

Rutgers SDFSC Project

Planning and Implementing Comprehensive Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) Abuse Prevention Programs

Program Planning Exercise

You and your colleagues at your table are on the local school district's ATOD Action Planning Committee Team. This is the second time that your team has met and as a result of the first meeting, your team has put together a community profile with a summary of existing needs (i.e. the scenario in front of you) and has also researched some potential evidence-based ATOD programs (i.e. the program descriptions distributed to your table).

Please read the scenario, and as a group respond to the following questions. Assign a speaker for your group and be prepared to discuss your work in the large group.

1. Summarize the ATOD prevention needs that currently exist for the school district AND the target audiences that have these needs.
2. Determine which need is the primary priority need.
3. Develop one goal statement to address the primary priority need.
4. Write 1-2 objectives for the goal.
5. Review the evidence-based program descriptions and as a group determine which program appears to be the most appropriate to address the primary need. In determining why this program is the most appropriate, identify the core components that align with the primary need.
6. Are there any adaptations that need to be made to the core program components, based on the local needs?

Be prepared to discuss your group's rationale for program selection in the larger group.

Misleyville

Misleyville is a small rural community not far from a military base. In recent years the aging population has seen rapid growth due to the relocation of very young families moving across the county, to be near the base, to be close to family members that are either preparing be deployed over seas or who are just returning from extended tours of duty. Most of the new residents are in their early twenties to early thirties, often with two or more children. A majority of the new arrivals are Hispanic or African American. 90% have one year or less college, approximately 65% of this group has either a high school education or a GED and nearly 20 % never completed high school.

The local automotive parts plant recently closed due to down turns in the economy putting a large portion of the residents out of work.

The local Headstart program and a companion county-supported daycare center have had to close due to the discovery of asbestos in the building they occupy. The building will not be renovated in the foreseeable future due to budget constraints. The facilities' patrons have been told that they can be accommodated at a similar facility 35 miles to the north for children in the Headstart program or in one 26 miles to the west for children in daycare. There are no accommodations possible for families with children in both programs to be in the same location. Bussing is not available.

A story in the local paper reported that the police have reported an increase in DUI and DWI citations and that a call to a noisy party reveled both high school students and several middle school students drinking alcohol. Several young adults were drinking in the home at the time, including an older sibling, who is the legal guardian, of one of the middle school students present. Marijuana was also found in the home but no one was arrested for use.

Edensend

The Edensend section of Anyville has recorded a significant increase in acts of vandalism and graffiti in the last 12 months. Because of the areas easy access to major highways as well as its close proximity to Bigtown, the parking lots of several closed stores have become drive-thru drug markets. It is suspected that the dealers are using middle school students as lookouts to alert them to police patrols.

The Edensend schools have a very high proportion of students with IEP's and an alarming rate of tardiness and absenteeism. According to the most recent census, 40% of the homes in Edensend are single parent families with multiple children. There is a high turnover rate among the student population with as much as an 18% rate of students moving on and out of district each year. The rate of teacher turnover is also on the rise with a significant spike last year when 16% of teachers left the district for jobs in other school districts.

More and more concern is being voiced by the residents of the nearby Golden Villa retirement community as act of vandalism and petty theft invade their neighborhood.

The residences of Golden Villa are, for the most part, younger middle class retirees who are expressing resentment at ever increasing property tax rates, for what they see as a broken school system.

After school and weekend activities, including in school and community center tutoring, have been drastically reduced due to a number of difficult issues. Attendance began to drop, which caused a reduction in funding, which caused a reduction in programming. As a result of fewer programs, attendance dropped and a negative spiral ensued.

The police have reported a number of complaints of citizens being intimidated by small bands of students between the hours of 2:30pm and 4:00pm. There was also a "wilding" incident at a local 99 cent store.

Unity

Unity is a 25 year old suburban community that has nearly doubled in population in the past 5 years and expects to grow an additional 25% in the next 5. There is a pleasant downtown area with shops and several restaurants. In addition to a variety of houses of worship, the community has several active community groups. The rural farming community that surrounded this growing suburb has all but disappeared, except for its population.

Both groups have a number of single parents. Upper middle class families have moved to the area to escape city life and to have nicer homes with lower taxes. The parents accept the trade-off of a longer commute and time away from their children for a better standard of living. At the same time, a large number of low income housing units have been built, funded by communities that were unable or unwilling to meet low income housing requirements within their own boundaries. Several warehouses and small manufacturers have come into the area to take advantage of the new pool of minimum wage workers.

Unity is just completing the construction of its first middle school for students in grades 6-8. The school will be accepting students from the Unity Elementary School (UES) and from the older and smaller Rural Elementary School (RES). Both schools were previously K-8 schools.

The new district wants to ensure a smooth transition for the students. For many of them it will be the first time that they will have daily interaction with students of different races. Additionally the students come from very different backgrounds. Most of the students from RES have always lived in the area, and many of their families have in the community for over 100 years. They have strong fundamentalist traditions. On the other hand the majority of UES students have lived in the area less than two years, and many have moved here from urban and inner city areas.

RES has a very early age for the first use of tobacco with students experimenting as early as 5th grade and becoming regular smokers by 8th grade. A county health survey showed that 60% of households had one or more adult smokers.

One year ago the state police found and destroyed 11 different plots of marijuana growing on unused farm land behind three of the new luxury subdivisions and in a field adjacent to the low income housing unit completed just 18 months ago. The plots were small, with 10 to 20 plants each. No arrests were made.

Two of the local bars and one of the local liquor stores have been cited for under age drinking.

Parents have been heard to remark, “What’s the big deal - a sip of beer never hurt anyone.”

The UES has experienced acts of vandalism and graffiti. There is an elevated truancy rate with a lack of support from a small portion of parents to address the problems.

A large bond issue and significant hike in property taxes to build the new state-of-the-art school has raised expectations for high academic achievement.

There will be many obstacles to overcome in combining the teaching staffs from two different schools that had very different styles and goals for their students.

While there appears to be support for the new school there is also a great deal of concern. The superintendent, school board and principal want to find a program that will help both the student and staff transitions and, help create a stronger community.