

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON PREVENTION WORK

How Virginia communities are adapting prevention amid the COVID-19 pandemic

WHAT IS WORKING

CSBs and communities across Virginia have transitioned some in-person strategies to work remotely. There has been significant amounts of trial and error in adapting strategies, including trainings, which continue to evolve and develop into virtual sessions. New opportunities have also presented themselves during this difficult time. New partnerships of all kinds have developed, fresh media campaigns on new platforms have launched, and staff are able to devote more time to important tasks typically overshadowed.

See the areas below where CSBs have seen some small – and large! – successes recently.

Media Campaigns

- Expanding TV, radio & social media campaigns
- Shifting to COVID-19 related content
- Partnering with media companies to maximize reach

Virtual Meetings & Trainings

- Using Zoom & conferencing tools (phone & video)
- Adapting content (MHFA, REVIVE, ACE's) & meeting format
- Offering resources on sensitive topics

Virtual Events

- Virtual Health Fair with short videos from organizations
- Virtual awareness walks being planned

Item Distribution

- New partners (i.e., school food programs, libraries, meal delivery)
- Mailing drug disposal items directly to community members

Youth Services

- Using Zoom & tech apps
- Utilizing partners to facilitate connections (i.e., telehealth)
- Keeping content light (i.e., games, dance parties)

Mental Health Wellness

- Providing self-care, wellness and parenting resources to students & parents through schools and partners
- Using social media and rack cards to distribute self-care messages

WHAT IS CHALLENGING

There are some barriers CSBs and communities are still overcoming. Many challenges involve using new and unfamiliar technology applications and platforms, difficulty with internet access for some communities, and reaching targeted populations.

CSBs continue to problem solve and develop work-arounds to address the challenges listed below.



Technology

- Internet access in rural areas
- Learning curve with new platforms and programs
- Different partners use different platforms
- Connecting with tech averse populations or those without internet
- Privacy concerns when connecting with youth



Staffing

- Staffing changes due to layoffs or furloughs
- Shifting duties, including non-prevention staff implementing prevention work
- Community and coalition partners lack capacity currently, or are unable to shift focus to COVID-19 related efforts



Prevention Relevance

- Ensuring prevention remains visible now that in-person community efforts are suspended
- Communicating value of prevention work during current crisis, and afterwards
- Planning for future events, trainings and efforts with uncertain timelines or resources

WHAT WOULD BE HELPFUL?

- For DBHDS and OMNI to continue to share updates and resources
- Opportunities to connect with each other across Virginia, by region, and/or by topic
- Learning from others and sharing tips or resources
- Specific TA on maximizing the use of Zoom and other virtual meeting/training platforms
- Support revising data entry plans to reflect current strategies
- Guidance and ideas on spending funds reallocated from strategies no longer being implemented
- Communication support on the importance of prevention and adhering to funding compliance requirements

WHAT CSBs ARE FOCUSING ON



Of the 33 CSBs and communities that responded to the recent COVID-19 Impact survey...

- 91% have canceled trainings or meetings
- 79% are equipped to work remotely
- 30% don't have full capacity to work remotely
- 52% continue to focus on prevention work as before
- 9% have had some or all prevention staff redirected elsewhere
- 82% have some or a lot of experience with conference calls
- 64% would like TA on Zoom and 64% have some experience with Zoom
- 58% would like TA on Google Hangouts

Planning and Administrative Work

- Revising planning and evaluation documents
- Reviewing trends and indicator data
- Researching new strategies and curricula
- Exploring grants and new funding opportunities
- Strategizing plans for next fiscal year
- Shifting funding away from strategies no longer implementing

Getting Ahead

- Drafting materials for future use (i.e., articles, blog posts, presentations)
- Developing media campaigns to use at a later time
- Creating data visualizations for reports, presentations, or marketing materials

Professional Development

- Enhancing or learn new skills (i.e., group facilitation, leadership, coalition building, marketing)
- Becoming certified in a specific curriculum
- Reading the latest literature on population specific strategies

Data

- Catching up on data entry in the CPG Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS)
- Reviewing PBPS data for accuracy by running reports
- Delving into evaluation of some strategies
- Developing data visualizations of PBPS data

BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING FROM HOME



Dedicated workspace

An office, a desk in a bedroom or corner in the living room – anywhere is fine!



Connect with others

Set aside time in meetings for water cooler talk and chit chat



Set boundaries

Communicate boundaries and work time expectations with family



Breaks

Take breaks throughout the day – go outside, check in with family & friends, take a walk, or even get up and do some jumping jacks every once in a while



Structure work time & have routines

Set aside work time and create/maintain routines for your workday; stop working at end of the day.



Set priorities

Use to do lists to prioritize tasks, but make sure they are realistic and manageable for the day or week



Productivity

Re-think what being productive means now



Self-Care

Go easy on yourself

SHARING COVID-RELATED RESOURCES WITH OTHER CSBS

Continue sharing resources and ways you are adapting your strategies with others!

- Most folks identified the VA Prevention Works! Portal as the best forum for sharing materials and news
- Don't forget about the designated COVID-19 section of the portal – sharing there will allow for a central resource hub. [Click here to check it out!](#)