

The Role of Law Enforcement in Preventing Substance Misuse on College Campuses

WEBINAR SUMMARY

Date: Wednesday, June 28, 2017

College campuses continue to experience significant issues related to student alcohol and other drug misuse. This webinar explores the unique role of law enforcement in a comprehensive approach to preventing substance misuse on college campuses. We identify opportunities for collaborating with local and campus police, and examine a selection of evidence-based strategies that law enforcement can use to help students avoid dangerous substance misuse behaviors.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION APPROACH?

A comprehensive prevention approach combines both individual- and environmental-level strategies:

- **Individual-level strategies** focus on the direct and indirect (social) influences on substance use. They emphasize norms for, and a social commitment to, avoiding substances while building on life skills and social resistance. These strategies tend to be short-term and target individuals. Examples include education classes or one-on-one interventions.
- **Environmental-level strategies** focus on raising awareness and creating conditions that support healthy behavior within a community, including physical, social, or cultural factors. These strategies tend to be long-term and affect an entire population. Examples include communication and education, policy and community support, and enforcement strategies.

While these strategies are most effective and sustainable when implemented jointly to prevent substance misuse, this webinar focuses primarily on environmental strategies that practitioners can use in conjunction with law enforcement.

ENVIRONMENTAL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Policy, public support, and enforcement are all essential elements of effective environmental prevention strategies. As these elements are interrelated, strong collaboration is required to sustain results. Environmental strategies to prevent substance misuse that involve collaboration with law enforcement include those designed to do the following:

- **Limit Access:** These strategies are some of the most powerful and well-documented approaches to prevention, and are effective in shaping the social, economic, and physical

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environments in which students make their decisions about substance use. Examples include:

- **Compliance checks:** These regular checks reduce the likelihood of illegal alcohol sales.
- **Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs):** PDMPs monitor controlled substances which can enhance the capacity of law enforcement to limit access.
- **Prescription Drug Takeback events:** Law enforcement can hold these events to provide the community opportunities to properly dispose of unused and expired medication.
- **Party patrol:** This strategy must be paired with a social host ordinance or law to provide power behind controlled party dispersals.
- **Responsible beverage seller/server training:** These trainings can include information on checking IDs and on when to not overserve a customer.
- **Change/Bolster Community Norms:** These strategies are designed to influence community norms related to substance use/misuse. They can be extremely powerful, especially in conjunction with other efforts. Examples include:
 - **Social norms marketing campaigns:** These campaigns correct misperceptions regarding underage alcohol use or non-medical prescription drug misuse by modeling and promoting healthy, protective behaviors based on the actual norms of a community.
 - **Media advocacy:** This strategy is designed to shape the way social issues are discussed in the media in order to influence community norms and effect change.
 - **Social marketing:** Prevention practitioners can use techniques adapted from commercial marketing to encourage positive and voluntary behavior change.
 - **Visibility campaigns:** These campaigns ensure high visibility of law enforcement to show the community that substance-related policies and laws will be enforced.
- **Facilitate Enforcement:** If laws and regulations are going to deter people and businesses from illegal behaviors, they must be accompanied by significant penalties, and they must be enforced. Enforcement and policy are closely connected, yet there are important reasons to draw a distinction between them. We separate policy and enforcement for three reasons:
 - First, policy alone does not imply enforcement. A policy on the books won't have any impact unless it is enforced.
 - Second, enforcement alone won't work if the policy isn't appropriate or isn't accepted by the general population.
 - Third, policy and enforcement are designed and implemented by two different systems. The legislative or organizational system makes policy, but the justice or law enforcement system enforces it. It is important to acknowledge these two separate systems and bring both parties to the table.
- Colleges and communities should focus on the certainty and the swiftness of the punishment, rather than the severity. Enforcement extends far beyond simply writing tickets and making arrests. Enforcement plays a vital role in restricting access, increasing related

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negative consequences, and influencing community norms and perceived risk. Examples include:

- **Surveillance:** Effective enforcement requires visibility; people need to see that substance misuse prevention is a community priority. Surveillance helps determine if people are complying with existing laws.
- **Penalties, fines, and detention:** These include consequences for people and institutions that do not comply with an existing policy.
- **Community policing:** Collaboration is key to community policing. It involves encouraging community members to participate in prevention efforts, such as neighborhood watches or campus community coalitions.

COLLABORATING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT ACROSS THE SPF

To implement environmental prevention strategies, practitioners need to work with multiple partners across multiple settings. In other words, environmental strategies require successful collaboration; it's the only way to move the prevention needle. Collaboration provides many benefits, including increasing prevention practitioners' access to local resources and building prevention knowledge. But it doesn't just happen on its own—it needs to be intentional.

The table below outlines opportunities for collaborating with law enforcement across SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF).

SPF Step	Opportunities to Collaborate with Law Enforcement
Step 1: Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement can share data that may be very valuable for prevention efforts, including data on arrests/citations, calls for service that did not result in arrests/citations, and hot spots (that is, specific houses/neighborhoods officers are continuously called to). • Prevention practitioners can also share their data with law enforcement, including student surveys on alcohol and other drug use. These surveys contain information on types of substances used, intake method, access, location, prevalence, and perceived risk. This information can be used to inform police department strategic planning efforts.
Step 2: Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with law enforcement increases readiness to engage in prevention efforts. Approaches might include cross-training, through which prevention specialists teach officers about evidence-based prevention strategies and officers train prevention specialists on what's happening out in the field. These trainings also provide important opportunities for engaging additional stakeholders, as police officers have contacts with fire departments and ambulatory services that they can help bring to the table.
Step 3: Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once prevention practitioners and law enforcement fully understand the factors associated with prioritized problems, they are better equipped to select and support appropriate interventions.

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SPF Step	Opportunities to Collaborate with Law Enforcement
Step 4: Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborating with law enforcement communicates a unified prevention message that is more likely to produce a greater impact and ensure that interventions are implemented with fidelity. Collaboration also increases the likelihood that the proper infrastructure supports are in place to sustain prevention efforts.
Step 5: Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation data can provide vital information to both prevention practitioners and law enforcement regarding what worked, what did not work, and lessons learned for creating sustainable change moving forward.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

The following examples highlight the importance of a comprehensive approach that involves close collaboration with law enforcement:

- **The Safer California Universities Project:** This comprehensive, community-based program is designed to address college student alcohol consumption. It focuses on the first weeks of the academic year and includes several alcohol control measures. It also includes a multifaceted media advocacy campaign delivered using channels unique to college students (e.g., social media). Results showed significant reductions in the number of incidents and likelihood of intoxication off campus and no increase in intoxication in other settings.
- **Eastern Illinois University:** Eastern Illinois University used strategies to raise awareness and community support for underage drinking issues. Through seller and server training in both English and Spanish, regular compliance checks, and increased enforcement, Eastern Illinois University saw a 70% decrease in on-campus citations over three years and a 40% decrease in underage drinking citations overall.
- **Clemson University:** Using grant funds, Clemson University combined alcohol awareness messaging, increased enforcement, and collaboration with the off-campus housing community and landlords to address underage drinking. In three years, the number of freshmen adjudication cases involving an alcohol-related arrest dropped from 82 to 53 cases.
- **University of South Carolina (USC):** With 70% of students living off campus, USC implemented controlled party dispersal operations in off-campus housing areas. Law enforcement agencies also instituted uniform "Student Conduct Tickets" which led to consistent adjudication of alcohol-related violations by the Student Conduct Office.

CAPT RESOURCES

SAMHSA's CAPT has a wide selection of substance misuse prevention resources available to the public on www.samhsa.gov/capt/, including *Prevention Collaboration in Action*—a toolkit designed to help practitioners build, strengthen, and sustain the effective collaborations needed to prevent substance misuse and improve health outcomes. This toolkit showcases collaboration success

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stories from SAMHSA grantees and provides 30+ tools and worksheets to help strengthen collaborative efforts, including:

- **Why Should We Collaborate?** This tool discusses some of the important reasons why collaboration is essential to substance misuse prevention.
- **Collaboration Across SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.** This tool presents opportunities for collaborating at each step of the SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.
- **Collaborating with Higher Ed.** This tip sheet provides an introduction to key players involved in on-campus substance misuse prevention efforts, important considerations for working together, and examples of how to engage campuses and college students in community prevention efforts.
- **Omaha Colleges Work Together to Prevent High-Risk Drinking.** This story highlights how the Omaha Collegiate Consortium, comprising eight colleges and universities, worked together at a time when many universities are reluctant to share the extent of their student drinking problems.