

Sustainability Plan

Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG)

LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG): Sustainability Module

Introduction

“The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of particular activities delivered or the format in which they are delivered.” –Mancini & Marek (2002)

There are four clarifying questions that need to be answered in order for sustainability planning to move forward:

1. *What* are you trying to sustain? (or, *What* needs to be sustained?)
2. **Public Value:** What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, *Why* does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)
3. **Authorizing Environment:** What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?
4. **Operational Capacity:** What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

A. Building the Sustainability Team

Before these questions can be answered, it is essential that you *identify the key players*. It is very important to consider your authorizing environment (Moore, 1995).

Who are the individuals on your campus that need to be involved in conversations about sustainability?

Lorain County Community College needs to involve not only individual instructors in specific sections of classes, but also:

- The Director of Student Life
- The Coordinator of Women’s Link and Men’s Link
- The Dean of Enrollment Services
- Instructors and mentors of Health and health related classes
- Instructors interested in providing service learning and/or have a particular interest in providing opportunities to LCCC students.

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B. Sustainability Question #1: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?)

Weiss, Coffman, Bohan-Baker (2002) identified four categories related “initiative sustainability.” These categories are very broad and are very applicable to alcohol prevention initiatives. These categories may be helpful for your team as you plan for sustainability. If your team has already clearly articulated what you are trying to sustain, you may want to categorize your objectives. Please feel free to create your own category if you need to.

Please remember that you do NOT need a sustainability objective/goal for each category. We are providing these categories as conversation catalysts, not as requirements.

1. *Organizations and/or Projects*: securing additional funding for projects begun or supported under the initiative
2. *Ideas*: maintaining the initiative’s core principals, values, beliefs, and commitment
3. *Relationships*: maintaining connections among people and institutions
4. *Outcomes*: maintaining initiative results

Please choose the question that most appropriately applies to your project: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?) Please state your sustainability objectives/goals as bullet-point statements. Each objective/goal must be specific, measurable, and observable.

- Secure additional funding to support continuation and expansion of alcohol awareness initiatives
- Involve several areas on campus (Student Life clubs, Women’s Link, Health classes)
- Have each area led by one person who can track involvement, hold each unit accountable
- Set specific goals for each unit to reach regarding numbers of students participating, workshops or events held here.

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C. Sustainability Question #2: Public Value - What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, Why does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)

We discussed the idea of *public value* (Moore, 1995). It may be helpful to frame this conversation among your planning team as such. For example, it may be useful to have your planning team respond to these questions (You do not need to write responses to these questions, these are just provided as conversation catalysts.):

1. How is this alcohol prevention initiative positively impacting students?
2. What results from this alcohol prevention initiative are valued by the campus community? The local community surrounding campus?
3. What results from this alcohol prevention initiative are valued by the leadership team?

Once you have answered these questions, please respond to the overarching question (whichever form is most applicable to your situation): What evidence do you have that what you are doing is worth sustaining? (or, Why does this initiative deserve to be sustained?)

The alcohol initiative has a positive impact on the high school freshmen we worked with in Health class, but we really need to target the college population. I do not feel we reached out to a broad enough student population. Our high school freshmen had just gone through a similar program in junior high and were not as motivated or close enough to the subject matter. I feel we need to expand the initiative to the entire college before we can answer impact questions. Our students are commuters, we do not have college housing, so on campus incidents don't really occur. This can be misleading however, because our students will still be faced with situations outside of a school setting where critical decisions regarding alcohol will be made. As a community college, we have the responsibility to educate not only students, but justify our interaction with the community. The community looks to us to be at the forefront of education not just classes, but education for the entire community.

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D. Sustainability Question #3: Authorizing Environment - What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?

We discussed the idea of *authorizing environment* (Moore, 1995). It is important to determine who holds the ability to make key decisions regarding the sustainability of the project.

What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability of your alcohol prevention initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What current *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* support your alcohol prevention initiative?
- Of these structures, which could be strengthened to ensure sustainability of your alcohol prevention initiative?
- What structures are blocking or obstructing your alcohol prevention initiative?
- Which structures are still needed to ensure sustaining your alcohol prevention initiative?

We had a very small group involved with this initiative, and it did not go over well with the students selected. We also had some time, resource issues that further hampered our initiative. I have reached out to other areas on campus to broaden the program and have had positive feedback from our Student Life Office, Women's Link, and college level Health classes. I do not think this will be a mandatory program from our Enrollment Services office, as there is limited time in our orientation classes. I think the program will be best served if a student advocacy group takes over. We need an easy to navigate program, one with a clear message. Finances are very tight here at LCCC at the present time and we may not be able to justify another expense without a clear objective and rationale, such as College Save Act compliance.

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E. Sustainability Question #4: Operational Capacity - What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

We discussed the idea of *operational capacity*. In order for your sustainability goals/objectives to become reality, your alcohol prevention initiative must have the *capacity* necessary to achieve those outcomes. Capacity is defined in many ways, including (but not limited to): securing diverse resources and acquiring the appropriate expertise. Basically, the purpose of this question is to determine the resources (e.g., time, personnel, funding, etc.) needed to achieve each sustainability goal/objective.

What operational capacity is necessary to achieve sustainability and where will the capacity come from to sustain your alcohol prevention initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What current resources are necessary to sustain your alcohol prevention initiative?
- Of these resources, which is insufficient or vulnerable?
- What current skills and expertise does your initiative rely on to sustain your initiative's positive outcomes?
- Of these skills and expertise, which could be strengthened to ensure sustained positive outcomes?
- Which skills and expertise are still needed to sustain positive outcomes?

We need faculty and staff committed to the program who can take on the administrative aspects of delivering the program to a particular set of students. Students will need access to time, computers, training in a particular program. It would be extremely helpful if funding were provided to assist these individuals train the students (funding for a specific program)-I think we have people who can take this project on, but we need clear outcomes, objectives, training, accountability, assistance with issues that arise with particular programs. If a leader has the determination to see the project through, the rest can be learned.

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F. Strengths/Challenges

In any projects, there are strengths and challenges. The purpose of the following questions is to help you identify ways you can capitalize on your strengths and prepare for probable or potential obstacles.

1. In what ways do you believe your alcohol prevention initiative is positioned to achieve sustainability?

2. What are the probable or potential obstacles to sustainability?

- We have several groups on campus who would be able to incorporate these initiatives into their existing program. It would be a great addition to their already strong programming.
- Potential obstacles are:
 - Financing (always!) –our groups will have a hard time setting aside dollars for fees not already budgeted
 - Keeping all the areas going in the same direction, communication,
 - Students will need some type of incentive to take on the project, as we will probably not make this mandatory

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