



Substance Use Prevention Policy: How Prevention Professionals Can Help Implement Policy Change

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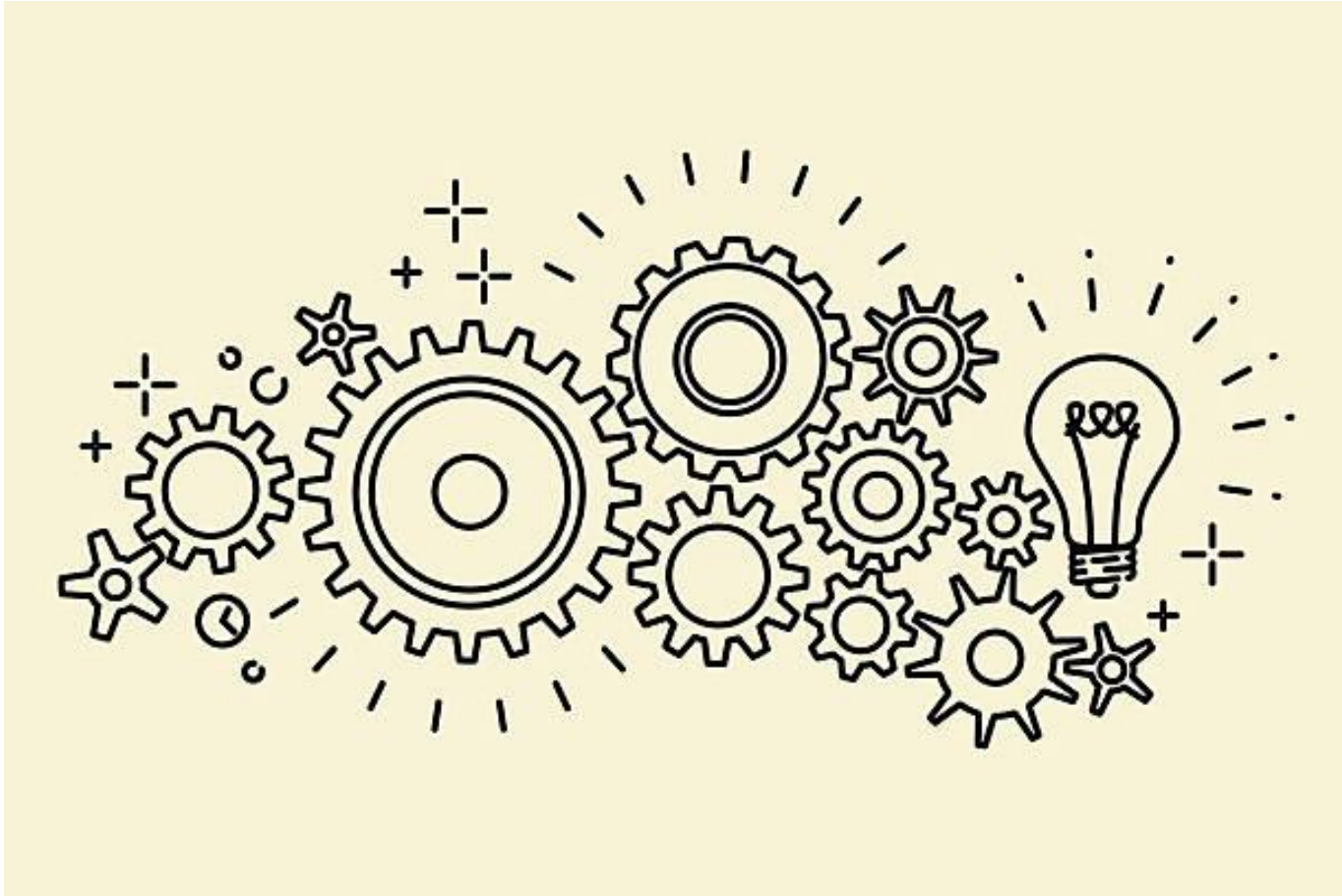
Learning Objectives

1. Identify the mechanisms for achieving policy change
2. Recognize key collaborative partners that can support policy change
3. Explain the importance of advocacy and the differences from lobbying
4. Describe the other steps prevention professionals can take to facilitate policy change





Mechanisms for Achieving Policy Change





Discussion Question

How would you attempt to seek policy changes that could benefit prevention goals?





What is Meant by Mechanisms?

- Achieving policy change is different from most other prevention activities
- Generally, not directly achievable by prevention professionals — or our usual partners
- Requires action by policy makers
- *Mechanisms* are the strategies we can pursue to get those actions taken





Who are Policy Makers?

- Wide range of individuals, and organizations, across all levels and branches of government
- Have varying authorities that can be used to achieve policy change
- Usually do not implement programs or strategies themselves





Why Work With Policymakers

- Goal: To inform their decision-making in ways that benefit substance use prevention efforts and improve behavioral health
- Prevention professionals typically engage policymakers for three reasons:
 1. To advocate for policy change related to specific areas of need
 2. To build support for evidence-based substance use prevention programming
 3. To obtain support for non-policy decisions in accordance with rules, regulations, or standards





What Mechanisms Exist?

- Advocacy and education towards individual policy makers
- Participation in policy maker organization's procedures and events
- Collaboration with other partners to pursue policy change
- Community education and awareness-raising





Individual Advocacy and Education

- Working with individual policy makers to build support for prevention as they act in their official capacities
- Sharing information about:
 - The importance of prevention
 - The current prevention work being done
 - The prevention needs of your community
 - The policy changes that could benefit the community





Organizational Procedures and Events

- Most policy making organizations/bodies have defined rules for influencing their decisions
 - Providing comments on proposed rules
 - Participating in advisory panels
 - Testifying at committee hearings
 - Speaking at roundtable meetings
 - Submitting white papers and briefs





Collaboration With Other Partners

- Expanding efforts targeting policy makers
 - Most relevant when trying to address areas of shared interest
- Developing policies that do not require outside authorities
 - Depends on your specific circumstances; may include local ordinances or voluntary policies
- Implementing policy decisions
 - Educating the community and stakeholders; ensuring enforcement; developing tools





Community Education and Awareness

- Raising awareness of the prevention needs in the community
- Building public support for policy change
 - Adds credibility to other efforts
 - Leads to additional voices pushing for the change
 - Allows community to take ownership of the issue





Partnerships for Policy Change





Identifying Key Partners



What are our goals?

Who is already working on this?

Who is directly affected by this problem?

Who benefits if the problem is resolved?

Who has the resources to help solve the problem?





Identifying Key Partners

Type of Power	Power Appraisal	Prevention Group A
Credibility		
Newsworthiness		
Skills		
Money		
Network		



Identifying Key Partners: Prevention Group A

Type of Power	Power Appraisal	Prevention Group A
Credibility	High	The group has secured endorsements from several city council members and has a proven track record of getting prevention issues on the agenda.
Newsworthiness	Medium	Last year the group did a public demonstration that was shared on social media and mentioned briefly on the news.
Skills	High	The leader of the group is a lawyer whose law firm donates free legal support.
Money	Low	All members are volunteers, and they don't take donations.
Network	Low	The group has yet to engage with other local prevention groups.



Examples of Collaborative Partners

- Businesses
- Schools
- Universities
- Researchers
- Youth-serving organizations
- Parent-teacher associations
- Neighborhood groups
- Community organizations
- Criminal justice/law enforcement
- Churches, mosques, synagogues, and other faith-based entities
- Local newspapers and reporters
- Youth sports leagues
- Civic groups
- Public health agencies
- Government agencies
- Policy makers
- Local elected officials
- Legislative staff
- Primary care providers
- Behavioral health providers
- Hospital systems
- First responders
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- National advocacy organizations
- Alcohol, tobacco, or (legalized) marijuana retailers and producers





Discussion Question

What are some partners you're interested in working with to pursue policy change in your community?



Tips for Sustaining Partnerships

- Establish clear roles and responsibilities
- Build trust and rapport
- Regularly share information
- Monitor impact and lessons learned





Partnership in Action: Wood County Health Coalition

1. Identified community substance use issue
2. Collected data
3. Partnered with local stakeholders
4. Created infographics to educate and raise awareness among policy makers
5. Educated community about policy changes
6. Presented to county Board of Supervisors
7. Passed a local ordinance!





The Importance of Advocacy





Discussion Question

Have you engaged in advocacy as part of your prevention work? What were your experiences with it?

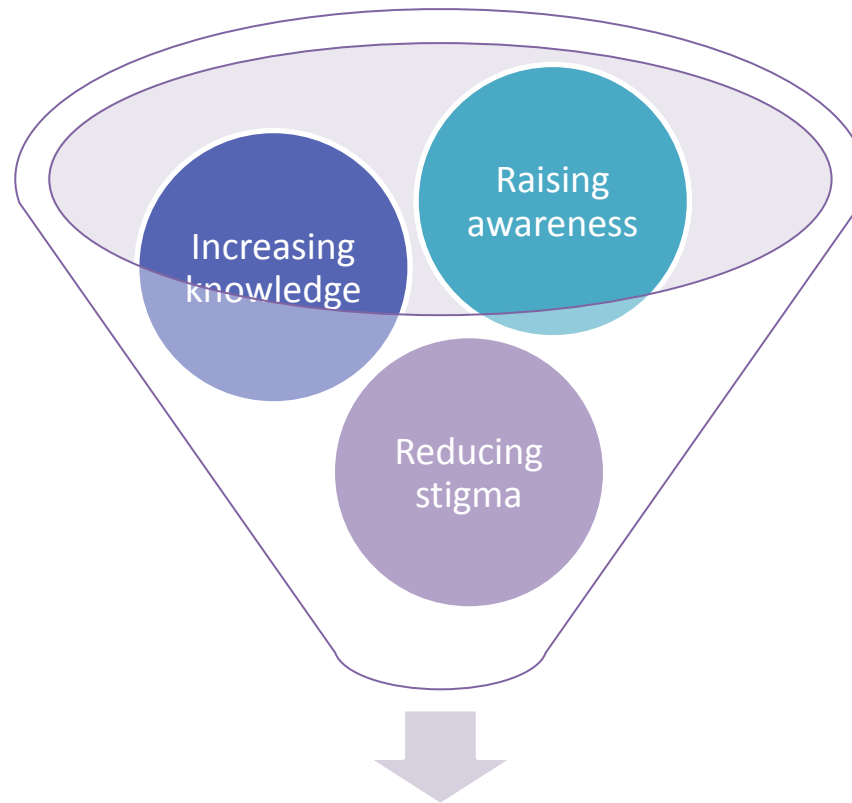


What is Advocacy?

- Aims to bring about community or organizational change by raising awareness and support for a particular issue
- Evidence-based



Advocacy in Prevention



Improved outcomes





Engaging Partnerships in Advocacy

- Hold events in your community (e.g., town halls, listening sessions)
- Give a tour of your organization
- Build a coalition
- Run a social media campaign
- Schedule meetings with policy makers





Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy	Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educating and informing stakeholders and the public about the facts around a particular issue• Sharing evidence-based best practices and policy solutions to address the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directly approaching policy makers (or their staff) to support or oppose a specific piece of introduced or proposed legislation• Grassroots lobbying• Requires registering and reporting activity





Illustrating the Differences

Education	“There were over 71,000 fatal fentanyl-involved overdoses nationwide in 2021.”
Advocacy	“County health departments play a key role in preventing fatal overdoses by providing education and access to naloxone.”
Lobbying	“Please vote for House Bill X, which will provide additional funding for purchasing naloxone.”





Exceptions to Lobbying

Technical assistance

- Testifying/sharing expertise with a legislative body or committee
- Must be done in response to a written request by the entire governing body
- Must be made available to every member of requesting body

Nonpartisan analysis, study, or research

- Independent and objective exposition of a subject
- Results must be made publicly available and easily accessible



Financial Restrictions on Lobbying

- Revocation of 501(c)(3) status
 - “Substantial Part” and Expenditure tests
 - Not relevant to 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), and 501(c)(6) organizations
 - Different rules for churches and religious organizations, private foundations
- Limits on use of federal awards





When Does Advocacy Become Lobbying?

Advocacy	Lobbying
Meeting with a state Representative to educate them about the importance of funding behavioral health in the community	Meeting with a state Representative to ask them to <u>vote for H.B. 505</u> , which would provide emergency funding for behavioral health
Preparing educational materials that share success stories from local law enforcement who have been trained to administer naloxone	Preparing materials about law enforcement use of naloxone that explicitly support or oppose <u>specific legislation</u> about naloxone training
Sharing statistics about the emergence of xylazine in your community and the response of the local health department on social media	Sharing a message urging the Governor to <u>vote for legislation</u> that increases funding to the local health department on social media
Sending a newsletter to members in your coalition discussing opioid use and evidence-based interventions	Emailing a call to action to coalition members encouraging them to <u>contact their legislators</u> in favor of prevention legislation





10 Minute Discussion





Small Group Discussion

- Do you have experiences with engaging in advocacy or policy change that you can share?
 - What went well? What didn't?
 - What advice would you give to others?
- What are some policy changes you would like to see occur in your community or state?
 - Who do you need to work with to enact those changes? How did you identify them? Or how will you identify them?





Discussion Debrief



Other Steps to Facilitate Policy Change





Other Steps

- Getting policy makers to enact a new/changed policy is only the beginning
- Need to ensure the policy is implemented, enforced, and widely understood
- *If the minimum purchase age for tobacco was increased to 21, but was still widely available for purchase at age 18, what did the change accomplish?*





Policy Implementation

- As mentioned in Part 1, policy makers usually are not the ones also implementing policy
- Need to ensure that whatever implementation steps are necessary occur
- For prevention organizations, can involve:
 - Applying for and using new funding
 - Implementing new prevention programs
 - Developing complementary interventions
 - Encouraging other stakeholders to take actions





Policy Enforcement

- Some types of policy change require enforcement by regulatory or law enforcement agencies
- Need to ensure agencies understand how/why to enforce; and other stakeholders know responsibilities placed on them
- For prevention organizations, can involve:
 - Supporting training efforts and building collaborations
 - Educating other organizations about policy changes





Widespread Public Understanding

- Policy changes can impact the general public or specific populations/communities
- Need to ensure that people are aware of policy changes and the potential impacts and benefits
- For prevention organizations, can involve:
 - Developing marketing and media campaigns
 - Hosting educational events
 - Sharing information with community partners
 - Other communications strategies





Conclusion

- Policy change can be an important prevention tool; BUT need to figure out how to pursue it
- Working with policy makers can require specialized processes and efforts
- If you engage in advocacy, make sure to understand the differences from lobbying
- Changing policy is only the first step, need to ensure implementation and enforcement also occur





Thank you for
your time and
participation!

Questions?

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