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TECHNICAL REPORT

Preventing Underage Drinking

Using Getting To Outcomes™ with
the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention
Framework to Achieve Results

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SUMMARY

Underage drinking has become a significant problem in the United States. For example, alcohol is the primary contributor to the leading causes of adolescent deaths (NIAAA, 2003). The purpose of this guide is to help communities through a systematic process of planning, implementation, and evaluation that will improve results in reducing and preventing underage drinking. The overarching framework for this guide is the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The SPF is a five-step approach to prevention that encourages comprehensive assessment, planning, and evaluation. In the SPF, there is a strong emphasis on integrating community needs with evidence-based practices in a manner that respects cultural diversity and promotes sustainability.

In this guide, the Getting To Outcomes (GTO) model is the operating system for how to “work” the SPF. GTO is based on established theories of traditional evaluation, empowerment evaluation, results-based accountability, and continuous quality improvement. The original GTO manual—*Getting To Outcomes: Promoting Accountability Through Methods and Tools for Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation*—was designed for classroom-based prevention programs. It established a participatory process that built practitioners’ prevention capacity, empowering them to address all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The current guide tailors the GTO model specifically for environmental strategies shown to be effective in tackling the problem of underage drinking.

This guide is designed to provide information on how a community can utilize the SPF to address issues related to underage

drinking by answering the 10 GTO accountability questions. These 10 questions lay out actions to take when planning a high-quality underage drinking prevention strategy. Table 1 provides an overview of the information covered in each chapter. Specifically, each chapter includes

- suggestions/ideas on how to answer the accountability question
- a summary checklist for each question
- a case example of how a real community addressed the accountability questions. This helps demonstrate how communities can use the accountability questions in their work.

This guide also has an extensive set of Appendixes. Among other resources, these Appendixes contain worksheets and tools to plan, implement, and evaluate most environmental strategies. These worksheets and tools can be customized for individual communities.

A majority of the Appendixes consists of “examples” corresponding to 10 environmental strategies that have the strongest evidence base. In each example, there is a brief research summary and additional text that describes issues related to planning, implementing, and evaluating the strategy. Each example also includes sample copies of the tools, partially completed, to help facilitate the community’s work. In some examples, there are additional worksheets and forms that can be used, including sample ordinances, sample letters, and ideas for a policy journal.

Table 1. Overview of the 11 Chapters

Chapter	The Chapter Provides Guidance on How...
1	...communities can get organized and begin to better understand their needs regarding underage drinking.
2	...communities can conduct an assessment of the underlying needs and conditions that must be addressed to reduce underage drinking.
3	...to develop goals and objectives based on the identified needs.
4	...to assess the current level of capacity and how to enhance that capacity to reduce underage drinking.
5	...to choose the most appropriate evidence-based environmental strategies. Written by Join Together, this chapter presents the evidence base for 10 environmental strategies that are effective in reducing underage drinking.
6	...to assess the current “fit” within the community context of the strategy chosen and how to enhance that fit.
7	...to develop a plan for reducing underage drinking.
8	...to conduct a process evaluation of the underage drinking prevention strategy.
9	...to conduct an outcome evaluation of the underage drinking prevention strategy.
10	...to conduct a continuous quality improvement process.
11	...to sustain successful underage drinking prevention strategies.