

Program Sharing—October 27, 2011

Identifying and Selecting Intervening Variables for Prevention Planning

Overview

- Defining
- Identifying
- Collecting/Gathering
- Prioritizing
- Planning

Defining Intervening Variables



Intervening Variables

- ...are **factors** that have been identified as being strongly **related to**, and influential in, the occurrence and magnitude of **substance use problems** and consequences
- Risk and protective factors are types of intervening variables.

Risk Factors

- ...are individual characteristics and environmental influences associated with an **increased vulnerability** to the initiation, continuation, or escalation of substance use*.
- Example: low perception of risk of harm from substance use

*Hawkins & Catalano, 1992

Protective Factors

- ...include individual resilience and other circumstances that are associated with a **reduction in the likelihood** of substance use*.
- Example: positive family communication

*Hawkins & Catalano, 1992

Retail Access/Availability

Social Access/Availability

Enforcement

Promotion/Pricing

Community Norms

Individual Factors

Local Conditions

- Describe **why** something is or is not a problem in your community—how the intervening variable manifests itself at the local level
- Can be **monitored and measured** using specific indicators
- Example: social access/availability is an intervening variable while a related local condition might be alcohol availability at community celebrations.

Outcome-Based Prevention Model



Lowther & Birckmayer, 2006

Identifying Intervening Variables



Retail Access/Availability

- Extent to which alcohol is available for purchase in your community, and how easy it is to purchase
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
ID issues	Youth reporting use of fake IDs	Minnesota Student Survey
ID issues	Retailers failing to check IDs	Young Adult Alcohol Survey; Retailer Compliance Rate
Training/education	Percent of outlets receiving RBST	Local managers, servers and sellers

Social Access/Availability

- Extent to which alcohol can be obtained from friends, associates, family members, or other adults
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
Provision of alcohol to minors	Youth reporting they got alcohol at a party	Minnesota Student Survey
Provision of alcohol to minors	Young adults who took alcohol from parents	Young Adult Alcohol Survey
Alcohol available at community events	Acceptance of drinking in social settings	Observation; focus groups

Enforcement

- Existence, enforcement and perception of community, school, worksite and household policies and laws
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
Policies in place	Social Host Ordinance in place	Local law enforcement agency; County Board
Policies in place	Household policy regarding alcohol use	Focus groups
Perception of enforcement	Likelihood of being stopped for impaired driving	Young Adult Alcohol Survey

Promotion/Pricing

- Monetary cost of alcohol, extent to which alcohol is promoted, and exposure to promotion
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
Drink pricing	Drink specials near college campuses	Environmental scan/observation
Drink pricing	Influence of specials on number of drinks consumed	Young Adult Alcohol Survey; focus groups
Advertising	Number/percent of billboards for alcohol	Environmental scan/observation

Community Norms

- Extent to which alcohol use is accepted, or perceived to be accepted
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
Perception of alcohol as community problem	Community support for increased enforcement	Community readiness assessment; focus group
Acceptance of drinking	Alcohol perceived as safer than other drugs	Focus groups; key informant interviews
Acceptance of drinking	Workplace promotion of drinking/happy hour	Focus groups; key informant interviews

Individual Factors

- Individuals' behaviors, perceptions, beliefs and knowledge
- Example:

Local Conditions	Indicators	Data Sources
Perceived risk of harm	Young adults' perception of risk of binge drinking	Young Adult Alcohol Survey
Bonding/support	Youth can talk to their parents about problems	Minnesota Student Survey
Early initiation	First use of alcohol by age 13 or younger	Minnesota Student Survey

Resources

- Communities That Care (CTC):
<http://www.sdrg.org/ctcresource/>
- Developmental Assets Tools:
<http://www.search-institute.org/assets>
- Prevention of Underage *Drinking*—*Logic Model Documentation*:
<http://www.pire.org/logicmodels.htm>

Collecting/Gathering Intervening Variable Data



Criteria to Consider

Before you collect/gather local data, narrow down the list of intervening variables by:

- Relevance
- Data access/availability
- Data quality
- Other (determine for your community)

Relevance

- Is the indicator even applicable for your community?
- Example: drink specials near campus may not be relevant for communities without a post-secondary institution

Problem Analysis Activities

- But why here?
- Five Whys
- ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequences)

See your Regional Prevention Coordinator for more information on these

Data Access/Availability

- Are the data readily available for your community?
- Can the data be obtained from a local entity (hospital, law enforcement agency, etc.)?
- Will you have to collect the data through a survey, focus group, or key informant interview?
- What resources are needed to collect the data?

LEGEND



Readily available data,
existing data for most
Minnesota communities



Data likely exists, but may
require relationship building/
agreements with local entities



Data collection required,
but tools and/or processes
for collection exist



Data collection required
which may be difficult or
time consuming

“Blueberries”

- Primarily Minnesota Student Survey data
 - Links to SUMN data tables when available
 - Links to county MSS tables on MDH site
- Liquor License Database searchable by city—
updated frequently

“Grapes”

- Includes records/archival data likely collected and managed by local entities:
 - Law enforcement/campus security
 - Hospitals/emergency departments
 - Schools
 - Area bars, restaurants and retailers
- May require a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or data sharing agreement

“Apples”

- Data collection tool or process exists, or is in development—but existing data not available
- Requires local resources: time, funding, staff, skills, collaboration
- Example: community readiness assessment
- Several tools being developed currently for Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant

“Coconuts”

- Data collection is required, but tools and processes may not currently exist
- Community scans and observation may be very time consuming and/or logistically difficult (for example, counting ads)
- For information on focus groups and key informant interviews, visit www.evaluatod.org

Data Quality

- Reliable source
- Current
- Accurately measures what you are trying to measure
- Available for the appropriate population and geographic area
- Multiple points in time (if possible)

Summarize Quantitative Data

- Magnitude—how big is the issue?
- Time trends—how has the issue changed over the past few years?
- Demographics—how does the issue differ among various populations within the community?

Magnitude

- How many members of the target population are impacted? (number of persons/cases/incidents)
- What portion of the target population is impacted? (percent of students responding to the survey; rate per 1,000 juveniles in service area)
- Summarize the data using tables or charts

Time Trends

- Has the issue been increasing over time, decreasing over time, or staying relatively stable?
- Summarize the data in a table by year, with a trend graph, or using directional arrows

Demographics

- Can the data be sorted by age group, gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual orientation?
- Can the data be sorted by student status, employment status, or veteran status?
- Can the data be further broken down by community within your service area?
- Show comparisons across demographic groups using tables or charts

Summarize Qualitative Data

- Look for emerging themes from focus groups, key informant interviews, open-ended survey questions
- Count number of responses (for example, how many major employers interviewed say they have a worksite alcohol policy in place?)
- Do the findings add context to the quantitative data?

Prioritizing Intervening Variables



Prioritizing

- It is not feasible to target every intervening variable with resources
- Use the data collected/gathered to guide decisions
- For a comprehensive prevention strategy, consider addressing indicators for each of the six types of intervening variables

Process

- Include input from multiple stakeholders and multiple sectors
- Determine prioritization criteria ahead of time, and clearly define criteria
- Select a method for scoring or ranking the indicators (such as high, medium, low)
- Consider a multi-step process: narrow down indicators first by a few key criteria, then narrow further using additional criteria

Criteria

- Magnitude
- Time trends
- Severity
- Political will
- Capacity/resources
- Changeability

Severity

- Are there financial costs related to the indicator?
- Which intervening variables and local conditions are related to the most severe consequences, such as death or injury?
- Is the issue worse in your community than it is in your region or in the state?

Political Will

- Encompasses readiness, concern and willingness
- Are community leaders aware of the problem?
- Is there support from community leaders to address the problem?
- Is there evidence from policies passed, newspaper articles, or key informant interviews?

Capacity/Resources

- Are the key partners at the table?
- Are the necessary dollars, staff time, and skills available?
- Is the issue already being address by other funds/projects?

Changeability

- Encompasses time frame, readiness and capacity
- Do you need to see change within a short time for a specific project?
- Can you reach the target population?
- Is change beyond your community's control (alcohol in movies; eliminating poverty)

Activity

- Form small groups of 3-5 people
- Use the mock data set and score sheets provided to select priorities for your group
- Choose one person to share your process and decisions to the larger group

Planning with Intervening Variables



Selecting Strategies

- Evidence-based Practices Workgroup (EBPW)
- Comprehensive Mix
- Strategies with the 'best fit'
 - Conceptual fit
 - Practical fit
 - Evidence base

Explore Options

Intervening Variable	Potential Strategies	Information on Fit
Retail Access/Availability		
Social Access/Availability		
Enforcement		
Promotion/Pricing		
Social Norms		
Individual Factors		

Strategy Resources

- Community Workbook on Evidence-based Prevention (estimated 2012)
- www.thecommunityguide.org
- www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol
- www.nrepp.samhsa.gov