

Learning Community Overview (Handout 2)



Background

The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) State Incentive Grant has provided a unique opportunity to create a learning community throughout Vermont focused on Substance Abuse Prevention. Communities who receive SPF funding will work together with a shared vision to fulfill common goals through collaboration, active learning, peer consultation and the use of many technical assistance resources.

Who is part of the Learning Community?

The Vermont Learning SPF Learning Community is comprised of two major audiences:

- 1) SPF Leadership including: (we need to provide a separate contact list of these people)
 - Vermont Department of Health (VDH) SPF Leadership Team
 - VDH Prevention Consultants
 - VDH Chronic Disease Specialists
 - SPF Training Team- Center for Health and Learning
 - Community Coordinators and Local Leadership Teams
- 2) Organization membership and emerging community partners

WHY have a Learning Community?

The Learning Community has a number of purposes:

- Create a shared vision
- Learn through cooperation, using one another as resources
- Build networks that are ongoing and provide access to shared resources that sustain the work
- Provide support for the application of knowledge in a timely way

WHAT will the SPF Learning Community do?

The goal is that all the activities of the Learning Community will support the application of knowledge and skills in communities with the purpose of preventing substance abuse. In addition, the use of common language, tools and technology at the community level will ensure consistency of approach statewide.

WHAT resources will we use to cultivate and support the Learning Community?

We will use a combination of activities and tools that build relationships, knowledge and skills including:

- Dialogue education and focused peer exchange
- Technical assistance from experts
- Print, online and other technological resources.

These resources are outlined in the Table on the reverse side.

HOW will we activate the Learning Communities?

The Learning Community design uses a process experienced in multiple cycles (through training and meetings) to enhance communication, and build community team rigor and outcomes. The cycle repeats and leads to the next stage of SPF planning. The cycle includes:

- Group forming and maintenance
- Identifying knowledge, tools and skills that assist the work
- Anticipating and planning for community level tasks
- Reflecting on successes and challenges