

As you assemble a plan to get your message out, here are some starting points to consider:

- Who is your target audience? Is it parents, or youth? What is the community like? What do people in that community do for leisure? What are their convictions?
- Team up with other organizations that have the same cause or goals as your group. Share resources and build the coalition and the prevention movement in the community together.
- Set a goal. What do you want the community to know about the coalition and the prevention efforts in the community?
- Make sure your messages/prevention efforts are specific to certain cultures in the community. Find out what different cultures are in the community and learn about them. This is a great way to build alliances within a culture.
- Create a plan that states how you are going to get your message out. Set budgets and timelines. Make sure coalition members help with tasks involved in this process.

Speaking engagements

Speaking engagements are a wonderful way to educate other clubs, professional groups, fraternal and service organizations to your coalition's purpose and goals. Speaking about your coalition brings it to life. This is also a great way to network and recruit new allies for your cause.

- Identify a spokesperson in the coalition who will present on behalf of the coalition.
- Contact groups that would be interested in having a speaker from the coalition.
- Know the group's specific interests so the message can be adapted to them.
- Keep the presentation specific to the coalition and the group you are presenting to. Don't forget to tell them how they can learn more about your coalition and how they can get involved.

Talking points

Talking points are a few key messages or points that are important to your coalition's cause. They

help a person speaking about your coalition to zero in on consistent language, perspectives, problems, and concerns. Include the coalition's core message and anecdotes, data, and statistics.

Audiovisual presentations

These presentations can be used as a part of a speech, or as an exhibit. It will need to be eye-catching and should highlight your main points. It should not be used as an outline! Always carry a duplicate presentation with you in case of a technical problem.

Printed materials

- Know what audience the printed material is for. Use key people from that audience to help write and review the material.
- Pretest the material on these key people. Test how well the message will be received in this particular group. Make sure your message is clear.
- List the benefits involved with preventing underage drinking. List what they can do in the community to help. Make it easy for community members to get involved. Include the coalition's contact information.

Newsletters

This medium is informative, entertaining, and can be great venues for soliciting money. Articles in newsletters are a great way to recognize people's achievements. They ensure that you reach a group with a common interest. They connect members that might not be connected on a day-to-day basis and work as a report card for an organization's performance.

Brochures

This is a common way to inform the public of your mission, answer questions, and give further information. Brochures are also designed to persuade and inform readers.

Flyers

The reason flyers are so popular and widely used is because they are easy to produce and are relatively

inexpensive. Flyers can be placed in many locations in the community like homes, businesses, community centers/buildings, libraries, any place with a bulletin board. Remember to get permission to hang flyers!

Posters

Posters tend to be more expensive than flyers, but can be more eye-catching. Posters tend to have a shorter lifespan than flyers. They need to communicate a simple and direct message.

Billboards

These should be short, bold, clear messages about the coalition or underage drinking. Billboards can be pricey, but talk with your local billboard company. Most companies will work with you to get your message out. For instance, they might give you the space for free if you purchase the drape for the billboard.

T-shirts, bumper stickers and decals

These designs need to be colorful, catchy, and to the point. This might be a way to utilize the youth of your community. Your coalition could have a contest for designs highlighting how underage drinking is unhealthy. Once again, decide your target audience, consider the cost involved, and look at how this relates to your purpose or a specific program.

Exhibits and special events

There are many places that offer booths during conventions and expos. Make sure you are aware of who will be attending so you can gear your message to them. Open houses and other special events are a good way to get your message out. These are all great networking opportunities and ways to gather more support for the coalition.

Internet

Creating a web site for your coalition is a great way to post information about your cause. You can also link your site to other sites. Make sure you get their permission. The web site needs to be easy to read and needs to provide imperative information. The contact information needs to be easy to find. Be

careful about putting too much information on the web, unless your events are truly open to everyone. Be sure to keep your site current!

PSA's, print, radio, and TV

While Public Service Announcements (PSA's) are great because there is no cost to run them, you must be prepared that they might not run often or at all. Since they are a public service, the radio station, TV station, or newspaper is not under obligation to run them. Try to get buy in from the media outlets by relationship-building with their community affairs directors. PSA's can be a powerful and economical way to reach a lot of people.

1. Learn the requirements for PSA's. Contact your media outlet for policies and procedures.
2. Play by the rules. Make sure you adhere to the requirements. They are providing a service to your coalition.
3. Tailor the message to the community.
4. Follow up to thank the media outlets.

Radio/TV interviews and talk shows

The impact of a radio or TV interview can be huge! It can also carry your message to new audiences in a community. Compose a pitch letter to send to the radio or TV station introducing the issues and to request a booking date. Here are tips to help you prepare for going on-air.

1. Become familiar with the show.
2. Before the show, role play possible questions and prepare your response. List three key points and prepare anecdotes, examples, or research to support your position.
3. Be confident, personable, and honest. If you don't know the answer, say so.
4. Talk slowly and articulate.
5. Dress appropriately for the occasion.
6. Always assume the microphone is on. Never say anything within ear shot of a microphone or reporter that you do not want on-air.

Engaging the community

The community you live in has diverse members with many beliefs and convictions. Your charge is to find the citizens in your community who make

substance abuse a priority and partner with them to create change. Community is not just geographical regions; it is shared interests, faith, age, or ethnicity. Seek out those individuals who want to protect the children of the community and make their neighborhoods safer.

Parents

Parents often believe their children are not at risk for substance abuse because they do not live in “at risk” areas, or there appears to be no trouble with their kid’s behavior/lifestyle. What they need to understand is their children are at risk at all times. Reach out to parents, guardians, and other caregivers where they work, shop, socialize, and live.

1. Take advantage of changes in a child’s life. Discuss and hand out materials to parents when a child moves from elementary to middle school, or joins a team or club. Help them by discussing these transitions and what their child may be facing. Presentations can be made to parents at school, club or team sign-ups, or orientations where they are also invited.
2. Conduct seminars at school, employment, or religious programs. This is a great way to educate parents about potential risks. Provide them with fact sheets and other information pertaining to underage drinking.
3. Designate a place in libraries, community centers, or other public place for materials about preventing underage drinking. Highlight the parent’s role in prevention. Make sure the information contains contact information.
4. Set up a local phone information line. Promote this to parents in the community.
5. Lead parents to your coalition web site or other prevention web sites for further information.

Youth

Alcohol and drug use among teens is influenced mostly by their attitudes and beliefs about alcohol and drugs. One of the ways to keep youth away from alcohol and drugs is to offer them positive activities that help in developing confidence, life skills, and self-discipline. Teens have a lot to say about being alcohol- and drug-free. They will speak out and get other youth involved if you help give them a voice.

1. Encourage teens to participate in community activities and to volunteer in the community. Be creative when developing youth activities. They love to volunteer, but make it enjoyable.
2. Start substance-free parties in your area. Have them coincide with big events like Homecoming, Prom, and Graduation. Make sure there are substance-free activities scheduled after these and other important events.
3. Arrange for drug/alcohol-free youth to speak to other youth. A youth presenter will speak their language and connect with them better. Maybe your community could start a theater program for youth and have the performances focus on substance abuse.
4. Promote the prevention message in creative ways like t-shirts and bumper stickers.
5. Develop after school programs for youth in the community. (Sports, music clubs, part-time jobs, etc.)
6. Spread your prevention message at public activities where kids gather. (Sporting events, concerts, arcades, community centers, shopping malls, etc.)
7. Plan Red Ribbon Week activities in October for youth to promote a drug/alcohol-free lifestyle.
8. Join forces with other organizations in the community that share your mission. They can help with activities and spreading the message in the community and to other youth.
9. Advertise prevention web sites to youth. They need valid places on the web to get reliable information about alcohol and drugs.

The educational system

Your community should ensure that a prevention message is given in your schools. Work with the school to choose the correct message for your area. Everyone in the school system should be involved. The school administration lives in the same community and they have a vested interest in kids. Do not assume they know about alcohol and drugs just because they are school administrators. Some will need education regarding this matter.

1. Facilitate an alcohol and drug educational meeting for school personnel. You might even want to invite the school board members.

2. Give the school personnel information on where to get resources. (For example www.teachersguide.org)
3. Call upon retired teachers to help. Maybe they have dealt with alcohol and drug abusing/using students in the past. They are a wonderful resource and are interested in the welfare of children.
4. Start a student mentoring program. Teens listen to what other teens have to say.
5. Form a middle school and/or high school coalition against alcohol and drugs. These teens can create school policies involving alcohol and drug use. Make sure they work with the administration and school board.
6. Sponsor a PSA contest at the middle school and/or high school. Award students at the school or district level. Partner with a media outlet to publicize the contest. Post entries around the school and community, in places kids frequent.
7. Announce prevention messages over the school's intercom. Run prevention ads in the school newspaper. Remember your target audience.
8. Recruit mentors from local colleges and universities to interact with teens. Choose your mentors carefully! Teens look up to young adults. Make sure they are really committed to being substance-free.
9. Develop creative events for teens in the community. For example: A slam dunk event using the theme "Slam Dunking Alcohol." Ask teens what would work.

Spiritual and faith-based groups

Clergy are in a unique position to help parents and youth in their congregation and in the community. They are very connected to the communities and want what is best for the members. They can be a strong voice in the prevention arena. Provide them with relevant statistics and useful information.

1. Research the faith-based institutions in your area. Partner with them to help with prevention in the community. Let churches provide outreach to the community.
2. It is imperative that clergy have fact sheets and talking points about prevention. They can work

those pieces into sermons, discussion groups, retreats, and other events.

3. Obtain permission to put prevention messages into bulletins, newsletters, and signs.

Media

The media can be the best ally your coalition could ask for. However, it can be tough to get the media's attention and partnership. Develop relationships with many media outlets and specific journalists. Ask a media outlet or journalist to join your coalition.

1. Pitch a story to the media about alcohol and drug problems within the community. Let them know that there are local problems that need to be addressed.
2. Track your local news. When stories break involving hot issues be prepared to respond promptly. While promptness is key.
3. Find your coalition allies in the media outlet newsrooms. Know which reporters cover health, family, and related issues.
4. Invite reporters to an event that focuses on prevention. Let them see the community in action, especially if youth are involved. Have the event organizers prepared to talk to the media, even the youth.
5. Keep the media honest. The coalition should supply media outlets with fact sheets, research, etc. Make it understood that they can and should contact you with questions.
6. Thank the media for good, honest reporting. Create an award to give to them. Present it on behalf of the coalition.
7. Ask a newspaper to run a kid's page. Incorporate prevention messages into the page. Try and partner with a youth-oriented radio station.

Local businesses

Partnering with local businesses can be a great opportunity for your coalition. Local retailers, grocery stores, hair salons, pharmacies, etc. have a great interest in the community. Partnering with them can ensure visibility for your coalition and may provide financial assistance too. Invite local businesses to join your coalition or sponsor events. If they help you, make sure to recognize their efforts on a banner or mention them in a press release or presentation.

1. Ask to put coalition materials (brochures, fact sheets, etc.) near the check-out or on a bulletin board.
2. Inform employees, vendors, families, and board members through company communications. (Newsletters, bulletin boards in employee-only rooms, break rooms, cafeterias, and the company's intranet.)
3. Provide materials for the business to put in their employee's paychecks, invoices, or statements. Once again, remember your audience.
4. Host a brown bag lunch for employees. Educate them on prevention skills for parents, or another topic of their choosing.
5. Work with businesses to create a community-wide program for youth who are committed to being drug-free. The coalition and the businesses could offer "rewards" to the youth like low-cost movie tickets.

Concerned citizens

Teens face problems of which their parents are unaware. Pressure to use alcohol or drugs is everywhere and teens often have to face this pressure alone. Teens need trusted friends in the community beyond parents and teachers, to guide them toward good, safe decisions. Children need to feel connected to their communities. Involve neighbors, coaches, and other caring adults to help youth stay substance-free.

1. If a well known community member shares your views, ask them to speak out on the coalition's behalf.
2. Supply materials to community arts and athletic programs. Ask them to pass them out at registration or practice.
3. Utilize senior citizens in the coalition. Ask them to volunteer, or run events/programs.
4. Run PSA's in the community newspaper, radio, or TV stations. Include the coalition's contact information.
5. Hold classes for parents, grandparents, and other community caregivers. Teach prevention skills and topics they are interested in.
6. Promote your web site and other prevention web sites in the community.
7. Organize community events around a substance prevention theme.

Multi-cultural communities

Many cultures can be present within one community. Each community needs to develop culturally appropriate materials for their area. A slogan or campaign that is right for one culture could offend or confuse another culture. If you are not aware of cultures in your community, research them or invite a member of that culture to sit on your committee.

African Americans

1. Partner with local religious institutions. Provide education and entertainment through this venue. This is a safe, trusted environment for this culture.
2. Encourage letter writing campaigns to media outlets. Ask them to provide community forums and run prevention stories and other relevant programming.
3. Establish a partnership with African American sororities and fraternities. Ask members to be mentors to teens in the community. Inquire about existing programs for teens.
4. Organize cultural specific events with prevention themes for youth.
5. Ask culturally based businesses to distribute material about prevention. Make sure the messages and statistics are true to that culture.
6. Involve police, fire, and other city employees in your prevention efforts.

Hispanics and Latinos

Right now, this is the youngest and fastest growing population in the United States. Younger Latinos are bilingual and enjoy both American and Latino cultures. Family is a core value in this culture as is respect for older generations. This information should be remembered when targeting Latinos.

1. Encourage Spanish radio stations to sponsor, promote, and coordinate community events with a prevention theme.
2. Invite local faith communities to address the alcohol and drug problem with your coalition. These are trusted members of the community.
3. Create PSA campaigns using Hispanic/Latino musicians or other local celebrities.

4. Become included in family focused festivals within the Latino community. (Cinco de Mayo, Calle Ocho, Hispanic Heritage Month, etc.) During these festivals, promote alcohol and drug free lifestyles. These events are usually guaranteed media exposure and are very high traffic.
5. Develop bilingual materials for the community. (Keep in mind, second or third generations might not speak Spanish. Research your community.)

Native American

The median age of the Native American people is 26. The Native American culture represents strength and resiliency. Many problems affect this culture like poverty, school drop-out, inadequate job training, and health problems that stem from alcohol and drug dependency.

1. Empower the Native American community. Develop programs and youth groups for teens. Promote healthy lifestyles and fun, alternative activities. Give them other things to do beside abusing/using alcohol and drugs.
2. Recruit citizens with knowledge of the Native American culture to join your coalition and interact positively with this community.
3. Acknowledge and respect prevention and healing practices of their culture. Many of these are traditions.
4. Reinforce the importance of family and community relationships and interactions.
5. Celebrate tribal holidays, powwows, and other Native American festivals. American Indian month is in November.

6. Promote positive role models in the community. Report successes from the culture.

Asian and Pacific Islanders

This is also a fast growing population in the United States. By 2050, there is expected to be 41 million Asian/Pacific Islanders in the US. This group is comprised of many ethnic and racial subgroups. They have diverse histories, experiences, languages, religions, and places of birth. This can be a challenge when trying to develop a culturally correct prevention tactic.

1. Acknowledge and celebrate the diversity within the culture. This will help you learn it better.
2. Recruit community people who command respect from parents and youth.
3. Encourage anti-alcohol and drug education as a parenting must. Most of these parents have never been exposed to substance abuse. Make sure parents have the knowledge to keep their children alcohol-and drug-free.
4. Acknowledge and respect prevention and healing practices often traditions in the Asian/Pacific Islander culture.
5. Celebrate holidays, festivals, and other cultural events. Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage month is celebrated in May.
6. Try to secure media coverage in different languages.
7. Ensure that prevention/treatment information can be obtained confidentially in the community.