

CSAP Strategies

Prevention strategies have been categorized in a variety of different ways. SAMHSA/CSAP promotes the following six strategies ⁽¹⁾:

Information dissemination This strategy provides awareness and knowledge of the nature and extent of substance use, abuse, and addiction and their effects on individuals, families, and communities. It also provides knowledge and awareness of available prevention programs and services. Information dissemination is characterized by one-way communication from the source to the audience, with limited contact between the two. [Note: Information dissemination alone has not been shown to be effective at preventing substance abuse.]

Education This strategy involves two-way communication and is distinguished from the information dissemination strategy by the fact that interaction between the educator/ facilitator and the participants is the basis of its activities. Activities under this strategy aim to affect critical life and social skills, including decision-making, refusal skills, critical analysis (e.g., of media messages), and systematic judgment abilities.

Alternatives This strategy provides for the participation of target populations in activities that exclude substance use. The assumption is that constructive and healthy activities offset the attraction to--or otherwise meet the needs usually filled by--alcohol and drugs and would, therefore, minimize or obviate resort to the latter. [Note: Alternative activities alone have not been shown to be effective at preventing substance abuse.]

Problem identification and referral This strategy aims at identification of those who have indulged in illegal/age-inappropriate use of tobacco or alcohol and those individuals who have indulged in the first use of illicit drugs in order to assess if their behavior can be reversed through education. It should be noted, however, that this strategy does not include any activity designed to determine if a person is in need of treatment.

Community-based process This strategy aims to enhance the ability of the community to more effectively provide prevention and treatment services for substance abuse disorders. Activities in this strategy include organizing, planning, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of services implementation, interagency collaboration, coalition building, and networking.

Environmental This strategy establishes or changes written and unwritten community standards, codes, and attitudes, thereby influencing incidence and prevalence of substance abuse in the general population. This strategy is divided into two subcategories to permit distinction between activities that center on legal and regulatory initiatives and those that relate to the service and action-oriented initiatives.

⁽¹⁾ These definitions are taken from the Federal Register, Volume 58, Number 60, March 31, 1993.