



RPS FACT SHEET Vol. 7

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Environmental Prevention Strategies

Regional Prevention Services (RPS) is a regionally-based system, funded by the Colorado Department of Human Services; Division of Behavioral Health and administered by OMNI Institute.

For more resources and to find out how to contact the Regional Prevention Consultant (RPC) in your region, visit www.rpscolorado.org

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) identifies six research-based strategies:

- 1- Information Dissemination
- 2- Prevention Education
- 3- Environmental Strategies
- 4- Community-based Processes
- 5- Alternative Activities
- 6- Problem Identification and Referral

This fact sheet addresses appropriate and effective implementation of Environmental Strategies as a prevention strategy.

Environmental Strategies offer well-accepted prevention approaches that change the context (environment) in which substance use/abuse and other risky behaviors occur. They incorporate prevention efforts aimed at changing or influencing community conditions, standards, norms, institutions, structures, systems and policies (CADCA “The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies” 2009)


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Prevention efforts in communities have generally focused on the individual by socializing, instructing, guiding, and counseling youth and families in ways to increase their resistance to health risks. These are necessary strategies in preventing risky behaviors, but there are limitations in only focusing on the individual. For example, if an alcoholic leaves their community to attend in-patient treatment and they come back to their community after being sober for 60 days, they will still be surrounded by the same environment of use which can make it difficult for that person to maintain sobriety. Properly designed and managed, the shared environment can support healthy behavior and thwart risky behavior for all youth and families, regardless of how well prepared they may be by their individualized skills.

Environmental Strategies offer well-accepted prevention approaches that change the context (environment) in which substance use/abuse and other risky behaviors occur. They incorporate prevention efforts aimed at changing or influencing community conditions, standards, norms, institutions, structures, systems and policies. *Environmental Strategies* can also enhance the prevention efforts of many communities that already have a number of programs aimed at the individualized environment.

Environmental Strategies:

- Reach entire populations
- Reduce collective risk
- Create lasting change in community norms and systems
- Can be more cost-effective than services targeting individuals
- Requires community organizing and/or development and the involvement of different community sectors/players

<i>Individual Strategies</i>	<i>Environmental Strategies</i>
Focus on behavior and behavior change	Focus on policy and policy change
Focus on the relationship between the individual and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug related problems	Focus on the social, political, and economic context of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems
Short-term focus on program development	Long-term focus on policy development
Individual generally does not participate in decision making	People gain power by acting collectively
Individual as audience	Individual as advocate

(CADCA “The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies” 2009)



Types of Environmental Strategies

- Lowering availability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
 - Compliance checks
 - Keg registration
 - Tax increases
 - Limitations on the location and density of retail outlets
 - Server training
 - Surveillance of high-use areas
 - Incentives for checking age identification

- Systems change
 - Consistent enforcement of laws
 - Policy change (i.e. underage tobacco possession law, social host ordinance, prohibition of alcohol sponsorship of public event)
 - Restorative justice practices implemented versus punitive discipline practices
 - Restrictions on advertising

- Change in community norms
 - Impaired driving checkpoints
 - Social norms campaign
 - Restrictions on use in public places
 - Zero tolerance proclamations
 - Cops in shops (building relationships between law enforcement and retailers)

- Increase awareness
 - Counter-marketing/Counter-advertising campaign
 - Media literacy
 - Environmental scanning

Sources: <http://www.cadca.org/resources/detail/coalition-impact-environmental-prevention-strategies>

Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training – course materials

**To find out more about
visit our website at www.rpscolorado.org**

