



How can Community Interventions Prevent Substance Use?

Community interventions involving coalitions or partnerships focus on preventing substance use among adolescents (ages 10-17 years) or young adults (ages 18-24 years). Interventions may focus on a specific substance of importance to the community or address risk and protective factors related to substance use in general.

While coalitions and partnerships are different types of organizations, they both share the following key components:

- Direction by a new or existing community-based organization which includes members of the community, representatives of community groups, local agencies, and research or implementation partners.
- Selection and implementation of two or more of the following interventions by members of the community:
 - School-based interventions
 - Family-based interventions
 - Community-based interventions
 - Retailer education to reduce sales of alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis to underage youth
 - Enforcement activities directed at underage sales or use of alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis
 - Policy advocacy
- Implementation support and ongoing technical assistance from research or implementation partners.

Why is This Important?

- Youth substance use is associated with increased behavioral and academic problems; teen pregnancy; sexually transmitted infections; involvement in, or experience with, violence; injuries; and mental health symptoms, such as anxiety and depression.
- Preventing or delaying youth initiation reduces later risk for substance use, substance use disorders, and overdose.
- Changes in the legal and regulatory landscape for substances including cannabis and psychedelics as well as the increased availability of illegally-made fentanyl and other synthetic opioids can affect overdose morbidity and mortality.
- Recent trends in substance use among youth indicate stabilization or decreases for all substance categories; however, some youth continue to experience high rates of substance use and associated harms (e.g., LGBTQ+ students).

Major Findings

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends community interventions involving coalitions or partnerships to prevent substance use among youth. Evidence from the systematic review shows interventions reduce both initiation and use of:

- Cannabis
- Tobacco
- Alcohol, including binge drinking
- Illegal substances

Most studies were conducted in rural or suburban communities. Interventions also reduced self-reported antisocial behaviors related to delinquency, violence, or alcohol use.

Learn More

Read the [complete summary of the systematic review](#), access implementation resources, and find out more about substance use.