

Tips for Seeing the Big Picture: Outcomes & Evaluation

Hosting a National Prevention Week event involves a lot of planning and attention to detail—from assessing your community’s needs and identifying partners, to developing a media outreach strategy. With so many competing priorities, it can be easy to overlook one of the most important steps to consider up front for creating a successful prevention awareness event—its evaluation.



Why focus on outcomes?

Setting your ultimate goals at the outset will help your organization or group plan an event that achieves meaningful short- and long-term outcomes. It’s important to identify the specific impact you hope to make in your community through your **National Prevention Week** event and develop a plan to reach that goal.

Does your organization plan to raise awareness of the dangers of illicit drug use among 6th and 7th grade students in the community? Does your local coalition intend to work with community leaders on changing local zoning ordinances related to the location and operation of alcohol outlets? Focusing on questions like this can help to narrow your focus and enable you to choose and plan a type of event that moves you forward toward your intended outcomes.

Getting Started

The central purpose of an evaluation is to measure how well your overall strategy works—which components work well and should be replicated, and which can be improved in the future. However, there is *no single correct approach to evaluation*.

Your evaluation approach will vary depending on the specific issue you hope to raise awareness of or address within your community, as well as the type of event you plan to host. Keep in mind the following three steps as you plan your evaluation:



1. Assess your needs and then define your goals and audiences.

The event you plan for National Prevention Week should help to address the needs and priorities within your community. It should also align with your community's or organization's prevention plan. Once you determine the goals of your event, your intended audience goes hand-in-

hand. It's helpful to articulate your community need, goals, and audiences from the outset, so that there is a shared understanding of what you want to accomplish. For example:

- *Problem/need:* High school students are using prescription drugs to get high
- *Short-term goal:* Raise community awareness of the consequences and warning signs of prescription drug abuse
- *Long-term goal:* Reduce rates of prescription drug misuse and abuse in the community
- *Primary target audience:* Youth
- *Secondary target audiences:* Parents, teachers and school administrators.

2. Establish realistic, quantifiable objectives.

With your need, broader event goals, and audiences in mind, determine the measurable outcomes, or objectives, you hope to achieve. It's important to set realistic objectives. For example, if you plan to host a community sports tournament, objectives may include selecting peer leaders from among the high school players to lead short sessions on nutrition, illicit drugs, alcohol use, steroids, and other topics with summer sports leagues for middle-schoolers or during summer school. Alternatively, if you plan to host a behavioral health training session, objectives may include a 75 percent increase in topic-specific knowledge as measured through pre- and post-event surveys.



3. Determine what, when, and how you're measuring.

Brainstorm the most effective way both to meet your stated goals and objectives, and to measure your success. Consider collecting information on:

- Participants' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with respect to the prevention topic you are addressing;
- Attendance rates; and
- Levels of engagement as measured through social media interaction or media coverage.



These data can be collected in a variety of ways, including pre- and post-survey tools, focus groups, key informant interviews, “town hall” discussions, customer satisfaction surveys, and Web analytics.

Choosing Your Approach

To guide your **National Prevention Week** evaluation planning, the following table outlines sample events and associated short-term outcomes and ways to measure them. When reviewing the table, consider which types of events would best meet your goals and objectives, and the measurement tools you can use to showcase the great work you're doing.

Use this table as a starting point for brainstorming, but don't feel limited. When it comes to what a successful event looks like, the sky's the limit!

Type of Event	Short-term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
Staff Skills Training Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote staff wellness to XXX employees ✓ Increase staff knowledge/ capacity related to behavioral health topics by XX% ✓ Increase staff knowledge/ capacity related to evidence-based prevention programs and strategies by XX% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance • Set wellness goals during session and administer follow-up survey to measure progress • Administer pre- and post-survey of knowledge/skills • Track staff participation/leadership in prevention programs and strategies
Leadership Development Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote personal wellness to XXX individuals ✓ Increase knowledge/ capacity related to leadership competencies by XX% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance • Administer pre- and post-survey of knowledge/skills related to wellness • Assess number of plans developed during session; administer follow-

Type of Event	Short-term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop executable prevention leadership plans for each attendee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> up survey to measure progress toward fulfilling steps outlined in the plans
Video Contest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase awareness of a specific prevention topic (e.g., underage drinking, suicide, prescription drug use) as evidenced by X,XXX+ combined Web and social media user actions (e.g., Web views/hits; social media comments, likes, and shares) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure reach through number of video submissions • If video submissions displayed on YouTube, track views, ratings, and comments • If Web assets developed to promote the contest, track Web hits/views • Track social media conversation about the contest (e.g., on Facebook, Twitter)
Open House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase awareness of your organization and its mission among X,XXX individuals ✓ Expand organizational partnerships by collaborating with three new partners in the community ✓ Raise \$XX,XXX in funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess reach through attendance, number of individuals added to organizational listserv or mailing list • Administer onsite feedback form/donation pledge cards • Measure new partnerships developed and tangible results of those partnerships • Tally funds and compare to pre-determined donations goal
Health Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote wellness strategies and behavioral health resources to X,XXX individuals ✓ Expand organizational partnerships by soliciting participation of three vendors/organizations to co-host the health fair ✓ Increase public attention on prevention, as evidenced by XX media clippings and/or spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure reach through number of participating vendors/organizations and event attendees • Calculate materials distributed • Solicit onsite feedback from participants • Track and tally media coverage of event (TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings, blog posts)
Community/School Pep Rally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inform X,XXX students about a specific behavioral health topic (e.g., underage drinking, prescription drug abuse, mental health and wellness) ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by XX new volunteer commitments ✓ Develop at least one new partnership with a local school or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance • Administer post-event survey to determine effectiveness in enhancing attendees' knowledge • Solicit onsite feedback from participants • Measure recruitment of future volunteers • Measure number of new partnerships formed as a result of the event

Type of Event	Short-term Objective(s)/ Outcome(s)	Possible Measurement Approach
	<p>community organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve school climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure school climate: for example, degree to which students get along well with teachers, students respect each other; degree to which students believe there is a real school spirit, the teaching is good at school, teachers are interested in students, and teachers praise their efforts (data may be available from surveys already being conducted at the school)
<p>Community Walk/Run/Bike Ride</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase community engagement in healthy activities, as evidenced by attendance by XXX individuals ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by X,XXX views/hits to Web content about National Prevention Week, and XXX+ combined social media user actions (e.g., comments, likes, shares) ✓ Increase community engagement with your organization, as evidenced by volunteer commitments ✓ Raise \$XX,XXX in funds ✓ Increase attachment to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance • Measure recruitment of future volunteers • Track and tally media coverage of event (TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings, blog posts) • If Web or social media assets developed, track Web hits/views and social media activity • Tally funds and compare to pre-determined donations goal • Measure attachment: for example, degree to which participants feel close to people in the community, are happy to live in community, feel like a part of the community
<p>Town Hall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus community attention on a specific behavioral health topic (e.g., underage drinking, suicide, marijuana use), as measured by XXX event attendees ✓ Increase community engagement around the behavioral health issue, as evidenced by X,XXX+ combined social media user actions (e.g., views, Web hits, comments, shares) ✓ Increase community attention on the behavioral health issue, as evidenced by XX media clippings and/or spots ✓ Increase community engagement in prevention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate total attendance • Track results of event (e.g., new ideas proposed, next steps/further action established as a result of event, new partnerships formed) • Administer post-event survey to determine event effectiveness/knowledge gained • If Web or social media assets developed, track Web hits/views and social media activity • Measure media coverage of event (TV and radio spots, print and online news clippings, blog posts) • Track participation/commitment to follow-up actions

Sharing Your Event Outcomes

Outcomes from your **National Prevention Week** event can serve many purposes. From contributing to healthier community-wide behavior over time, to promoting your organization's successes, to being able to cite successes and tangible outcomes when applying for grant funding, evaluation data can be used to demonstrate the impact of your organization's efforts.

Consider the following ways to use your event outcomes:

- Develop a brief evaluation report for internal and external distribution
- Present your findings in a PowerPoint presentation at local events, trainings, or conferences
- Use key findings from your evaluation data to inform a local media campaign (e.g., infographic, posters, messaging)
- Develop a key outcomes "tips sheet" containing content that can be easily adapted for future reports, promotional materials, and grant applications.

Helpful Resources & Sample Evaluation Tools

Refer to the following resources and sample evaluation tools to develop the right materials to capture your event outcomes. Keep in mind there are many existing tools that you can use and adapt to fit your evaluation needs.

- SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework [resources](#) and information about [evaluation](#)
- SAMHSA's National Recovery Month [customer satisfaction form](#) (*if prompted for a username and password, click "Cancel"*)
- SAMHSA's Town Hall Meetings [outcomes overview](#)
- NIDA's Pre- and Post- [Student Survey on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs](#)
- Cornell University's [Designing an Effective Questionnaire](#)
- CDC's Guide to [Developing an Effective Evaluation Plan](#)