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PREVENTING ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE THROUGH THE USE OF A STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK SYSTEM IN COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a planning and implementation model that mobilizes communities to collaborate on developing and implementing an evidence-based prevention system. This model follows a structured five-step process with two cross-cutting elements (cultural competence and sustainability) that emphasizes building capacity of coalitions to strategically plan, implement, and sustain evidence-based prevention services to reduce adolescent substance use. This study utilized a prospective pretest-posttest cohort design using multiple cross-sectional data. Participating youth were in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 and lived in one of 27 counties in a Southeastern state that was funded through the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention’s SPF State Incentive Grant program. Community coalitions that completed the SPF SIG process were found to have strengthened policies and procedures needed to promote high quality prevention. Coalition stakeholders demonstrated increased capacity in their awareness, commitment, and skills for advancing through the SPF. It was also found that organizations these stakeholders represented were supportive. After the SIG was completed, middle and high school students reported using less alcohol and tobacco. High school students also reported less use of other drugs such as cocaine, inhalants, and methamphetamines. It is difficult to determine in this study what, if any, of the SPF SIG causal mechanisms produced these outcomes. There was no association between community capacity building and reductions in adolescent substance use. Future study should examine the association of other SPF mechanisms with change in adolescent substance use.