**National Prevention Week Event Planning Checklist**

One of the first steps in planning a successful **National Prevention Week** event is to develop a detailed timeline and checklist of tasks. This checklist will help you stay on track and ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Use the following schedule of activities to plan your event.

Every step in this checklist may not be necessary for your event, so customize it to fit your organization’s needs. You may also find that the checklist can be shortened depending on your event’s size and purpose or when you begin planning your event.

Tell SAMHSA about your event! Please provide the following information to SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week Coordinator, David Wilson, at [david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov), and SAMHSA will post your event information on the National Prevention Week Events Web page:

* Your organization’s name and website address
* A brief description of your event(s)
* Topics addressed by the event
* Target audiences
* Date and time
* Venue name and address

**PLANNING TIMELINE JANUARY – MAY (National Prevention Week)**

| **Timeframe** | **Essential Planning Activities** | **For Consideration** |
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| **Four Months Out (January)** | **Planning the Event**:  Brainstorm core elements of your event with staff, board members, and/or event planning committee members.  Create draft budget.  Create a timeline. | * When brainstorming: * Identify goal of the event and topics/themes to address, * Identify target audience, * Identify type of event and setting (educational, sporting, community, workforce). |
|  | Form teams and assign duties.  Develop a brief fact sheet to provide an overview and explain the goal of your event.  Ask sponsors, partners, and vendors to help underwrite the costs.  Determine a location. Submit requests for permits (as needed). Secure/reserve event location for chosen date(s). Identify a backup location in case of inclement weather (if primary event location is outdoors).  Create a detailed supplies list—determine what must be bought and what can be borrowed or received as donations.  Book necessary vendors.  **Partners:**  Identify potential community and state partners.  Contact partners.  **Promotion/Media:**  Create a marketing strategy.  Craft messages for promotional materials. | * Identify date for the event—determine if other community organizations or coalitions may be planning something around the same time that could support the event or compete with it, * Identify tangible outcomes and impact you want to achieve as a result of the event. * When contacting partners: * Share your event fact sheet. * Send the partner sponsorship letter to partners you want to approach to help fund or provide resources in support of your event. * Invite partners to participate on your event planning committee. |
|  | Create list of promotional materials for distribution, focusing on who receives which materials and when.  Assess need for professional printer, and set up printing schedule if necessary.  Start collecting national and local data from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data> and other resources with community-specific data.  Determine if audiences are active on social media and create a social media promotion plan.  Develop a media outreach strategy and schedule.  Determine the specific story you want to communicate to the media, and craft corresponding key messages.  Identify key media networks and publications for outreach efforts.  **Evaluation:**  Determine the objectives of your event.  Determine target outcomes and evaluation metrics to document ongoing processes and final results. Identify a process for capturing data. | * When creating a social media promotional plan, consider: * Creating accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and/or other social media sites that are relevant to your target audiences (e.g., Instagram), * Identifying local community and prevention bloggers for targeted outreach and engagement, * Creating a YouTube promotional video, * Visiting [www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week](http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week) for sample social media messages. * Check with other organizations that have planned similar events to discuss media outreach tips and lessons learned. |
| **Three Months Out (February)** | **Planning the Event:**  Create guest list.  Invite speakers or special guests.  Determine how many volunteers you will need to help plan and implement the event.  **Partners:**  Include each partner’s role(s) in your promotional materials or event promotion. Publicly acknowledge each partner’s support for your event by including their logo in all print materials, on your website, and in media/social media outreach.  Ask partners to promote your event on their websites and social media channels. Provide promotional messages and event information.  **Promotion/Media:**  Announce your event to your supporters/partners.  Create and print custom promotional materials.  Pull together local statistics and other data (e.g., from state or county statistics departments, university research centers, local law enforcement or other agencies. | * Identify and contact local businesses, centers, schools, places of worship, community event calendars, etc., that may promote your event. * Write live-read radio scripts. |
|  | Share your event fact sheet with the local community and media.  Update your organization’s or group’s website and/or blog with information about your event and upcoming activity dates and times.  Create a detailed schedule for social media posts and blogger outreach. Include dates and times when content should be posted.  Draft social media posts and blogger outreach materials.  Send bloggers outreach materials.  Begin disseminating social media posts using your organization’s Facebook and Twitter accounts and include the National Prevention Week hashtag.  Identify key reporters within targeted networks and publications and obtain their contact information.  Craft and share pitch points with your event planning team and people within your organization. | * Schedule a round of follow-up e-mails to bloggers who have not responded by a date to be determined by you/your organization. |
| **Two Months Out (March)** | **Planning the Event:**  Draft a tentative schedule/agenda for your event.  Recruit volunteers.  Confirm availability of necessary amenities for guests.  Plan for room visuals (background for podium, posters for speaker presentations, visuals for sign-in areas, directional signs).  Make arrangements for security.  **Partners:**  Continue to identify new partners or partner roles for the event.  **Promotion/Media:**  Begin posting about National Prevention Week on social media.  Send follow-up e-mails to identified bloggers.  Use your Facebook account to “Like” and link to the SAMHSA Prevention Pledge on SAMHSA’s Facebook page; link to the SAMHSA Prevention Pledge using your Twitter account. | * Consider participating in a National Prevention Week Event Planning Conference Call. (Check [www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week](http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention-week) for schedule.) * Think about event logistics, such as:   + Are facilities available that are accessible by persons with disabilities?   + Who controls the lights and thermostat?   + Is the sign-in area an ante-room or a wide hall with sufficient space to keep traffic moving as media and guests arrive?   + Is there an area to serve refreshments with enough waste baskets?   + Are there a sufficient number of restrooms?   + Where will people put coats if weather is rainy or cold?   + Is the parking for media, participants, and others close by? * Post YouTube video or link to videos hosted on SAMHSA’s YouTube channel. |
|  | Print fact sheets to distribute at event.  **Evaluation:**  Develop a feedback/evaluation form to collect information about outcomes and ideas for future events. | * Set up meetings with local radio stations to arrange for live-read radio broadcasts. |
| **One Month Out (April)** | **Planning the Event:**  Send confirmation letters to speakers and participants.  Compile a list of event duties and who is responsible for each.  Make arrangements to videotape or photograph the event.  **Partners:**  Invite staff from partner organizations to volunteer or participate at the event.  **Promotion/Media:**  Distribute promotional materials locally and digitally.  Create and post “Save the Date” notices on social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—and include event name, date, website and the National Prevention Week hashtag (recommend posting during the first and last week of the month). | * Line up back-up speakers in case a last-minute replacement is needed. * Identify who will be responsible for activities including:   + Transport of supplies to the event area,   + Event set up,   + Greeting attendees, managing sign-in tables,   + Attendee and speaker escorts,   + Post-event clean up,   + Monitoring of office phone during the event and coordinating calls to cell phones at the event. * If needed, hire a person to sign for the hearing impaired. * If needed, conduct a second round of outreach to volunteers for the day of the event. |
|  | Draft a press release about your upcoming event.  Prepare a media advisory.  Send designated reporters a media kit that includes a press release, media alert, and community or National Prevention Week fact sheet.  Follow up with reporters as necessary to secure coverage of your prevention event.  **Evaluation:**  As promotional and media outreach materials are disseminated, monitor online activity to measure the promotion and reach of your event. | * Consider speaking opportunities for partners at the event. * Write an op-ed for a local publication. * Place your event on the daybooks of local media and local Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). * If partners promote your event, request information about how extensive their reach is as well. |
| **Month of the Event (May)** | **Planning the Event:**  Send out reminder invitations.  Assess supply list to identify outstanding gaps.  **Partners:**  Request any materials or visuals the partners may want to have at the event. Coordinate delivery and set-up. | * Post the reminders during the first week of the month and a week before the event. |
|  | **Promotion/Media:**  Post reminders on websites and/or social media networks and post fliers that include your event name, date, website, and the National Prevention Week hashtag.  Follow up with reporters as necessary to secure coverage of your prevention event.  **Evaluation:**  As promotional and media outreach materials are disseminated, monitor online activity to measure the promotion and reach of your event. | * If partners promote your event, request information about how extensive their reach is as well. |
| **Week of Event (May)** | **Planning the Event:**  Hold a meeting to finalize any logistics prior to the event.  Confirm all arrangements (e.g., payment, delivery of goods, photographer, and schedule) with any vendors, speakers, or important event attendees.  Visit the event site to ensure preparations are in place.  Collect equipment to take to the event, including easels, scotch tape, staplers, note pads, pens, extension cords, and other items.  Conduct a walk-through of the event, including testing of audiovisual equipment, 1-2 days before the event date. |  |
|  | **Partners:**  Provide partners with an overview of the final logistics for the event.  **Promotion/Media:**  Post messages on websites and/or social media networks with a call-to-action message of how to make a difference and be part of SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week. Include your community’s name and your event name, date, website, and the National Prevention Week hashtag.  Print hard copies of promotional materials to hand out during your event.  **Evaluation:**  Disseminate feedback/evaluation form to event planners and/or participants with instructions for how to complete the forms and submission date. | * Coordinate partner speakers for media interviews. * Post the promotional messages at the beginning of the week and the day of the event; for the day of the event, alter the message to “Today is the day!” |
| **Month After Event (June)** | **Event Wrap-Up:**  Place thank-you calls to supporters, sponsors, and media contacts that provided coverage.  Write thank-you letters and notes. | * Post a message on websites and social media networks thanking those that participated—especially in-kind donors and volunteers. |
|  | Post pictures and videos from your event on your website and/or social media networks, and share the photos with SAMHSA. Obtain necessary permissions from people featured in the photos and videos before posting online or using in print materials.  Compile press clippings from the event coverage.  **Partners:**  Place thank-you calls or write thank-you letters to partners.  **Evaluation:**  Review and assess media coverage.  Collect feedback forms from event planners and/or participants.  Compare and evaluate event objectives and results.  Write an overview of the event, including lessons learned, for internal use and future planning.  Submit National Prevention Week Feedback Form to SAMHSA with your success story and examples of specific outcomes, such as new partnerships formed, new products developed, and/or engagement of policymakers in your organization’s initiatives.  Send articles that cover the event to David Wilson, SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week Coordinator, at [david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov). Be sure to include photos! | * Share event summary and media coverage received with partners. * Request that partners complete a feedback form and share lessons learned on the experience to be used for future planning. |