Getting Started on Campus
Tips for New Prevention Coordinators

Prevention coordinators have an important role on campus. To be effective, they must demonstrate the right balance of accurate information, clear strategy, and open collaboration with others. New prevention coordinators are confronted with a great deal of information to absorb when they start their positions on campus. Even the most enthusiastic newcomer to prevention can feel overwhelmed. This publication is intended to simplify, organize, and provide a context for the information and resources prevention coordinators need for successful programs.

What are prevention coordinators talking about when they say “prevention”? Successful prevention efforts reduce the incidence of unwanted events or behaviors. Unlike early intervention or treatment measures, which take action once a problem arises, prevention seeks to reduce “risk” factors that may bring about a problem or behavior and promote “protective” factors that are known to ameliorate negative behaviors.*

A strong prevention program requires understanding the problem, identifying the contributing factors, taking action to intervene, and then evaluating to see if the problem was prevented. To be effective, prevention must be a deliberate process that applies science-based principles of planning and action to produce desired outcomes. Furthermore, it requires an assessment of local problems and resources in order to identify the necessary changes to reduce the risk for problems. This Prevention Update outlines the critical elements in this process and identifies helpful resources to support campus-based prevention efforts. Intended as an overview, it includes many references to publications from the U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention and other resources, for more in-depth information.†

Critical Elements of Prevention

While prevention is not a formal sequence of one specific activity followed by another, the following elements are critical to support effective efforts:

- Engaging partners in solutions;
- Understanding the problem;
- Becoming aware of best practices in prevention;
- Building a strategic plan; and
- Connecting with others.

Appropriate Partners in Prevention

Consider the following campus constituencies in building relationships:

- Campus security personnel;
- Health and counseling services staff;
- Judicial affairs personnel;
- Dean of students;
- Student affairs representatives;
- Residence life staff;
- Resident assistants;
- Students from the general population and specific groups (e.g., student athletes, peer educators, student government);
- Students using commuter center;
- Fraternity and sorority coordinators; and
- Athletics director or related staff.

Community groups, such as the following, also can support prevention efforts:

- Community services, including treatment centers;
- Business owners, including alcohol outlets;
- Police department personnel;
- Judges and court staff;
- Local media and newspaper personnel;
- Elected officials;
- Liquor commissioners; and
- Emergency room staff.

Engaging Partners in Solutions: Build a Coalition

The challenges of addressing alcohol and other drug and violence (AODV) problems on campus should not be taken on by a prevention coordinator in isolation. Successful prevention requires building and nurturing relationships to gain the assistance and partnership of key stakeholders so that efforts are well received and championed by others. In fact, the primary role of a prevention coordinator is mobilizing and organizing the campus and community and being a catalyst for change. Typically, two mechanisms facilitate team collaboration among partners committed to AODV prevention: While a campus task force can address the contributors to AODV problems on campus, a campus and community coalition will address the root causes of the problems in the surrounding community.

* The risk and protection framework is a commonly used public health approach, using research to identify factors that are positively associated with problem behaviors (risk factors) and those that have an inverse relationship to problems (protective factors). By reducing risk and increasing protective factors, prevention professionals have successfully reduced youth problems that include substance abuse, delinquency, and violence.

† A complete categorization by topic of the Higher Education Center’s publications can be found in its Services and Catalog; see p. 8 for the Center’s contact information.

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measures. In order to succeed, a task force should have the backing of senior campus administrators, including the president.

One way to develop relationships and engage cooperation across multiple constituencies is through simply talking with people. Interviews with students, staff, and key stakeholders serve a dual purpose: They will not only uncover a variety of perspectives but will help develop support and relationships as well. When identifying whom to interview, the prevention coordinator should consider people who coordinate organizations across campus—moving outside the director level to the frontline personnel who interact with students. Striking a collaborative tone can help establish a sense of partnership and will advance the relationship building.

When engaging potential partners in dialogue—for a task force or coalition—the idea is to explore the main problems, potential solutions that exist, and the role the task force or coalition can play in advancing prevention. This also is an opportunity to assess current and past efforts: What efforts have succeeded or failed and why? What can be improved upon? How was the previous prevention coordinator perceived and what were the contributors to his or her successes and failures? While gathering this information, important contextual elements relating to the political climate both on and off campus also can be gleaned—including information on the personalities of both allies and detractors, interdepartmental dynamics, the sense of “ownership” of the issue, and town-gown tensions—to assist the practitioner in navigating the waters of change. Whether conversations with stakeholders result in a formal partnership or participation in a coalition or task force, it is necessary to nurture the relationships through continued dialogue and communication as prevention efforts move forward.

More seasoned task forces may consider working with off-campus constituencies, such as local courts, law enforcement, businesses, and the media for task force involvement. These groups will almost certainly inform and participate in a community coalition for AODV prevention. The frequency with which these groups meet and the kinds of reports they issue will vary from one situation to another. But, keeping key campus constituencies informed of task force progress and keeping its members involved in meaningful activities is key to the group’s success.

**Understanding the Problem: Gather Data**

An important primary step in addressing student AOD abuse and violence is to assess where the problems exist. Doing so will provide a solid basis upon which the task force or coalition can identify solutions and strategies to address local problems effectively.

Successful prevention efforts are based on a clear understanding of the specific nature and extent of AODV problems on a campus and in its surrounding community. One way to assess these problems is through surveys administered to a random sample of students, staff, and faculty. Other sources of quantitative data from campus files include official records of substance abuse and violence violations, crime data (which include arrest records), disciplinary records, and referrals to judicial boards. Every campus is required to complete a campus crime report (per the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act [known as the Clery Act of 1990]), and biennial review of AOD policies and programs (per the Drug-Free School and Campuses Regulations). These two reports (see p. 4, under Federal Mandates) provide additional sources of existing information. Environmental scans or assessments also can provide useful information. For qualitative data, focus groups of students and staff and interviews with key stakeholders offer more in-depth and nuanced perspectives on the challenges facing a campus.

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Having data to describe and explain specific problems on campus—for example, the effect of alcohol use on student academic performance, high-risk and illegal prescription drug use among students, or rates of sexual violence and other trauma—brings credibility to prevention efforts and can attract support from allies, key audiences, potential funders, and colleagues. Data will help set prevention priorities for implementing action, as outlined below.

To put the local situation in context, there are many sources of national data on alcohol and other drug use to consult, including the National Institute on Drug Abuse—funded, ongoing Monitoring the Future study; the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey; the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study; and the American College Health Association’s (ACHA) National College Health Assessment. While these surveys report also on violent consequences of alcohol and other drug use, bear in mind that these associated behaviors are not the only causes of violence.

While no study captures the full scope of violence on U.S. campuses, several studies document different forms of violence—hazing, sexual assault, dating violence, hate crimes—which are summarized in the Higher Education Center’s Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach. This publication is a valuable resource to address student violence, articulating in greater detail many of the concepts outlined here.

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### Preventing High-risk Behaviors: What Works?

#### A Comprehensive Approach

Once a campus has gained a sense of the specific problems it faces when it comes to alcohol and other drug abuse and violence, what does it need to address them? In answering this question it is critical to understand the factors that contribute to high-risk and illegal substance use and violence among college students. As with many health and safety problems, these factors are many, complex, and varied. They range from individual and interpersonal factors to those at the institutional, community, and public policy levels. Given this complexity, it is safe to assume these problems cannot be solved by a single model, approach, or program—and certainly not by a person in isolation. Therefore, effective prevention planners address issues at several levels, using a comprehensive approach and a variety of vehicles and partners to achieve change—a campus task force, a campus and community coalition, and other key stakeholders.

#### Environmental Management

While campus-based prevention efforts have tended to focus on the individual and interpersonal levels, such education activities aimed at changing individual student behavior and awareness have not been proven effective when used in isolation. Therefore, the Higher Education Center focuses on the importance of changing the broader environment through a prevention framework termed *environmental management*. Although this framework was designed primarily to address student alcohol abuse, it is applicable to other drug use and is grounded in the same public health theory as the campus violence prevention framework developed and promoted by the Higher Education Center.

The environmental management approach is supported by the research literature and major national reports addressing youth alcohol use:

- In 2002, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) released its report *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges*, revealing the extent and nature of the college student alcohol problem, reviewing the research literature, and providing guidance to college administrators on effective prevention programs and policies.
- In 2003, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies released *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, outlining recommendations to address underage drinking in the United States.

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Becoming conversant with and encouraging fellow collaborators to read these two reports will prove invaluable in student alcohol abuse prevention efforts. Summarized on the Higher Education Center’s Web site, these reports underscore the need to tackle alcohol use in a comprehensive manner using evidence-based environmental management approaches to address the range of factors that promote or deter high-risk and illegal alcohol use, and using evaluation to assess program progress and achievements. In the area of violence prevention, environmental management is also consistent with proven practices of community policing and other public health approaches to violence.

When applying a comprehensive, environmental management approach to addressing student alcohol and other drug abuse or violence, efforts should be both coordinated and synergistic so that program components complement and reinforce each other. For instance, messages promoted across program elements should be consistent, avoiding contradiction. Similarly, a key target audience is best reached using multiple media and vehicles, as opposed to employing a single medium, such as posters, radio PSAs, or e-mail.

Additionally, prevention efforts need critical infrastructure—staff resources, administrative leadership, and a dedicated budget to ensure efforts are institutionalized and enduring. A close and fruitful collaboration with multiple campus constituencies will help institute these necessary components. The Higher Education Center’s publication Building Long-Term Support for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs addresses some of the challenges to creating an adequate infrastructure for prevention.

**Avoiding the “Activity Trap”**

Instead of asking, “What are we going to do?” ask, “What are we trying to change?”

**Key Questions to Explore:**
- What is the problem we want to solve?
- How do we envision proposed efforts will solve these problems?
- What evidence exists that these efforts will work?

**Principles of Effectiveness for Prevention Programs**

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools promotes principles of effectiveness for prevention programs, as codified in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. A subset of the principles of effectiveness that are most applicable to institutions of higher education (IHEs) can be summed up as follows:

- Design programs based on a thorough needs assessment of objective data.
- Establish a set of measurable goals and objectives linked to identified needs.
- Implement prevention activities that research or evaluation have shown to be effective in preventing high-risk drinking or violent behavior.
- Use evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen the program and refine goals and objectives as appropriate.

Outcome that will solve their specific problems. A sounder approach first determines the desired outcomes and then identifies activities likely to achieve them.

A sound prevention planning process is grounded in the principles of strategic planning, a systematic process involving identifying and analyzing the problem, identifying goals and objectives, selecting evidence-based strategies, and then selecting activities based on the readiness of a campus to move forward with prevention programming and policies. A readiness assessment will determine the willingness and commitment of the community to create change around identified problems.

**Federal Mandates**

In addition to prevention planning and implementation for the sake of a safer, healthier campus and community, federal mandates require action on the part of colleges and universities.

**Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations**

Education Department General Administrative Regulations. Part 86, the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations, requires all IHEs receiving federal funds to certify they have adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees. Failure to comply with the regulations may cause an institution to forfeit eligibility for federal funding. Part 86 compliance requires institutions to:

1. Annually notify each employee and student, in writing, of standards of conduct; sanctions for violation of laws and campus policy; a clear statement that the IHE will impose disciplinary sanctions; AOD health risks; and available treatment programs.
2. Develop a sound method for distributing this annual notification information to every student and staff member each year.
3. Prepare a biennial report on the effectiveness of its AOD programs and the consistency of sanctions and enforcement.

More information regarding Part 86 can be found in the Higher Education Center’s publication Complying With the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations [EDGAR Part 86]: A Guide for University and College Administrators and on its Web site.

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Clergy Act of 1990
The Clergy Act of 1990 is a federal law requiring institutions to report security policies and annual statistics related to crime in and around their campuses. All campuses receiving federal funds for student financial aid are required to report these data, including information regarding sexual assault policies, the law enforcement authority of campus police, and where students should report crimes. The Web site of Security on Campus has more information regarding the Clergy Act and its requirements (see Resources).

Key Higher Education Center Publications
- Strategic Planning for Prevention Professionals on Campus [In review.]
- Evaluating Environmental Management Approaches to Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention
- Safe Lanes on Campus: A Guide for Preventing Impaired Driving and Underage Drinking
- Annotated Bibliography of Alcohol, Other Drug, and Violence Prevention Resources 2001–2005
- Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention on College Campuses: Model Programs
- Experiences in Effective Prevention: The U.S. Department of Education’s Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses
- Building Long-Term Support for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs

Connecting With Others
Being a prevention coordinator on campus is at its best both very rewarding and very challenging. The best work in building a safer, healthier campus environment will come from working with peers to provide mutual counsel, encouragement, and mentorship. Several mechanisms offer access to networks that provide advice, resources, and peer assistance.

Campus Prevention Consortia and Statewide Initiatives
Many colleges and universities have formed prevention consortia to share experiences, resources, and materials on the basis of regional or common interest. To investigate the existence of a regional prevention consortium, contact AOD coordinators on other nearby campuses, the state department of education, department of public health, or alcoholic beverage control agency. Many statewide consortia are featured on the Higher Education Center’s Web site. Information regarding violence prevention consortia in particular can be obtained by contacting the state sexual assault or domestic violence organization.

The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
Approximately 1,600 colleges and universities are members of the Network, committing to a set of standards aiming to reduce collegiate alcohol and other drug abuse problems. Established in 1987 by the U.S. Department of Education, the Network develops collaborative AOD prevention efforts through electronic information exchange, printed materials, and sponsorship of national and state activities and conferences. Each Network member has a regional campus contact who helps determine Network activities.

Electronic Mailing Lists
One way to engage directly with peers, learning about their efforts and news from the field, is through electronic mailing lists, such as HEC/News of the Higher Education Center; the Drug Abatement Research Discussion mailing list (or DrugMailed); and those of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators’ AOD Knowledge Community, Student Health Services, and Security on Campus. While some lists enable discussion, others deliver information in a one-way fashion. More information regarding electronic membership in AOD and violence groups can be found by visiting the Information & Assistance and Violence links on the home page of the Higher Education Center’s Web site.

Annual National Meeting on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education
The National Meeting on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is the foremost annual conference on substance abuse and violence problems in colleges and universities. It is an invaluable resource for learning about innovative and science-based programs, discovering an array of resources and organizations to help meet prevention goals, and meeting peers. To make attendance a priority, a dean or other superior should budget the necessary funds for the prevention coordinator’s participation.

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References
2. Education Department General Administrative Regulations, Sec. 86.1, titled “What is the purpose of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention regulations?” and 20. U.S.C. 1145g.
3. Education Department General Administrative Regulations, Sec. 86.301, titled “What actions may the Secretary take if an IHE violates this part?”

See Resources on following pages
Resources

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS)
U.S. Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/osdfs; 202-260-3954

OSDFS supports efforts to create safe schools, respond to crises, prevent alcohol and other drug abuse, ensure the health and well-being of students, and teach students good character and citizenship. The agency provides financial assistance for drug abuse and violence prevention activities and activities that promote the health and well-being of students in elementary and secondary schools and IHEs. OSDFS participates in the development of Department program policy and legislative proposals and in overall administration policies related to drug abuse and violence prevention.

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention
http://www.higheredcenter.org; 1-800-676-1730; TDD Relay-friendly, Dial 711

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention has a wealth of materials and resources to support prevention efforts. As the nation's primary resource center for AODV prevention professionals at U.S. colleges and universities, the Higher Education Center offers an integrated array of services to help campuses and communities identify problems; assess needs; and plan, implement, and evaluate AODV prevention programs. Services include training; technical assistance; publications; support for the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues; and evaluation activities. The Higher Education Center's publications are free and can be downloaded from its Web site.

CampusHealthandSafety.org
http://www.campushealthandsafety.org; no telephone number

CampusHealthandSafety.org, created by the Center for College Health and Safety (CCHS), is a resource for prevention professionals concerned with reducing high-risk drinking, other drug use, and violence among college students. The environmental management approach is infused throughout the site, with a large section devoted to detailing this approach. The site has more than 700 articles of relevant research, references, resources, and Web sites.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
http://ncadi.samhsa.gov; 1-800-729-6686

NCADI is the information service of the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. NCADI is the largest resource clearinghouse for substance abuse information and materials, with publications and other materials from federal agencies (e.g., study reports, surveys, guides, videocassettes), many of which are free of charge.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
http://www.nida.nih.gov; 301-443-1124

NIDA's mission is to lead the nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction through providing strategic support and conduct of research and ensuring the rapid and effective dissemination and use of the results to improve prevention, treatment, and policy as it relates to drug abuse and addiction. NIDA offers fact sheets on various illicit drugs, which can be viewed at http://www.drugabuse.gov/drugpages.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
http://www.nsvrc.org; 1-877-739-3895

NSVRC serves as an information clearinghouse, provides information and technical assistance to prevent sexual violence, and identifies emerging policy and research needs to support the intervention and prevention of sexual violence. The Web site includes campus-specific resources.

The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
http://www.thenetwork.ws; see Web site for telephone contacts by region

The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues (Network) is a national consortium of colleges and universities formed to promote healthy campus environments by addressing issues related to alcohol and other drugs. Developed in 1987 by the U.S. Department of Education, the Network comprises member institutions that voluntarily agree to work toward a set of standards aimed at reducing AOD problems at colleges and universities. It has approximately 1,600 members nationwide.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s College Drinking—Changing the Culture
http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov; no telephone number

In 2002, NIAAA’s Task Force on College Drinking published the report A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges. The report reveals new findings on the extent and nature of the problem, reviews the current research literature, and provides guidance on effective programs and policies. The accompanying Web site provides reports, tools, features, and content directed to numerous campus constituencies in their alcohol abuse prevention work.
Notes

Security on Campus, Inc.
http://www.securityoncampus.org; 1-888-251-7959

Security on Campus, Inc. (SOC), is a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to fostering safe campus environments. SOC educates students, parents, and others about the prevalence of campus crime and assists victims with legal information, advocacy organizations, counsel, and other resources. SOC also provides guidance regarding compliance with the Clery Act of 1990 and other federal laws.

StopHazing.org
http://www.stophazing.org; no telephone number

Established in 1992, StopHazing.org is a Web-based resource committed to providing students, parents, and educators with resources and up-to-date statistics on the problem of hazing in the United States. The site lists books, articles, and hazing prevention programs.

Stop the Hate
http://www.stophate.org/stophate; no telephone number

The Association of College Unions International created the Stop the Hate initiative to provide training and other resources to aid colleges in addressing hate and bias-related crimes and incidents.
Our Mission
The mission of the U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention is to assist institutions of higher education in developing, implementing, and evaluating alcohol, other drug, and violence prevention policies and programs that will foster students’ academic and social development and promote campus and community safety.

How We Can Help
The U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Center offers an integrated array of services to help people at colleges and universities adopt effective AOD prevention strategies:

- Training and professional development activities
- Resources, referrals, and consultations
- Publication and dissemination of prevention materials
- Support for The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
- Assessment, evaluation, and analysis activities

Get in Touch
Additional information can be obtained by contacting:

The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458-1060

Web site: http://www.higheredcenter.org
Phone: 1-800-676-1730; TDD Relay-friendly, Dial 711
E-mail: HigherEdCtr@edc.org

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