



Hancock County Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force (HCPDATF)



Overall Project Description

A recent survey revealed that 5.7% of 18-25 year olds in Hancock County have misused a prescription drug within the last thirty days (HCPDATF Survey of 18-25 Year Olds in Hancock County, 2012). We believe this low percentage is due to our increasing capacity to address prescription drug misuse and our commitment to keeping this issue from ever becoming an epidemic within our community. However, the survey

also revealed that the majority of 18-25 year olds in Hancock County perceived the misuse of prescription drugs to be “totally unacceptable” and poses a “moderate to high risk.” Therefore the Task Force determined a Media Campaign addressing this protective factor as the most appropriate means to reinforce this social norm and to encourage others within this target population to come to the same perception concerning prescription drug misuse.



Assessment

The Task Force focused its efforts on prescription drug misuse use among 18-25 year olds in Hancock County. Our Needs Assessment revealed that although 5.7% of the target population reported misusing a prescription drug within the last thirty days, the majority of the target population does not misuse prescription drugs and believes doing so is unacceptable and poses a moderate to high risk.

Planning

The Task Force spent a considerable amount of time learning how to reinforce community norms through media campaigns. Realizing that our Needs Assessment revealed a significant key protective factor – that the majority of the target population does not misuse prescription drugs and believes doing so is inappropriate – the Task Force chose to plan ways to reinforce this rather than focus on reducing the percentage of the target population (5.7%) that reported misusing a prescription drug within the last thirty days. It is believed that a reduction in this percentage will result as the percentage of those in the majority increases. Thus, the Task Force developed its Theory of Change to state: “If the Hancock County Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force implements a Media Strategy, then it is more likely that the community will experience a decrease in the misuse of prescription drugs among 18-25 year olds in Hancock County.”

Evaluation

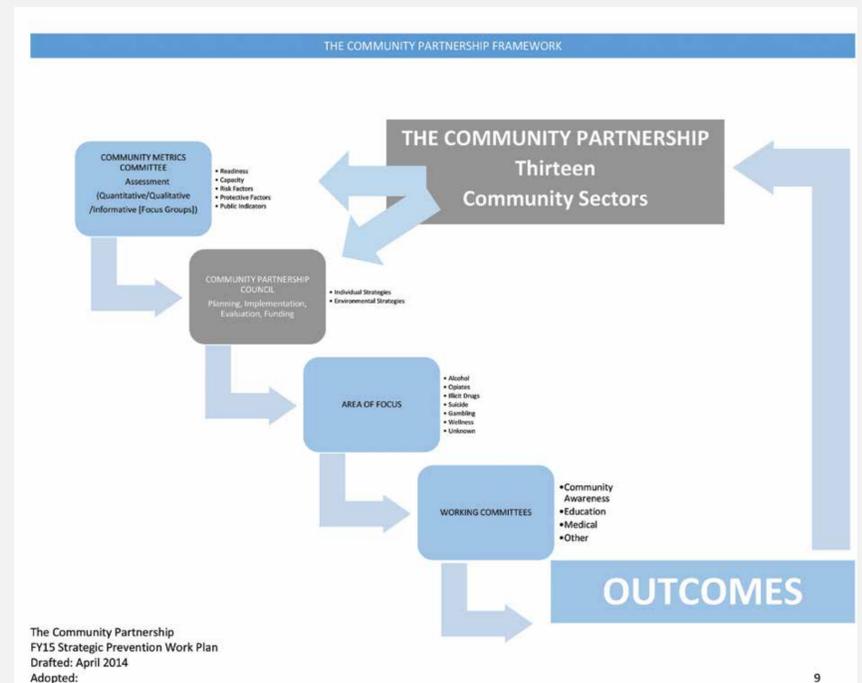
The Task Force developed the following anticipated outcomes: Short Term: 1. Task Force will have a significant social media presence. 2. Target population will indicate significant awareness of the social norm message. 3. Target population will indicate a decrease in the misuse of prescription drugs within the last thirty days. Long Term: 1. Increase unacceptability of prescription medication misuse of 18-25 year olds by 5-10%. 2. Decrease the indifference to prescription medication abuse of 18-25 year olds by 5-10%.

Capacity

The Task Force developed out of our existing coalition, the Hancock County Community Partnership. The coalition has worked diligently over the years to include representatives from as many of the community sectors as possible. Although there is significant community representation, our Readiness Survey indicated that our community understands there is a problem but does not know how to address the issue of prescription drug misuse. Through the SPF SIG process, we were able to educate our Task Force in many facets of prevention, including prevention theory, prevention strategies, and information specific to our targeted issue of prescription drug misuse.

Implementation

The environmental strategy implemented by the Task Force is a Media Campaign addressing a revealed social norm which indicates that a majority of the target population does not misuse prescription drugs and believes doing so is unacceptable. The Task Force solicited proposals from local media consultants, vetted each consultant, and selected one consultant who is particularly well versed in social media and media habits of the target population to manage the campaign. The media campaign is entitled, “I Am Enough” and features members of the target population demonstrating through social media outlets how choosing not to misuse prescription drugs is an acceptable and positive way to live a productive and healthy life. In early May, the campaign was introduced at a community launch party.



Sustainability

The Hancock County Community Partnership, which is the parent coalition of the Task Force, has developed a Work Plan for the upcoming fiscal year (July 2014-June 2015) that intends to employ aspects of the SPF process as it assesses, studies, develops, and implements future prevention initiatives. The Community Partnership learned that through the SPF process it can be more effective and more adeptly address issues affecting our community rather than relying on instinct alone. Using the SPF process, the Community Partnership will remain confident that whatever strategy it employs will yield positive outcomes as data and analysis will guide its initiatives in doing so.

Cultural Competence

The Task Force learned that addressing only the collegiate community (the University of Findlay) would not be as effective as addressing the entire 18-25 year old population in Hancock County. More individuals of the target population are not college students and as a result the Task Force learned that it is important to reach them where they work, live, and play, as well as where they attend school. Additionally, it has been imperative to understand that the target population utilizes social media as a primary means of communication, and therefore the media campaign has a strong social media component.