Implementing the Strategic Prevention Framework using Action Planning as a Tool for Measuring Community Change

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Background
- Underage drinking is a socially significant problem in the United States.
- In 2003 and 2004, Kansas reported the 16th highest rates of youth ages 12-20 engaging in past month alcohol consumption, and the 10th highest rates of youth engaging in past month binge drinking (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2006).
- The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) in Kansas uses an iterative process of participatory evaluation to build coalition capacity for preventing underage drinking in Kansas.
- The Strategic Prevention Framework is an iterative process grounded in sustainability and cultural competence (see Figure 1).
- Previous research has shown action planning to be effective in promoting key changes in communities, across various sectors (Watson-Thompson, Fawcett, & Schultz, 2008).
- The present study is an empirical case study of a Kansas coalition that supported implementation of evidence-based strategies through the use of action plans to support new or modified programs, policies, and practices within the community to reduce underage drinking among youth.

Study Participant Data & Research Design
- Participant: One community coalition in the south central Kansas area.
- Design: Case study of a SPF-funded community in south central Kansas.
- Timeline: Implementation of strategies began on January 1, 2007. The coalition has been awarded funding annually since that date of implementation. Site visits by the Kansas SPF grant coordinator were conducted in 2009 and 2010 to facilitate grant reflections on adherence to identified action plans.
- Primary Measures: Community Change—New or modified programs, policies, or practices that support strategy implementation; Completion status of approved action steps for identified strategies.
- Outcome Measures: Student reported 30-Day alcohol consumption and binge drinking (i.e., 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row).
- Strategies: Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), Strengthening Families (SF), LionsQuest (LQ), Botvin Life Skills Training (LST).

Procedure
- Coalition members identified evidence-based strategies to implement based on the community assessment.
- Action plans for each strategy were developed to guide strategy implementation.
- Action plans were reviewed monthly by the technical support team with coalition representatives.
- Action Planning status updates documented by coalition staff in the web-based Action Planning tool.
- Coalition members documented initiative-related activities using the ODSS, which served as validation of action plan status.
- Documented entries in the ODSS were secondarily scored by the KU Work Group evaluation team to ensure inter-rater agreement and further validate the completion of action steps.
- Coalition members were provided with monthly technical support and supplementary training tools to further support their efforts in implementing and evaluating evidence-based strategies related to their stated objectives.
- Coalition documenters completed quarterly reports detailing the percentage of strategies and action steps completed each quarter.
- These were supplemented by biannual sensemaking sessions, which allowed coalition members to reflect on their action planning progress.
- Additionally, coalition members reflected on how their progress supports the overall SPF process in regard to planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Results
- The data also indicate a substantial number of action plan completion across strategies (See Figure 3).
- The data also indicate an overall continuous increase in community changes across strategies (see Figure 2). This overall increase is consistent with key steps being completed across action plans.
- Completion of key steps from action plans are associated with marked increases in community changes.
- These changes involved several community sectors, including media, religious organizations, civic groups, schools, and local citizens.

Discussion
- Developing and implementing action plans can aid in achieving stated goals and objectives within the coalition.
- Action planning can facilitate the occasioning of community and systems changes across individual, community, and statewide levels.
- The slow increase in community changes noted in Figure 2 is consistent with Watson-Thompson, Fawcett, & Schultz (2008). Moreover, this study suggests that strategic planning is an effective process to promote widespread behavior change.
- Future research should examine the role of influencing and contextual factors as mediating variables in the implementation of action plans.
- Additionally, the strategic planning for similar strategies across settings and sectors should be further explored and examined.

References

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