



#### Techniques of awareness building

- Individual and group interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Films
- Slide shows
- Lectures
- Role plays
- Drama or street theatre
- Puppet shows

#### Prevention Activities

Certain principles are useful to remember when deciding on the techniques and methods of planned prevention. Some important principles are:

- Avoid mass awareness campaigns. Targeted interventions are more useful in drug abuse prevention.
- Focus on the positive aspects of not using drugs. This includes messages on saying 'NO' to drugs and resisting peer pressure.
- Provide factual information on drugs. Scare tactics (showing skulls and bones) usually do not work.
- Focus on healthy ways of having fun. This may include group activities like games, cultural programs or activity workshops.
- Education, including academic education, vocational training and value-based education, are useful techniques of prevention.
- Job placements and pre-job training are especially useful for high-risk youth.
- Harm minimization may be the first step to help youth at risk (e.g. providing information on clean injecting practices to youth not yet willing to give up injecting drug use).

#### Messages of Prevention

- Drug abuse is **preventable**
- Drug dependence is **treatable**
- Those not abusing drugs must protect themselves from pressure to use (e.g. peer pressure)

You can add to this list. Be innovative. Be sensitive to the specific needs of the community. Monitor your messages and make sure they are understood. If they are not, alter the message or the way it is conveyed.

#### The Humane Community Worker

In any program, it is the sincerity and warmth of the community worker that is crucial to success. In addition to developing good communication skills, here are some practical tips to gain rapport with the community, especially the drug user in need of help:

- A warm 'hello' at every meeting goes a long way.
- Establish rapport. Listen with interest and understanding. Do not moralize.
- For those not using drugs, strengthen involvement in sports and social activities not involving drugs.
- For the drug user, convey a positive message that giving up drugs is possible and a drug-free life can be healthier and happier.
- Use success stories of persons who have recovered to motivate the community and the drug user.
- Encourage attendance to self-help groups. For alcohol- and drug-dependents, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous groups are available in larger cities. Self-help groups can be formed in smaller communities.
- Encourage the community to support the drug user to get treatment and support his/her reintegration into the community.
- Involve the families actively. Convey the same message of hope.

#### Developing Community Drug Rehabilitation and Workplace Prevention Programme

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##### Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi - 110 001

Tel : 3388580 Fax : 3384918

##### United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Regional Office for South Asia

EP 16/17, Chandragupt Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110 021

Tel : 4104970, 71, 72, 73 Fax : 4104962, 63 E-mail : undcp@undcp.ernet.in

##### International Labour Organization

Core 4B, 11rd Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003

Tel : 4602101 Fax : 4602111 E-mail : delhi@ilodel.org.in

##### European Commission

65 Golf Links, New Delhi - 110 003

Tel : 4629237, 38 Fax : 4629206 Email : eu@delind.cec.eu.int

##### National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention

Ground Floor, West Block 1, Wing 7, Rama Krishna Puram, New Delhi - 110 066

Tel : 6173257 Fax : 6173257 E-mail : nc\_dap@excite.com

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Principal Author : Dr. H. S. Sethi

Scientific Editor : Dr. Pratima Murthy

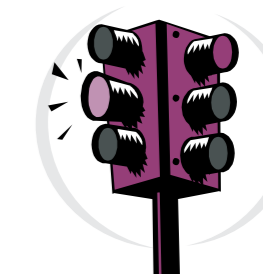
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## Prevention in the Community

### Role of a Community Worker



#### Introduction

When it comes to drug abuse, people within a community can be seen as belonging to three different zones. The three zones can be best compared to a traffic light. People in the green zone are those who do not use drugs presently. Those in the amber zone are the early users, who run a great risk of developing problems. Those in the red zone are persons who are addicted. People in the red zone need treatment that is expensive and requires a lot of effort, and relapses are frequent. Therefore, red zone strategies include detoxification and rehabilitation. Green zone strategies, which include awareness and education, reach a lot of people in the community. Amber zone strategies, including early identification and referral to treatment centers, are very effective, especially when the person is willing to work towards behavioral change.

This pamphlet addresses the role of the community worker in understanding the needs of the community and planning prevention of drug abuse.

#### Learn about the Community

It is useful to carry out drug abuse prevention work in a defined geographical area. The characteristics of the people in that community, including age groups,





occupations, socio-economic status, and cultural practices help in planning a community program specific to their needs. It is important to be aware of the attitudes of the local government, local community leaders and to understand the 'needs' of the community.

#### Focus on the most vulnerable groups

At what age do people start using drugs in this community? In most cases, drug abuse begins around adolescence. How are the children and adolescents in this community spending their time: do they go to school, do they work, or do they stay at home, idle? How do they spend their free time: do they play, do they 'hang out'? How strong is the peer group? Do they use drugs with peers? What recreational activities do they have?

#### Know the social patterns

How closely knit or isolated are members of the community? Are neighbors friendly with each other? What are the formal and informal social networks within the community? Do they have contacts outside the community? If so, what are they? What are the common activities that involve a lot of community members? How long have people been in the community? Do they move in and out? Is there frequent mobility?

#### Assess the strengths, resources and vulnerabilities of the community

What is the community proud of? How involved are people with community activities? Are they motivated to solve problems, or is the neighborhood experiencing rapid deterioration - increasing unemployment, growing problems with children? Has the community thought about drug and alcohol abuse as a problem? Have they considered possible responses?

The answers to some of these basic questions will shape the kind of community program that is required.

## Define the Needs and Plan a Project

The following steps are useful in assessing needs, and then planning and initiating a community project to prevent drug abuse.

### i. Carry out a Systematic Needs Assessment

- Identify the needs: What are the current problems faced by the community and what would constitute ideal community living? What does the community need to reach that ideal?
- Prioritize the needs: Decide which needs are most vital and can be met by your organization.
- Level the needs: Match the needs of all concerned – community needs, your organization's needs, needs of funding agencies (if any).
- Use a filter process: Decide which needs can be considered by your organization.

#### Who needs what as defined by whom?

##### Who are the persons in need of services?

- Out of school youth?
- Youth already experimenting with drugs?
- Youth using drugs in dangerous ways?

What are the needs of the community? For instance, do they need facilities to read and write? Do the children need a safe place to play? Do young men need alternative recreational activities for the evenings? What kind of health services are required? Do people need to develop skills to get jobs? How can their job opportunities be enhanced?

These needs are defined by **whom**? What are the different categories of people who can define the community's needs? It will not be feasible to talk to all members of the community. Therefore, we need to identify 'key informants' and 'gate keepers' who have an understanding of the community because of their position (leaders, teachers, project planners in government, and local 'know-all'), role in the community (non-governmental organization representatives), or their needs (community persons in need of services themselves).

### ii. Plan the Project

- Decide what is important and what can be done, based on community priorities.
- Focus on the persons who use drugs and not on the drug itself.
- List out the resources needed for the program, what you (your organization) and the community can offer.
- Check the difference (between needs and resources available) and plan to raise the additional resources needed.
- Decide whether the drug abuse prevention and program can be a 'stand-alone' one, or it should be a component of another project that the community needs.
- List the immediate activities from the priorities identified.
- Monitor the program at every stage. Evaluate impact by deciding beforehand what your program aims to achieve.

### iii. Mobilize the Community

Assess the existing degree of involvement among community members, and also gauge how much they will involve themselves in bringing about change. It is important to create active interest in your program among the community. Identify the right community

#### Potential community members who can be included in drug abuse prevention programs include:

Youth groups  
Women's groups  
NGOs  
Community leaders  
Community workers  
Health professionals  
Police  
Policy makers  
Government officials  
Municipal officials  
Local counselors  
Social clubs like Lions, Rotary etc.  
Scouts and Guides  
NSS  
NSC  
Parent Teacher Associations

members to participate in the program and give them well-defined leadership roles, so that community ownership for the program is developed from the start.

Effective community members are those:

- Who can empathize with drug users
- Have knowledge of substance abuse
- Have regular contact with drug users and the project staff
- Are well respected by the local community and have social, political or financial power that is important for drug abuse prevention
- Who respect differing opinions.

#### Techniques of involving key community members

- Discussion among focus groups is a useful way of involving key community members. In this method, about 6-8 potential members are brought together to discuss a specific issue. Their opinions, including points of agreements and disagreements, are recorded and are very useful in understanding the problems in the community, and in planning programs.
- Encourage formation of self-help groups. This could include groups of ex-users, groups of youth at risk, families of drug users, etc.
- Voluntary drug abuse prevention committees may be another effective strategy to prevent drug abuse in the community. These committees may plan programs for the community: e.g. recreational facilities for the youth, starting an employment agency in the community, setting up a counseling center for people in distress. These may be important measures to prevent drug abuse.
- Add on a drug abuse prevention component to existing programs in the community. In many communities there may be ongoing programs such as programs for adult literacy, self-employment, health and so on. Drug and alcohol prevention messages can very easily be incorporated into such programs.

#### Breaking the denial of the community

Members of the neighborhood might think that the problem identified by you does not exist or is not as significant as you have indicated. The denial of existence or significance of the problem varies from one neighborhood to another. Breaking through the denial by the community is a process not an event, and is tackled in several, at times overlapping, steps. This is achieved by:

- Creating awareness of the problem of drug abuse in the community and how it affects the community members and their children (increasing knowledge). At the end of this step, the community members will accept that there is a problem
- Encouraging participation of community members
- Selecting community members to work for the project
- Involving the community in project planning, implementation and evaluation, and giving them ownership of the project.

At the end of these steps, the community members would have understood the problem and would have ownership of the project.

- Demonstrating change to the community as a result of project work, by sharing success stories of the project with other community members. This increases the understanding of the problem by a larger number of people in the community
- Facilitating evaluation of attitudes and attitude change in members of the community after getting involved in the project. Changing attitudes of community members is the goal of breaking the denial.

### iv. Create Awareness

Create awareness about:

- The Problem
- The Responses
- The Resources

#### Awareness programs help to:

- Motivate people to come together for action. Targeted awareness can be conducted for parents, teachers, NGOs, community leaders, community members, government officials, administrators and policy makers
- Reach high-risk groups like street children, injecting drug users, industrial workers, prisoners etc.

- Promote alternative strategies like sports and recreational activities to prevent drug abuse
- Identify the problem and intervene early, as change occurs best with early intervention
- Provide information on treatment and rehabilitation

- Advocate a change in approach from only treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, which is expensive, to prevention, which is cheaper and reaches more people
- Mobilize resources from funding agencies (industry, government, private and international agencies).