

Substance abuse prevention and public health crosswalk: How two distinct systems can come together to address environmental strategies in local communities

Moderator/Discussant: Abigail Wells

Panelists: Kerryann Bouska, Jennifer Veersteg, Julie Spackman, Nick Stevenson

The recent merger of substance abuse prevention and public health has brought about many questions, such as where is the future of public health and substance abuse prevention integration going next. Both systems have evidence based practices, years of research and strong outcomes when it comes to best practices for community wide prevention. While many counties and prevention staff across the state are still working out the details and waiting to see how this merger plays out, many substance abuse prevention and public health professionals are coming together and laying the groundwork in their communities by merging the knowledge and practice of each profession in new and innovative ways. This panel will provide public health and substance abuse professionals a look into each other's areas of expertise and will focus on ways in which partners are successfully navigating this new relationship in a way that is both respectful of each other's knowledge base and distinct fields, while maintaining a can-do attitude and searching for commonalities that will tie us together with our common goals. In this session you will hear an overview of the Strategic Prevention Framework and the 7 Strategies for Community Change, with emphasis on the 4 environmental strategies (Enhancing Access/Reducing Barriers, Changing Consequences, Physical Design, Modifying/Changing Policies). The panelists will also discuss how this applies to public health strategies and systems, and talk of the commonalities and ways in which they are similar, yet each have unique qualities that can be utilized to the advantage of both fields. You will then hear from some of these professionals who have jumped in feet-first and have found ways to collaborate and create practices that will strengthen the way public health operates and addresses substance abuse prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs by adopting a new and fresh lens through which to look at local conditions and community-wide public health problems.

Presentation 1: Kerryann will give an overview of the Strategic Prevention Framework and the 7 Strategies for Community Change, with emphasis on the 4 environmental strategies (Enhancing Access/Reducing Barriers, Changing Consequences, Physical Design, Modifying/Changing Policies). She will then tie this into public health strategies and systems and talk of the commonalities and ways in which they are similar, yet each have unique qualities that can be utilized to the advantage of both fields

Presentation 2: Jennifer has been working closely with the nursing section of public health on the community change strategy of enhancing access and reducing barriers. They each shared information on trends in their various sectors of public health. Jennifer and her team had recently done focus groups in the county around prescription drug abuse and after an extensive strategic planning process they uncovered that, unlike what they had originally assumed teens meant by abusing prescription drugs, the prescription drug abuse that was actually more rampant amongst their youth was not that of opiates, but more frequently the abuse of ADHD drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin. Around the same time, the nursing team had uncovered a recent upward trend in STDs amongst youth in the county. Through further strategic means, they uncovered the rise was tied to needle use from these youths who had progressed in their substance abuse after first abusing the aforementioned ADHD drugs. This finding allowed them to begin to work on

this public health issue together and begin to address and tackle it in ways that would not have been done before if not for these two silos coming together to solve a common problem that they would not have known existed before the merger. They are in the works of creating a needle exchange program to address this rising issue that is relevant to both fields.

Presentation 3: Julie and Nick both work in Deschutes County where they are in the midst of integrating TPEP into their local substance abuse coalition, Shared Future Coalition. The assimilation of TPEP will be discussed, as well as some of the successes and challenges of this integration and how they have faced them head on.

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