

How to Develop a Community Substance Abuse Logic Model

What is a Community Logic Model?

A Community Logic Model reflects the planning that needs to take place to generate community level change. Building the logic model begins with careful identification or mapping of the local substance abuse problem and associated patterns of substance use and consequences. Developing the logic model starts with defining the substance abuse problem, not choosing the solutions, that is, the programs, practices, or policies already decided upon by States or communities. The Community Logic Model describes your theory of change.

A comprehensive plans combine a variety of strategies, therefore it is important to understand the relationship between the problems and factors that contributed to them. Since most substance abuse problems aren't usually fixed by direct influence or through attack mode it is important to find the underlying factors that contributed to the problem, its escalation and the subsequent adverse consequences. These factors include:

- Risk and Protective Factors-These present themselves across the course of development and make individuals and groups either more or less prone to substance abuse in certain social conditions.
- Contributing Conditions-The are implicated in the development of the problems and consequences associated with substance abuse. Such as specific local policies and practice, community realities, or population shifts.

Identifying risk and protective factors for substance abuse or use are important in determining the most promising strategies, practices and policies to address the issue and consequences.

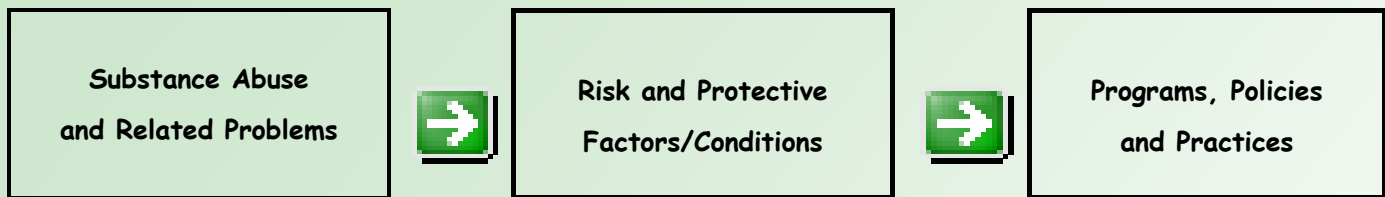
Logic models are a visual way to lay out the substance abuse problem and the key markers that led to the problem. Logic models represent a systemic way to address the local problem within a specific context. The Community Logic makes explicit the rationale for selecting programs, policies, and practices to address the community's substance abuse problem.

In order for an substance abuse prevention program, policy or practice to be effective it must address the underlying risk and protective factors and any other factors that may have contributed to the problem.

Relevance

The purpose of the Community Logic Model is to assist in guiding the selection of types of programs, policies and practices for substance abuse prevention that are relevant for a particular community. Community Logic Models are tailored to reflect and meet the unique circumstances of a particular community. Because substance abuse problems are complex, it is reasonable to expect that multiple factors and conditions will be identified when applying the logic model. Communities should identify a comprehensive set of interventions directed toward the most significant risk and protective factors and contributing conditions to meet those identified within the particular community.

Example of a Community Logic Model



Benefits of Logic Models

- More Strategic Community Planning
 - Helps ensure selected strategies are relevant and feasible
 - Provides a common language about the strategy
 - Identifies resources needed to maintain the programs or expand strategies
 - Clarifies when outcomes are expected
- Strengthened Programmatic Planning
 - Ensures outcomes works well with the programs mission, resources and capacity
 - Provides focus for the team
 - Clarifies the target population
 - Provides understanding across complex tasks and diverse environments
 - Helps differentiate between program activities and outcomes
- Helps Establish Evidence
 - Assists with maximizing evaluation resources by identifying key outcomes for evaluation
 - Assists with identifying evaluation questions
 - Assists with identifying evaluation methods, instruments and measures
 - Assists with planning timing of evaluation data collection

While different communities may show similar substance abuse problems, the underlying factors that contribute to most of them will probably vary from one community to another. Communities should tailor the logic model to fit their particular community's needs, capacity and readiness to act.

References:

Identifying and Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions: Guidance Document for the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant Program, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, January 2007

Steps for Prevention: Your Program's Logic Model, Carol E. Hays, PhD, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Southeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies

