



Substance Prevention in Schools

With Beth Keister and
Sarah Roy

Purpose

- ▶ **Overview**
- ▶ **Provide ideas/resources to help**
- ▶ **Connect school-based folks to others in the field who can help**
- ▶ **Chance to ask questions**

Agenda

- ▶ **Defining prevention**
- ▶ **Prevention Education**
- ▶ **Policy aspects**
- ▶ **Youth/family engagement aspects**
- ▶ **Helpful people**
- ▶ **Possible funding sources**
- ▶ **Questions/sharing ideas**

Helpful Definitions

- ▶ **Prevention:** what you do to prevent the unwanted or harmful behaviors from ever happening in the first place. Prevention is about building protective factors and reducing risk factors.
- ▶ Prevention can (and should be) universal, but there may also be preventative approaches taken with specific populations (for example, those identified as particularly at risk).
- ▶ **Interventions:** things you do once you already know there's a problem. For example, smoking cessation courses, referral to treatment
- ▶ **Screening:** a system in place to identify students who are at risk. Ex. CRAFFT or GAIN.

School-Based Prevention

- ▶ 1) Universal prevention/health promotion education that is developmentally appropriate.
 - ▶ Described in Vermont statute [16 V.S.A. § 131](#)
 - ▶ Inform about risks such as substance use AND the development of important social emotional skills that are protective against substance use and other risks;

School-Based Prevention

- ▶ 2) Targeted prevention or intervention activities for students who may be more at-risk of substance use or who are already using substances;
- ▶ 3) Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for students who are actively using substances (screening can be in place universally for all students).

Take-Aways

- ▶ Subs. use prevention is about a lot more than just talking about drugs
- ▶ Expand idea of what prevention means and in what context
- ▶ Find ways to incorporate protective factors/skills in many places

Selecting a curriculum:

- Consider evidence base
- Blueprints registry, or ask for help
- Caveat: new and emerging problems and programs
- Consider problematic industry ties
- Soup-to-nuts vs topic-specific



Selecting a curriculum:

- See [AOE website](#) for more information
- Consider using the Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s [HECAT Module T](#) or [AOD](#) to develop your scope and sequence
- Review existing data (for example, [the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)) to determine any areas of special concern.

Policy

- ▶ This could mean:
 - ▶ Disciplinary procedures
 - ▶ Defining what is/isn't allowed (possession, use) for students and staff
 - ▶ Other health-related policy
- ▶ Consider using the [School Health Index](#) to identify gaps in programming, staffing and policy
- ▶ Do you need support revising or updating your tobacco and substance use policy? Many schools will share their policies as examples—email the [Agency of Education Tobacco and Substance Use Coordinator](#) to get connected.

Youth, Family, Community Engagement

- ▶ Who better to engage around youth health, than youth themselves?
- ▶ Many family members are also concerned about use and/or may have misunderstandings about particular drugs and their risks
- ▶ Family engagement needs to be done sensitively, but is important
- ▶ Youth can directly challenge the community to improve prevention practices—for instance, smoking bans in public places, product placement, opt-outs of cannabis retailers, etc.

Who Does Prevention?

- ▶ Answer: everyone/anyone
- ▶ But actually: it varies (typically, SAP, school counselor, health educator, nurse, school-based clinician, school social worker are all possibilities)
- ▶ We can all have a role in prevention
- ▶ Doesn't have to be “siloed” to *just* health education class...if we're thinking about it holistically

What if you don't have the capacity?

- ▶ Reach out for help!
 - ▶ Community prevention coalitions or PreventionWorksVT!
 - ▶ Prevention Consultants
 - ▶ Association of Student Assistance Professionals
 - ▶ UVM Extension
- ▶ Apply for any available funding
- ▶ Consider how concepts could be incorporated into other content areas
 - ▶ AOE interdisciplinary tool

Funding

- ▶ AOE prevention grant (not currently open to new applications)
- ▶ Title IV funding
- ▶ ESSER funds—drawing connection between substance use issue and COVID
- ▶ (related) 21st century learning
- ▶ ADAP school grant funding