Getting Unstuck: Identifying and Managing “Organizational Relapse” in AOD Prevention Programs

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Learning Objectives

Identify three indicators of “organizational relapse” based on organizational readiness and stages of change theory.

Describe two ways they might address plateaus within their alcohol and other drug prevention programs.

Identify two ways to re-engage stakeholder enthusiasm in order to sustain prevention program gains and effectively implement current and future goals.

Identify two institutional, societal, economic, and political factors that may pose challenges to the progress of prevention programs, both on their campuses and nationally.

Articulate the important role that they can play in re-invigorating institutional enthusiasm and promoting continued long-term progress within their prevention programs.
What do we mean by Organizational Relapse

- When successful long term (ten years or more) evidence-based prevention programs begin to observe challenges in sustainability such as:
  - Plateaus in program progress
  - Disengagement of stakeholders
  - Questioning by the institution of need to persist with intervention
Thoughtful and comprehensive planning

With focus on sustainability

This is where to start

And where to come back to during times of relapse

What it takes to be a successful long-term program
Organizational readiness for change is a multi-level, multi-faceted construct.

Organizational members’ shared resolve to implement a change (change commitment).

Three key determinants of implementation capability
* Task demands
* Resource availability
* Situational factors.

Shared belief in their collective capability to make a change (change efficacy).

The Stages of Change: Not Just Important for Individuals we Serve…
“Quit whining. It’s the same distance.”
Risk Factors to Organizational Relapse

Institutional Barriers

- Changes in leadership
- Changes in front-line staffing
- Staff burnout
- Increased scarcity of and competition for resources
- Organizational restructuring
- Changes in reporting lines
- Lack of institutional memory
- "Learn by Google"
- Benchmarking strategies
Risk Factors to Organizational Relapse

- Societal and National-level barriers

  Shifts in focus of national-level prevention priorities

  Decreases in access to targeted external funding and technical assistance resources
Risk Factors to Organizational Relapse

Individual level barriers

- How we as prevention professionals can often get in our own way.
- How we react to the overall environment may impact our productivity.
- Lack of professional mentorship for new professionals
- Cultural expectations
- Advocacy
- Mission drift
- Maintaining the status quo and not keeping up to date with current literature
- Not hitting the “refresh button”
Suggestions for Enhancing Organizational Readiness for Progress: Addressing Relapse

- Revisit your original strategic plan
- Engage new and/or additional stakeholders in your efforts
- Use assessment tools to further assess readiness and clarify needs
Strategic Planning utilizing a Strategic Prevention Framework

Run all of your programs/interventions/activities through this framework

Utilize available resources such as NIAAA Call to Action, College AIM

Be able to articulate WHY you are doing what you are doing

Share strategically with stakeholders
Supporting Organizational Progress

- Collaboration
- Networking and Program Promotion
- Building Intervention Capacity
- Evaluation of Our Interventions
- Establishing a Diversified Funding Base
- Engaging Stakeholders to Support Program Sustainability
Strategies for Stakeholder Engagement

Articulate the need for intervention
- Use data to demonstrate need
- And to support proposed solutions
- Make data meaningful and accessible to your audience

Implement various methods of stakeholder engagement
- Use relevant language for various groups
- Propose a solution that is easy for stakeholders to understand
- Teach prevention language while avoiding jargon

Assign tasks
- Clearly identify what role each stakeholder plays
- Delineate tasks
Anticipate Stakeholders Thoughts

- Why do we need this program?
- What will it cost me in terms of time, staff and money?
- Are you going to make my work easier?
- How will I know it is working?
- What do you want from me?
Working with Administrators

New ideas and new challenges can be perceived as threats

Part of sustainable is not saying “I can’t” or “I won’t” or “it will never work”

Use data to support your position/program

Keep doors of possibilities open

Use the Strategic Planning Framework
Students as Stakeholders

Your program ultimately will improve the health and academic well-being of students

Determine value of new or improved program for students-increased access, personalized approach, evidence-based, response to student input

Seek student input throughout entire process

Articulate the value of program to students
Networking and Program Promotion

Have we increased program’s visibility and likelihood of sustainability?

How well do our established networks offer support and help to modify and improve efforts through exchange of ideas and techniques?

Are our networking efforts advancing insight into sustainability strategies and resources that might not have been identified locally, but have been successful for similar programs or groups?
Building Intervention Capacity

- Have we ensured that multiple program staff or coalition leaders and members are trained in the essential program elements or strategies?

- Have we developed written resources, such as manuals and ongoing documentation of program processes to ensure that programs are sustained with fidelity?

- If transitions are needed from one collaborator (individual or organization) to another, can this position be filled more appropriately and seamlessly based on the infrastructures we have established?

- Have we kept a written record of collaborators and the roles that they have played in our project?
Evaluation of Our Interventions

- Are we working with a qualified evaluator who is knowledgeable about appropriate and current data analytic methods for our project?
- Are we using tools that can most accurately and efficiently measure what we want to measure?
- Are our samples of students large enough to detect changes or differences when they exist?
- Has our evaluator “cleaned” our dataset thoroughly?
- What are the possible alternative explanations for negative or null results?
Establishing Diversified Funding

- Have we included sustainability funding options and support within our unit or campus strategic plan?
- Have we identified the types of funding sources to be pursued to operate and sustain particular program elements, the manner in which the approach will be made, and the person responsible for the approach?
- Have we established a timeline to secure funding for the project?
- Have we engaged stakeholders in sustainability discussions from the beginning of the project?
Sustainability

...A well-developed evidence-based program or intervention, in combination with a well-articulated training, implementation, and sustainability plan, can offer a road map to enhanced effectiveness and the capacity to implement and evaluate a broad scope of evidence-based services delivered to our students in most need of them.
Strategic Planning

Addictions Research Center

Project work group & Steering committee

Consultation with colleagues

Media advocacy

Presentations & Publications

Presidents Advisory Council on AOD Prevention

Sustainability
Experiences in Effective Prevention

- Core elements of effectiveness

- Exercise leadership
- Build coalitions
- Implement strategic planning
- Choose evidence-based programs
- Conduct a program evaluation
- Work toward sustainability
- Take the long view
Field Experiences in Effective Prevention

- Link prevention to the institution’s mission, values and priorities
- Strategic planning is an ongoing, dynamic process
- Engage the campus community in data collection and evaluation
- Promote student involvement
- Pay attention to strategic timing
- Hone communication skills
Surviving and Thriving in the Midst of “Organizational Relapse”

- Recognize that negative psychological and somatic symptoms are common responses to organizational relapse
- Avoid self-blame
- Adopt a realistic perspective on the possibilities for change
- Recognize that a certain amount of emotional distress is unavoidable
- Seek consultation from trusted colleagues
- Seek social support
- Diminish self-doubt
- Understand the potential impact on your productivity
- Engage in extra-institutional professional activities
- Accept the things you cannot change, change the things you can and have wisdom to know the difference
KEEP CALM AND MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU
Question and Answer
Action Planning
Action Planning

- What are factors that are posing challenges to the progress of prevention programs on your campus?

- Identify at least 2 strategies to address plateaus and/or relapse within your AOD program(s).

- Identify at least 2 ways to re-engage stakeholder/administration enthusiasm.