SPF Essentials

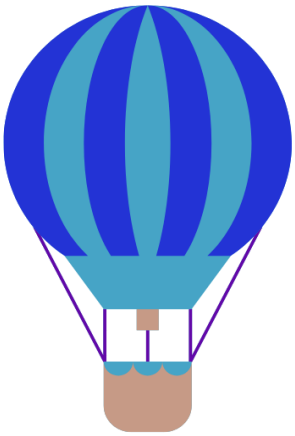
What is SPF?



The Strategic Prevention Framework, also known by the acronym SPF, is a planning model for community change that is driven by data. This model was developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and provides a comprehensive approach to effectively address substance use related issues in communities. It follows a circular, 5-step planning process, with two core principles guiding each step.

The SPF helps planners assess where their community and coalition stand on the path to change, build the necessary capacity for that change, and implement effective, evidence-informed and culturally appropriate strategies that lead to lasting change. For Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) groups, the SPF is a tool that can be utilized to cultivate and nurture systemic change in communities related to advancing recovery supports.

How does community change happen?



Community change is like a hot air balloon. The things we do on the ground level and at mid-elevation make it possible to get to our maximum altitude, and that is where systems level change happens! Ground level activities like organizing meetings, engaging partners, and reducing barriers create an important foundation for the work. This allows us to rise into bigger things like community activities and events that raise awareness. Over time, raising awareness lowers stigma by showing the community that people in recovery are not scary or different. These things continue to help us get to higher altitudes where systems level change happens. This is where we see changes in hearts and attitudes on the community level, where people realize that recovery is not a moral failing, and that people in recovery are seen as valuable members of the community.

However, changing community systems is not an easy or fast process! Just like a hot air balloon, it takes time to get to those higher altitudes. Sustainable change is slow and ongoing. It is about making our communities healthier and safer by identifying and addressing why our community is not currently designed to support individuals who use drugs or individuals and families seeking or maintaining recovery. It involves working together, using available resources, and taking strategic actions that lead to that sustainable system level change.

How does systems level change happen?

Provide education → **Increase awareness** → **Engage community partners** → **Create a coordinated network**

Cultural Humility and Sustainability

Culture shapes our values, behaviors, and perspectives, influencing how we interact with the world and each other. Understanding and respecting different cultures is essential for fostering inclusive and supportive environments, and this is where cultural competence and humility come in. Cultural competence is about working to understand and appreciate the cultural differences that make up our unique communities. Cultural humility is an acknowledgement that we not only need to understand and appreciate cultural differences, but we also need to acknowledge, regularly evaluate, and learn or unlearn behaviors associated with our own biases. Hence, we need to strive to not just be competent but culturally humble in our work.

Cultural Humility and the SPF

Why would being culturally humble be important in our work? Well, the goal for ROSCs is to create systems level change in your communities to better support individuals and families struggling with substance use and/or maintaining their recovery journey. Creating systems level change requires that we identify barriers and solutions impacting our *entire* community. Incorporating cultural humility into every step as we navigate the SPF process ensures that our work is reflective and relevant to all community members.

What is Sustainability?

There is a common misperception that sustainability largely coincides with funding for our coalitions or the work that we are doing. However, sustainability is so much bigger than just having funding available. Yes, it is an important piece of our work, but there is much more that needs to be considered. If we base the foundation of our work solely on funding, we create an unstable foundation that will crumble as soon as funding is no longer available.

Other Pieces of a Sustainable Coalition	
People	Is one person responsible for all the day-to-day tasks to keep the work going? Would progress come to a halt if one or two individuals took a step back from the coalition? Diversifying responsibilities among numerous members is key to not only maintaining the momentum of the work, but to also aid in preventing burnout for coalition leadership.
Resources	What resources are already available in your community or within your coalition? Are they established and well known? Are they sustainable and going to exist for the foreseeable future? Considering these questions throughout the SPF process helps to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts and prevents our work from being reliant on short-term resources.
Recruitment Efforts	Recruitment is a large part of the work when a coalition is in its beginning phases, but eventually those efforts tend to decrease as the group becomes more established. While recruitment does not need to be the focus for an established group, efforts in this area must continue. Our communities are constantly evolving, and ongoing recruitment efforts help us ensure that our membership is reflective of our community as well as ensure that we have a coalition that can withstand the ebbs and flows of member engagement.
Ongoing Engagement	Are members regularly engaged in the day-to-day tasks of the coalition? Is there even an opportunity for them to be engaged unless there is a large event taking place? Including members in the day-to-day decisions of the group helps to keep them engaged, even when the work is slow. We will not always have big events or developments that we are actively working towards, and only engaging members when this is the case can leave them feeling undervalued and questioning their role in the work.

Assessment

The assessment phase of the SPF involves several key steps including data collection, assessment of needs, identifying gaps, and prioritizing problems. The goal of the assessment step is to determine the priority problem(s) that your ROSC group is going to tackle. To do this, we will assess 3 general areas:

- The nature and extent of substance use, recovery supports, and resources available to those seeking recovery in our community.
- The gaps preventing access to services as identified by current data, as well as the assets currently connecting people to needed services and supports in our community.
- The readiness our community has for change at all levels including fiscal, organizational capacity, engagement from community members, stigma, etc.

Types of Data and Assessment Tools		
Qualitative Data	Qualitative data allows us to hear from the community directly and provides an opportunity to obtain multiple perspectives about the issues our community is currently facing.	• Key informant interviews • Open-ended survey responses • Focus group discussions
Quantitative Data	Quantitative data allows us to put numbers to the issues. Oftentimes, this data will come from shared data with other providers or databases.	• IL Youth Survey & County Health Rankings • Local Coroner & Health Department data • Many more!
SWOT Analysis	The SWOT Analysis is another great tool for assessing current conditions and factors influencing change. The strengths and weaknesses look at the internal workings of the coalition. The opportunities and threats look at the external community conditions.	When it comes to recovery supports in our community, what are our… • Strengths? • Weaknesses? • Opportunities? • Threats?
Community Survey	If properly developed, a community survey allows us to collect quantitative and qualitative data from our community about the current issues.	• A key item to consider for the community survey is collecting data from a representative sample (see below)
Asset & Resource Mapping	An asset map is a tool used to identify and showcase the strengths, resources, and assets within a community.	Assets can include: • Physical • Economic • Social • Cultural • Organizational • Human

Obtaining a Representative Sample

A representative sample is a subset of a population that we collect data from to accurately reflect the characteristics and needs of the larger group. Obtaining data from a representative sample helps to ensure that our work is culturally humble and relevant to the entire community.

Steps to achieve a representative sample:

- Set a goal for the minimum number of surveys, key informant interviews, etc. that need to be collected
- Partner with multiple organizations and individuals
- Offer multiple formats for surveys and meetings
- Develop a marketing and outreach plan

Considerations to ensure data is collected from a representative sample:

- Demographics of your community
- Community sectors
- The entire service area (and population)

Capacity Building

Capacity building is critical for the longevity of recovery support programs. It involves both strengthening the core ROSC Council team and engaging with the wider community to ensure that the efforts taking place can continue, regardless of funding streams or political support. Capacity is a combination of your community resources and readiness to engage in the work needed to create sustainable change.

Capacity Building Process



Identifying Gaps in Membership

During the capacity building step, it is important to ask, "who is missing?" Are folks missing because they do not see recovery supports as an important community issue? One way to identify who is missing from your "table" is looking at community sector representation (and lack thereof) in your group.

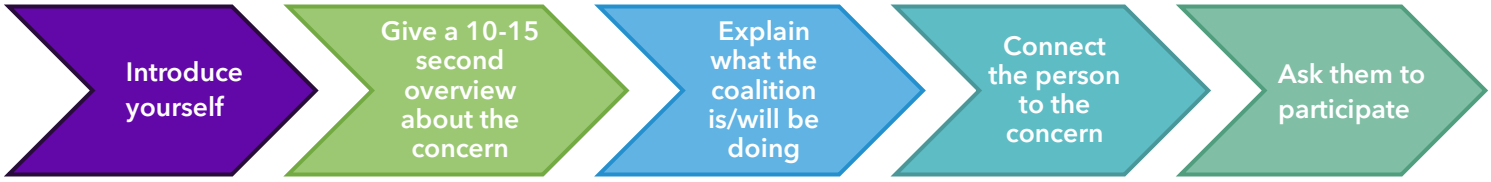
Business	Civic Groups	Faith Communities	Family Members with Living Expertise	Healthcare
Individuals with Living Expertise	Law Enforcement	Local Government	Media	Parents of Youth
Recovery Support Circles	Schools	Substance Use Organizations	Youth	Youth Serving Organizations

Additionally, remember capacity building is a team effort and will take the whole council to pitch in. It should not be a responsibility designated to one council member. You will also want to consider everyone's level of engagement when you begin to assign roles based on people's capacity.

The Elevator Pitch

The elevator pitch is a short, 30- 60 second long explanation of the coalition and their work that can be used for conducting outreach. It allows for a quick introduction that highlights the important points without taking up too much time, like the amount of time you may spend in an elevator with someone. Practicing your elevator pitch over and over until you are comfortable delivering it will help ensure its effectiveness.

Elevator pitches should be tailored to the individual that you are speaking to. How do substance use and recovery issues impact them? How can they get involved? Why should they care? These are the questions you should try to address, and the answers are going to vary depending on who you are talking to.



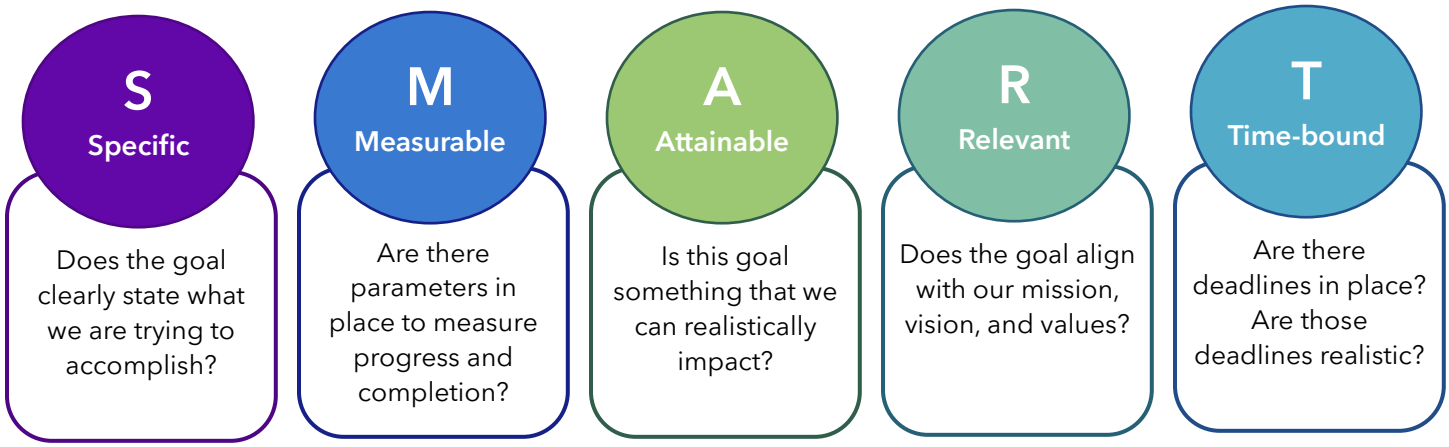
Another note, an engaged coalition member is not always someone that attends your meetings. Engagement can look like many different things. Maybe this individual rarely attends meetings but is regularly willing to donate goods or services to events for the group. Or maybe they are very responsive over email and are happy to help make connections with other stakeholders in the community. These individuals are still valuable, important, and engaged members for your coalition.

Planning

Planning helps maximize our impact in an efficient and organized way. It uses the data we collected in the assessment phase to select culturally appropriate and evidence-informed programs and strategies that fit our community and address the identified challenges.

SMART Goals

Once your coalition's planning group has brainstormed a list of activities or efforts to impact the gaps and barriers identified through the assessment phase, it is time to develop the steps and processes needed to fulfill our goals. Remember, you will want to make sure that you utilize evidence-informed and culturally relevant strategies that will be effective for your community's unique demographic. Setting SMART goals helps to make sure that every aspect of your strategic plan is well-considered.



Planning for Sustainability & Cultural Competence

Sustainability should be at the heart of the planning process from the very beginning. Asking ourselves, "how will this work continue in the future?" throughout the planning process helps to ensure that we do not create plans solely dependent on current available funding, resources, or stakeholders. Having realistic expectations for what our group can accomplish is another important point to consider. There are a lot of large issues, like a lack of local treatment beds, that create a barrier that prevents people from getting the help they need.

Instead of focusing our efforts on fixing the large issues, like trying to increase the number of local treatment beds, we can try to address some of the factors and barriers contributing to the large issue. For example, maybe our coalition works on transportation solutions to help community members be able to access treatment in other neighboring communities. Or maybe we look at methods to improve telehealth availability in our communities to help bridge the gap. Developing achievable goals with realistic timelines helps prevent discouragement and ineffectiveness in the implementation step.

Implementation



Evaluation

Information is power! We use evaluation data to measure and improve our work, which helps us to plan our future efforts to be more effective. It is a common misperception that we should only evaluate our work after big events or towards the end of a fiscal year. This isn't true and can make the evaluation process more overwhelming. Evaluations are most effective when they are done regularly and consistently. Some items that we should regularly evaluate in our work are:

Meetings	Are the meeting discussions facilitated well? Are we discussing topics relevant to our work and sticking to the agenda? Does the meeting time, date, and place work for our members?
Events	Did we see the result we were expecting? Did we have enough supplies, volunteers, etc.? How can we improve next time?
Programs	Are we seeing the outcomes we expected? Are more resources needed? How can we improve outreach and awareness efforts?
Strategies & Goals	Does this goal still align with our mission, vision, and values? Are we seeing the outcomes we expected? What adaptations are needed?
Community Data	Has there been a shift in data around substance use trends, overdose data, etc. If there was a change, is it what we expected? How does/should this new data impact our efforts?

Types of Evaluations

Process Evaluation
Used to evaluate the quality of implementation, ensure that the project stays on track, and make necessary adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of our efforts.

Outcome Evaluation
Focuses on assessing the direct effects of a program or practice after its implementation. It determines whether the program or practice had an impact and identifies what changes occurred.

Benefits of Evaluating Our Efforts

Regularly evaluating our work provides an opportunity to:

- Improve programs, practices, and processes
- Measure outcomes
- Obtain additional funding by illustrating our success
- Build community awareness and support
- Demonstrate our impact in the community
- Celebrate successes with our members

CCE Center for Community Engagement at Chestnut Health Systems

STATEWIDE ROSC

These services are funded in full or in part through a State Opioid Response Grant (TI085769) to the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.