Five Stepping, Part II

Our last newsletter highlighted the differences between the Five Steps in the new California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP) Strategic Planning Framework (SPF) and the department’s Five Step Planning “business practice” model contained in NNA agreements over the last several years. The differences were relatively minor, primarily with a stronger focus on assessing and building capacity for action.

Why is SPF Important Now?

The potential of the new SPF to help achieve outcomes is evident. SPF can help make the case for prevention, and can help prevention initiatives achieve practical results. And, in July 2006, SPF planning using the Five Steps will be required as part of contracts between counties and the DADP.

One past challenge was that there were many versions of five step planning; the federal SPF language was in development in 2005. Fortunately, everyone is now playing from the same sheet of music, with the feds, DADP, Prevention by Design and other technical assistance providers using common language to describe the SPF process.

Counties have questions about how to get started. And Prevention by Design is prepared to help.

Where on the Merry-Go-Round Do I Get On?

SPF is an ongoing, flexible planning process that works as a continuous loop, like a merry-go-round. This process feeds into continuous quality improvement of prevention programs. Where to start? How long does the ride last? How many cycles? Appropriate questions.

Every county is unique, and there is not a single entry gate. Many California counties, thanks to Safe and Drug Free School projects or State Incentive Grant projects, may have recently compiled good problem assessments. These counties may step directly into Step 2 or 3. Others have recently completed comprehensive strategic plans, and are ready for implementation. SPF is flexible to local conditions. Likewise, every county knows best about the length of the planning cycle, and when to revisit plans. Again, SPF is a flexible planning framework. Prevention by Design recommends an annual review of plans –conveniently guided by Regional Trainers – but new planning cycles may not be needed without significant local change or new trends.

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Prevention by Design
Working Together for Effective Outcomes

A project of the Community Prevention Planning Program at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, Berkeley

Established in 1999 with the California Department of Drug and Alcohol Prevention (DADP), and in conjunction with the County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California (CADPAAC), Prevention by Design provides technical assistance to county alcohol and drug program (ADPs) and contracted community based organizations (CBOs). Prevention by Design operates through a Regional Trainer system set up to help counties and communities design and use a five-step outcome-based approach to prevention of alcohol and drug problems.

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SPF Step 3 (Planning) is designed to support counties at various levels of planning – though a comprehensive prevention plan is the main goal. Some counties may want to use Step 3 to engage in or revisit strategic planning; other counties may want to use Step 3 to focus on implementation or Action Plans for a well-developed current strategic plan. Ideally, an Evaluation Plan and a Sustainability Plan are part of Step 3.

System of Support for SPF

Prevention by Design is part of DADP’s technical assistance (TA) system to help counties make progress in SPF implementation. Tools and assistance in the form of the Regional Trainer (RT) are a handy package for counties of all sizes. We have refined several tools to “unpack” the Five Steps through a series of self-ranked sub-steps. The ranking helps set priorities for local action in terms of SPF implementation.

The first tool is the Capacity Building Tool, or CBT, which is a guided self assessment on the details on each step. Each county completes its own CBT with the assistance of its RT. The CBT provides a qualitative picture of current status of prevention services at the county level on each step.

Many participating counties have completed CBTs in the past. The self assessment in itself is part of Step Five evaluation, and should be done on an annual basis to track progress and revisit priorities in a changing world. As of late fall, the CBT language has been aligned with SPF.

Each of the CBT Five Steps is followed by an Action Plan that identifies where the county wants to go, what action is needed, and a time frame for follow-up. The county staff and the RT identify the challenges and opportunities in an Action Plan for achieving desired outcomes. For example, a county may need help designing an evaluation plan, and the RT can help make connections to groups like the Community Prevention Institute for no-cost consultations.

Following completion of the CBT and Action Plan, the county can complete the final tool, the County Prevention Outcomes Plan (CPOP). The CPOP summarizes the county’s Action Plan in a concise format useful for letting the state know about the county’s SPF prevention plan. The CPOP may report at whatever level of detail the county prefers to summarize actions and outcomes for the coming year, including kinds of assistance the county may need from the RT or other technical assistance providers.

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Web-based Surveys: A Great Tool

There are many reasons to use surveys as part of prevention planning. Web-based surveys are free or low cost, easy to design, easy to change, and most importantly, easy to distribute. Questions can be structured to elicit a variety of responses, such as yes/no, multiple-choice, Likert scale rankings, or open-ended essay. The responses can be tied directly to the respondent or completely anonymous. An internet search using the key words “web survey” yields many options at a variety of costs.

Prevention by Design recently conducted a simple customer satisfaction survey that offers a case in point. The nine-question survey focused on the usefulness of services, Regional Trainer availability and expertise, project’s role in Five Step planning, and quality improvement. The survey was sent as a link to the site in an email to county staff and administrators. The survey site compiled and tabulated answers.

A few tips on using web-based surveys:
- Each question should have a clear theme with specific answer choices.
- Respondents must have computers with internet access.
- Avoid long or complicated surveys in order to maximize completion rates.
- For ease of analysis, structure open-ended comments only in connection with questions that include specific answer choices.
- Quick turn around and sharing of results is recommended.
- Clean, correct email addresses are vital for distribution lists.
- Make sure your cover memo is precise about how long the survey will take, and includes clear instructions.

Highlights of PbD Survey Results
- 85% either agree or strongly agree that PbD services improve their outcome based planning
- 81% agree or strongly agree PbD materials meet practical needs

Web-based surveys are easy, inexpensive and effective tools for gathering data, assessing problems, receiving feedback, and obtaining many other types of information in your community. Ask your Regional Trainer or call the Berkeley office for more information or help!

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Starting in 2006, Prevention by Design RTs are focusing on helping each county prepare its own CPOP to identify county SPF prevention objectives for the near future (usually the coming year or two). Additionally, as time permits, RTs will help the county implement the CPOP in person, through internet resources, and by referral to TA services from the Community Prevention Institute, Friday Night Live/YLI, and others.

If your county hasn’t already met with its RT to use these tools and develop its own SPF process, call now and arrange an appointment to begin.
WHO WE ARE

REGIONS AND REGIONAL TRAINERS

REGION I
Counties: Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Tehama, Shasta, Butte, Plumas
Trainer: REBECCA BERNER, rberner2@berkeley.edu

REGION IB
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Trainer: DANIELLE CAMPBELL, kidccampbell@sbcglobal.net

REGION II
Counties: Mendocino, Lake, Colusa, Yolo, Sonoma, Contra Costa, Napa, Marin, Solano, Sacramento
Trainer: MELINDA MOORE, mkassocts@aol.com

REGION III
Counties: San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, Santa Cruz
Trainer: STEPHEN PURSER, spurser@berkeley.edu

REGION IV
Counties: Placer, El Dorado, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Merced
Trainer: PETER CATTRELL, petecattrell@yahoo.com

REGION V
Counties: Alpine, Mono, Inyo, Calaveras, Amador, Tuolumne, Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings, Kern
Trainer: RANDY DAVIS, rad19@csufresno.edu

REGION VI
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The opinions, finding, and conclusions herein stated are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State of California, Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.
## Current Five Step Language

Here’s a brief synopsis of the SPF Five Steps. These steps are also being integrated into the KIT Solutions web site for California Outcome Measures System – so these will all become very familiar soon. A more detailed list is available at our web site: www.preventionbydesign.org.

### Step One: Assessment
Identify areas of concern for community AOD problems; collect and analyze relevant data to define the local magnitude and locations of problems, identify target populations and environments and assess resources; rank AOD problems according to community need and health / safety criteria; share data and ranked concerns with the community.

### Step Two: Capacity Building
Assess readiness, capacity, and stakeholder resources and leadership to implement and sustain prevention initiatives; engage and mobilize local resources (financial and organizations) to address assessed needs. This may include convening partnerships or coalitions;

### Step Two, continued
Build readiness, cultural competency, and leadership among prevention partners through education and training; prioritize AOD concerns.

### Step Three: Plan
Set priorities for action on AOD problems; identify strategies for use with target populations and/or high-risk settings; use assessment data to develop a county strategic plan that includes effective policies, programs, and practices; identify strategic goals, objectives, and measurements; logic models are useful tools; prepare work plans for implementation, including evaluation plans.

### Step Four: Implement
Carry out the plan(s) developed in Step 3 above; as appropriate, issue RFPs / RFAs, etc. to carry out the work of the plan; document the work plan’s process and activities according to the evaluation plan; modify (and document) implementation as needed to achieve project goals and objectives.

### Step Five: Evaluate
Activate evaluation plan designed above; collect, analyze and report evaluation data to analyze processes and outcomes for programs, policies, and practices implemented in Step 4; share evaluation data and review with stakeholders; use evaluation findings to refine and improve prevention services.

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**Prevention by Design**

**Working Together for Effective Outcomes**

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