

Prevention is a Process

Preventionists are asked constantly to react to the latest drugs. Often, community leaders want an immediate program or marketing campaign to warn against whatever is the latest drug of choice. However, prevention science shows us that we have to start by understanding the problem and the community. If we start there, we're more likely to succeed. If we don't, we risk being ineffective or even making matters worse.

The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a process to understand and address substance misuse and related problems in our communities.¹



The Five Stages & Two Principles of SPF

Assessment – identify local prevention needs based on data.

Capacity – build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs.

Planning – find out what works to address prevention needs and how to do it well.

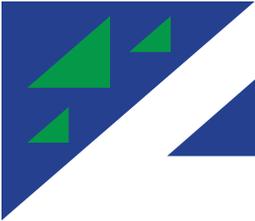
Implementation – deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended.

Evaluation – examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices.²

Combined, these five stages represent a cycle. After evaluating the effects of your efforts, you'll go back to assessing for your next initiative. In addition to the five stages, there are two principles that must be reflected throughout the entire process:

Cultural competence – the ability to understand and interact effectively with people who have different values, lifestyles, and traditions based on their unique history.

Sustainability – the process of building an adaptive and effective system that achieves and maintains desired long-term results.²



The Strategic Prevention Framework

How to Use SPF

SPF is a robust process that can be used even outside of prevention work. In applying SPF, it's best to ask seven questions, one for each of the stages and principles:

- What is the problem? (Assessment)
- What do we have to work with? (Capacity)
- What should we do and how should we do it? (Planning)
- How can we implement this plan? (Implementation)
- Is our plan succeeding? (Evaluation)
- How can we interact with the people in our community? (Cultural competence)
- How can we ensure long-term results? (Sustainability)²



[To learn more about SPF, view A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.](#)

About Us

Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit in Columbus, Ohio that is dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more about Prevention Action Alliance at preventionactionalliance.org.

Prevention
Action Alliance

1. "SPF Overview." SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies. <https://www.campusdrugprevention.gov/sites/default/files/files/Overview.pdf>.
2. "A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework." Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>.

