tips
- Sample Press Materials (press release, letters to the editor)
- Media talking points
- Sample Radio Ads
- Sample Proclamation
- Power Point presentation
- Information on New York Alcoholic Beverage Control Laws

Below Are Some Suggestions For Community Involvement:

In The Community:

- Have the mayor sign a community proclamation about the campaign
- Display materials at local fairs and information nights
- Write letters to the editor about the importance of the campaign message
- Promote the message through radio and newspapers
- Hold a community forum with a power point presentation, local experts/resources and distribute the materials
- Place information on community website

In the Schools:

- Mail fact cards to parents of students through school mailings
- Put campaign information in school newsletters from the principal or superintendent
- Mail fact cards to parents of high school juniors and seniors along with information about prom or graduation
- Pass out fact cards to parents and other adults during school functions
- Develop a pledge card for parents to sign committing to not host parties where alcohol is available to tens
- Put campaign logo and information in school event programs such as choir, band or plays
- Place information on school website
- Show slides from the power point presentation prior to family/youth movie nights

Businesses:

- Display campaign posters in local businesses for employees and customers
- Insert fact cards in employee paychecks
- Place campaign logo and information as ad in local papers
- Use fact cards as bag stuffers at local businesses
- Have local pizza shops place fact card on each delivery box

Law Enforcement

- Print local law enforcement number on materials to report parties
- Mail campaign information and how to report violations from local police chief or sheriff
- Increase monitoring of teen house parties during prom and graduation weekends
- Inform public that there will be an increase in monitoring teen house parties

A Program of Drug Free Action Alliance



Project Sticker Shock

This campaign is designed to reach adults who might purchase alcohol and provide it to minors. Stickers warning consumers about the penalties for providing alcohol to minors are placed on all multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, and other alcohol products in participating stores that might appeal to underage drinkers. The impact of the stickers is increased by media coverage and by longer lasting signs and window clings to be displayed in the participating stores. This project brings together law enforcement, youth, retailers and adults to raise awareness and change attitudes regarding underage drinking.

Materials Available to Communities Who Participate:

Through the Healthy Communities that Care initiative, Genesee Valley Health Partnership will provide the stickers used in the campaign, signs and window clings for retailers, and implementation kit including: Permission slips, store information forms, sample letters to retailers, press releases and media advisories covering the campaign, evaluation forms, general guidelines and a discussion guide.

Implementation:

Sticker Shock Action Plan: Step-by-Step

STEP 1: Meet As a Group And Develop A Local Implementation Plan

- Recruit youth and adult volunteers
- Identify the alcohol retailers in your community.
- Decide whether to send them an invitation letter and/or visit them personally to invite them to participate.
- Distribute permission slips to each participating youth and adult volunteer
- Assign responsibilities and deadlines (you may want to use the Action Plan form)
- Establish future meeting dates/times.

STEP 2: Contact Alcohol Retailers And Line Up Participating Stores

- Send letters/make visits to each store to invite them to participate. Decide how you will follow up if they can't give you an immediate answer.
- Develop a schedule for visiting each store to place the stickers during your campaign timeframe.
- Make appointments with each store and decide who (youth and adults) will visit each store on the agreed-upon day. If possible, you may want to do all the stores in town in the same trip, if one team can do them all.
- When you make your appointment, find out how many multi-packs of beer, wine coolers, etc. are likely to be accessible to you on the day you visit so you can roughly plan how many stickers you will need at each store (plan to sticker only the alcohol that is easily accessible – only store staff should move or rearrange large boxes, not youth or adult volunteers!). You should also ask how many posters, signs and window clings they would display.
- An option for some stores in your area is for the merchants to sticker the items as they sell it. Find out how many they would need for the rest of the month, and plan to leave them that many. At least a week in advance, check to make sure you have enough stickers and posters.

STEP 3: Develop A Media Plan

- Send out a media advisory detailing the campaign to all local newspapers. Send out a detailed press release the morning of (or before) the media event.
- Plan to take lots of pictures when you place the stickers at the stores- these can be used for press releases
- Other options include sending an Op-Ed piece to your local paper, and/or having different people write Letters to the Editor to encourage adults to think twice before providing alcohol to youth, encourage parents not to allow youth to drink at graduation parties, recognize the youth for taking action on this issue, praise the retailers for participating, etc.
- Once you have identified the pieces of your media plan, assign responsibilities and deadlines.

STEP 4: Do It!

- Be sure all youth involved have turned in a permission slip/media release.
- If useful to your group, fill out the tracking form listing each retailer so you can track your progress.
- Have fun and take pictures!
- Avoid liability issues – youth should not be in the coolers, back rooms, or storage areas of the establishments. Plan to sticker only the alcohol that is easily accessible.
- Offer to leave additional stickers with the store manager if they wish to place more stickers on the less-accessible items themselves, and/or if they are willing to continue stickering beyond your campaign. Also, don't forget to give them one or more signs and window clings to display.
- Stickers should be placed on the cardboard in a way that does not cover the brand name or the UPC symbol. Do not place stickers directly on bottles or cans.
- Videotape the news coverage and clip newspaper articles.

STEP 5: Celebrate And Recognize Participants / Evaluate Your Efforts

- Recognize all participants and find a way to publicly thank them: youth, adult volunteers, law enforcement, retailers, etc.
- Have a post-campaign debriefing to talk about what you accomplished and identify anything that could be improved next time.
- Fill out the Team Evaluation Form and send it with your store info forms and copies of any local newspaper articles on Sticker Shock to Rachel Trost, Genesee Valley Health Partnership, 36 Holmes Rd, Rochester, NY 14626
- Encourage your participating retailers to send/fax back their Merchant Evaluation form (if you wish, visit them again to collect it and thank them for participating).



Social Marketing Campaign to Reduce Underage Drinking

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Community Roles:

While the HCTC Coordinator is responsible for the research that will be conducted and general management of the campaign, community members wishing to be involved will assist with this campaign in the following ways:

- Connecting coordinator to groups of adults and youth to interview and/or conduct focus groups
- Defining the target audience
- Assisting with developing campaign messages and types of materials to use
- Disseminating campaign materials

Below is a Step-by-Step Process Behind Creating a Campaign to Reduce Underage Drinking:

Phase 1: Describe the Problem and Target Audiences

- Form strategy team.
- Conduct a SWOT analysis. (Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats)

Phase 2: Conduct Market Research

- Step 2.1 Define research questions.
- Step 2.2 Develop a market research plan.
- Step 2.3 Conduct and analyze market research.
- Step 2.4 Summarize research results.

Phase 3: Create the Marketing Strategy

- Step 3.1 Select target audience segment(s).
- Step 3.2 Define current and desired behaviors for each audience segment.
- Step 3.3 Describe the benefits you will offer.
- Step 3.4 Write behavior change goal(s).
- Step 3.5 Select the intervention(s) you will develop for your program.
- Step 3.6 Write the goal for each intervention.

Phase 4: Plan the Interventions

- Step 4.1 Select members and assign roles for your planning team.

- Step 4.2 Write specific, measurable objectives for each intervention activity.
- Step 4.3 Write a program plan, including timeline and budget, for each intervention.
- Step 4.3a Plan new or improved services.
- Step 4.3b Develop or adapt a product.
- Step 4.3c Plan a strategy for policy change.
- Step 4.3d Plan communication intervention/promotion activities.
- Step 4.4 Pretest, pilot test and revise as needed.
- Step 4.5 Summarize your program plan and review the factors that can affect it.
- Step 4.6 Confirm plans with stakeholders.

Phase 5: Plan Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- Step 5.1 Identify what information needs to be collected.
- Step 5.2 Determine how the information will be gathered.
- Step 5.3 Develop a data analysis and reporting plan.

Phase 6: Implement the Interventions and Evaluation

- Step 6.1 Prepare for launch.
- Step 6.2 Execute and manage intervention components.
- Step 6.3 Execute and manage the monitoring and evaluation plans.
- Step 6.4 Modify intervention activities, as feedback indicates

For More Information on HCTC and/or Any of These Strategies Please Contact:

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