

Strategies to Improve Community Readiness

The following strategies are based on the Tri-Ethnic Center's Community Readiness Model.

STAGE 1 – Community Tolerance/No Knowledge

- Small-group and one-on-one discussions with community leaders to identify perceived benefits of substance abuse and how norms reinforce use
- Small-group and one-on-one discussions with community leaders on the health, psychological, and social costs of substance abuse to change perceptions among those most likely to be part of the group that begins development of programs

STAGE 2 – Denial

- Educational outreach programs to community leaders and community groups interested in sponsoring local programs focusing on the health, psychological, and social costs of substance abuse
- Use of local incidents in one-on-one discussions and educational outreach programs that illustrate harmful consequences of substance abuse

STAGE 3 – Vague Awareness

- Educational outreach programs on national and state prevalence rates of substance abuse, and prevalence rates in communities with similar characteristics, including use of local incidents that illustrate harmful consequences of substance abuse
- Local media campaigns that emphasize consequences of substance abuse

STAGE 4 – Preplanning

- Educational outreach programs to community leaders and sponsorship groups that communicate the prevalence rates and correlations or causes of substance abuse
- Educational outreach programs that introduce the concept of prevention and illustrate specific prevention programs adopted by communities with similar profiles
- Local media campaigns emphasizing the consequences of substance abuse and ways of reducing demand for illicit substances through prevention programming

STAGE 5 – Preparation

- Educational outreach programs open to the general public on specific types of prevention programs, their goals, and how they can be implemented
- Educational outreach programs for community leaders and local sponsorship groups on prevention programs, goals, staff requirements, and other startup aspects of programming
- A local media campaign describing the benefits of prevention programs for reducing consequences of substance abuse

STAGE 6 – Initiation

- In-service educational training for program staff (paid and volunteer) on the consequences, correlations, and causes of substance abuse and the nature of the problem in the local community
- Publicity efforts associated with the kickoff of the program

- A special meeting with community leaders and local sponsorship groups to provide an update and a review of initial program activities

STAGE 7 – Institutionalization/Stabilization

- In-service educational programs on the evaluation process, new trends in substance abuse, and new initiatives in prevention programming, with trainers either brought in from the outside or with staff members sent to programs sponsored by professional societies
- Periodic review meetings and special recognition events for local supporters of the prevention program
- Local publicity efforts associated with review meetings and recognition events

STAGE 8 – Confirmation/Expansion

- In-service educational programs on the evaluation process, new trends in substance abuse, and new initiatives in prevention programming, with trainers either brought in from the outside or with staff members sent to programs sponsored by professional societies
- Periodic review meetings and special recognition events for local supporters of the prevention program
- Presentation of results of research and evaluation activities of the prevention program to the public through local media and public meetings

STAGE 9 – Professionalism/High Level of Community Ownership

- Continued in-service training of staff
- Continued assessment of new drug-related problems and reassessment of targeted groups within the community
- Continued evaluation of program effort
- Continued update on program activities and results provided to community leaders and local sponsorship groups, and periodic stories through local media and public meetings

National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse. (1997). *Community readiness for drug abuse prevention: Issues, tips and tools* (NIH Publication No. 97-4111). Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse.

