

CAPACITY TOOL 3: COMPONENTS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

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Key components of capacity building include:

- **Improving awareness of substance abuse problems and readiness of stakeholders to address these problems.** Stakeholders are often busy people, juggling multiple, competing priorities. To make your issue their priority, you will need to make a strong and compelling case for why they should devote their time, energy, and resources to the problems you have identified. It is especially important to educate other members of the behavioral health workforce, who may not recognize the role they can play in substance abuse prevention, or understand how their health promotion efforts are related to the work you do. Increasing community awareness isn't about increasing the knowledge and awareness of every community member. But there are certain key stakeholders in every community who must be on board if your prevention initiative is going to succeed. To figure out who these players are, it is important to look critically at the readiness data collected in Step 1 and identify community members and groups who are not yet ready for prevention, but who must be brought around if your initiative is going to take off. Then develop and implement strategies for boosting their readiness levels.
- **Strengthening existing partnerships and/or identifying new opportunities for collaboration.** Engaging and involving a range of partners is an essential piece of prevention planning--to share resources and information, and to ensure that you're able to reach multiple populations with multiple strategies, in multiple settings. Building a team from the various groups that have expertise in or represent the target population will ensure better outcome and results. Involving different sectors of the community in early planning will also help to ensure that resources needed for sustainability will be available later on. When thinking about collaboration, consider both traditional and non-traditional partners. Important champions for prevention may be found in the local media, and in the legislature, faith, or business communities. It's important to foster relationships with stakeholders –individuals or institutions who support your prevention efforts, as well as those who may stand in your way.
- **Improving organizational resources.** At the State level, this might involve strengthening data collection systems and infrastructure, re-allocating staff workloads to improve efficiency and effectiveness, or increasing coordination with other State systems that can support prevention efforts (e.g., public safety, juvenile justice). At the community level, this often means engaging or building planning groups, ensuring that planning groups reflect the ethnic make-up of the community, and /or enhancing how the group does its work (e.g., selects members, makes decisions).
- **Developing and preparing the prevention workforce.** The effectiveness of any prevention effort depends on the knowledge and sophistication of the people delivering the intervention. But workforce development means more than simply preparing individuals to complete specific tasks. It also means creating or enhancing systems to support development activities and making sure that practitioners can access the services provided.

For more information:

SAMHSA. (2015, September 29). *Step 2: Build Capacity*. Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention-framework/step2-build-capacity>

¹ Capacity tool was borrowed directly from a SAMHSA document found on their website in 2013. This document is no longer available from their website. However, similar resources can be found at <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention-framework/step2-build-capacity>