

# Substance Use Prevention Month

## What is Substance Use Prevention?

Substance use prevention aims to educate and support individuals and communities to prevent the use of drugs and the development of substance use disorders across the lifespan.

Substance use prevention is essential for fostering healthier communities. Effective prevention programs educate individuals about the risks of substance use and promote healthy coping strategies. By investing in prevention, communities can create supportive environments that empower individuals to make informed choices, leading to stronger, healthier communities.

## Prevention Science

Prevention science refers to the science behind substance use and determining effective prevention strategies. It also refers to understanding academic, social and health problems at the community and individual levels, developing effective interventions and translating scientific evidence into policy and practice.

## SAMHSA Prevention Framework (SPF)

The Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration uses the Strategic Prevention Framework to guide substance use prevention work. The Strategic Prevention Framework emphasizes a data-driven approach that assesses community needs, builds capacity and implements evidence-based interventions to foster healthy communities.



Source: [samhsa.gov/sptac/strategic-prevention-framework](https://samhsa.gov/sptac/strategic-prevention-framework)

### Five Guiding Principles

- 1. Assessment:** Identify local prevention needs based on data
- 2. Capacity:** Build local resources and readiness to address prevention needs
- 3. Planning:** Find out what works to address prevention needs and how to do it
- 4. Implementation:** Deliver evidence-based programs and practices as intended
- 5. Evaluation:** Examine the process and outcomes of programs and practices

The Strategic Prevention Framework operates around creating culturally competent interventions and focuses on implementing interventions that will achieve long-term community change.

Cultural competence is the ability of an individual or organization to understand, interact and engage with all people within the served community who may have different backgrounds and life experiences.

Sustainability is the process of building an adaptive and effective system that achieves and maintains desired long-term results.



**DART Prevention Coalition**  
Taking Aim at Substance Use in Ocean County

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## The Importance of Prevention

Prevention is crucial in addressing substance misuse as it reduces the likelihood of addiction and its associated negative consequences for individuals and communities. By prioritizing prevention, communities can enhance resilience, reduce risk factors and promote well-being among their populations.

## What Drives Our Work in Prevention

### CADCA's Seven Strategies for Community Change

1. Provide Information
2. Enhance Skills
3. Provide Support
4. Change Access / Barriers
5. Change Consequences, Incentives/Disincentives
6. Change Physical Design
7. Modify & Change Policies

The DART Prevention Coalition of Ocean County uses CADCA's seven strategies for community change to create a structured, evidence-based approach to addressing substance use issues in our community. These strategies help build capacity, foster collaboration among key leaders and ensure that programs and initiatives are tailored to our community's needs. By following these strategies, we can mobilize resources, engage community members and achieve sustainable change.

## What are Risk and Protective Factors?

Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of adverse outcomes.

Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of adverse outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact.

Risk factors increase the likelihood of substance use, while protective factors can mitigate these risks. Understanding the intercorrelation of risk and protective factors is essential for substance use prevention efforts. It allows communities to identify and strengthen protective factors while addressing and reducing risk factors, helping to create healthier environments that support individuals in making positive choices.

## Interested in learning more about our initiatives?

Please reach out to [amy.piacentedesch@rwjbh.org](mailto:amy.piacentedesch@rwjbh.org) with any questions regarding our prevention initiatives.

## DART's Prevention Efforts in Ocean County

### Trainings

- Marijuana, vaping and medication management trainings
- Young Athletes and Opioids training
- TIPS Trainings (Responsible Beverage Server Trainings)

### Campaigns and Initiatives

- Project Sticker Shock
- Safe medication disposal kits
- Prevention toolkits, fact cards, infographics and awareness campaigns
- Permanent metal signage for young athletes, recovery access and smoke-free areas

### Community Coalitions and Groups

- Youth Prevention Coalitions in county middle schools and high schools
- Substance use prevention efforts in faith-based communities through the Southern Ocean County Interfaith Advocacy & Leadership (SOCIAL) Network

### Data Collection and Policy Change

- Collecting data to guide initiatives and efforts in our communities
- Assistance in changing local policies, school policies and ordinances related to substance use

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