



Sustainability Plan



This publication was made possible by grant H79SP081638 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.

Introduction

“The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of particular activities delivered or the format in which they are delivered.”
 –Mancini & Marek (2002). There are four clarifying questions that need to be answered in order for sustainability planning to move forward:

- What are you trying to sustain? (put another way, What needs to be sustained?)
- Public Value: What evidence do you have that what you are doing is worth sustaining? (put another way, Why does this initiative deserve to be sustained?)
- Authorizing Environment: What institutional supports, structures, and/or policies need to be in place to achieve sustainability?
- Operational Capacity: What capacity is necessary to sustain this effort and where will that capacity come from?

Building the Sustainability Team

Before these questions can be answered, it is essential that you identify the key players. It is very important to consider your authorizing environment (Moore, 1995).

Who are the individuals in your agency, organization, coalition or community that need to be involved in conversations about sustainability? Please do not list your entire rosters. Be purposeful and intentional about the individuals who need to be at the table to discuss sustainability. This group must be big enough to be inclusive but small enough to move forward quickly. Please also consider individuals from outside your agency, organization, coalition or community that could play a role in sustaining the work of your SPF-PFS initiative (however you define it) in your community.

Current Members of our Sustainability Team:



- **Mollie Stevens:** CEO of Impact Prevention and an Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist. Works closely with the SPF-PFS-19 initiative.
- **Meagan Joseph:** Program Manager at Impact Prevention and an Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant. Works closely with Mollie Stevens for the SPF-PFS-19 initiative.
- **Dr. Jennifer Richards:** Health Planner/Accreditation Coordinator for the Lawrence County Health Department. Has been essential in making connections with schools for policy evaluation and is experienced in data collection.
- **Michele Bower:** Associate Director at the Adams, Lawrence, Scioto County ADAMHS Board. She is familiar with the prevention resources in our community and has experience with strategic planning and coalition work.

Sustainability Question #1: What are you trying to sustain?



- OHYES! Data collection is a key part of many aspects of Impact Prevention’s work with two coalitions Youth-Led IMPACT Teams and Adult-River Hills Prevention Connection. This data collection provides our Youth-Led IMPACT teams a snapshot of their school community which allows them to identify a problem of practice and intervening variables that cause the problem. With this information IMPACT Teams can create strategies for implementation to improve health and wellness in their school community. River Hills Prevention Connection relies on the Prevention Data Committee to review annual data for the Strategic Prevention Framework process also.
- Impact Prevention will maintain connections with the 10 School districts in Lawrence County to ensure yearly participation and data collection with the Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (OHYES!) Data collection. OHYES! Data collection is key for the continuance of a data driven process to identify needs and implements evidence-based strategies within the community.

Sustainability Question #2: Public Value - What evidence do you have that what you are doing is worth sustaining?

This initiative is positively impacting the community in the following capacities:

- **OHYES! Data Collection:** The focus on, prioritization of, and technical assistance with data collection during the SPF-PFS initiative has been an exceptionally valuable element for the Lawrence County community. The River Hills Prevention Connection Coalition's Prevention Data Sub-committee initially analyzed this data, along with the completion of Community Readiness Assessments and Adult/youth focus groups, to help determine that lack of family communication was the contributing factor in reference to the concern around underaged alcohol consumption. This opened the door to the adoption of the "Talk. They Hear You."® campaign. Further, all youth-led prevention teams in the area utilize this data in order to determine problems of focus in their school and community, which creates greater public value overall.
- **"Talk. They Hear You."® :** Throughout the SPF-PFS initiative, a core component (as a result of the previously mentioned data collection process) for Lawrence County has been the "Talk. They Hear You."® program. Ways that this has been implemented in the community include:

Campaigns

"...inclusion of the link to the 'Talk They Hear You' webpage on the Impact Prevention website..."

- **Print media:** Newspaper advertisements, conversation starting postcards, inserts into local theater programs, inclusion in a coloring book distributed to Pre-K to 2nd grade students and their caregivers, crayons with the logo printed on the box to accompany the crayons, billboards, printed fans with the "Talk. They Hear You."® brand image and a QR code directing to the "Talk. They Hear You."® website, and banners displayed at local sporting events.
- **Digital media:** Geofencing advertisements (directed at local schools, sporting and community events, etc.), SAMHSA-created graphics and videos used on Impact Prevention social media, inclusion of the link to the "Talk. They Hear You."® webpage on the Impact Prevention website, and banner ads on the IHeart Media phone app.
- **Broadcast media:** Radio advertisements customized to the community using the voice of a local celebrity.
- **Braiding with the Up & Away CDC Campaign:** As mentioned previously, Lawrence County had coloring books and crayons with the "Talk. They Hear You."® logo printed. These coloring books, titled "Up & Away" were created by the Center for Disease Control to promote proper medication storage among caregivers and general medication safety for the children who receive them. In order to braid this campaign with "Talk. They Hear You."® Lawrence County included a SAMHSA-created advertisement that would direct caregivers to the "Talk. They Hear You."® website.

The following results are valued by the community

- Lawrence County is involved in an initiative called “Hidden in Plain Sight” which helps caretakers identify diversion safes (items that look like ordinary household items, but hold secret compartments in which paraphernalia could be hidden) that they may find in the room of their young person. However, in order to ensure that an emphasis on positive communication is made, “Talk. They Hear You.”[®] conversation starter postcards were handed out to caretakers who participated. These individuals expressed gratitude for the combined approach and noted that they felt better equipped to utilize these tools.
- Anecdotally, community members who have been present during community events (where the “Talk. They Hear You.”[®] campaign has been discussed) have expressed the need for continued conversations around tough topics and we’re glad that this need is being addressed.

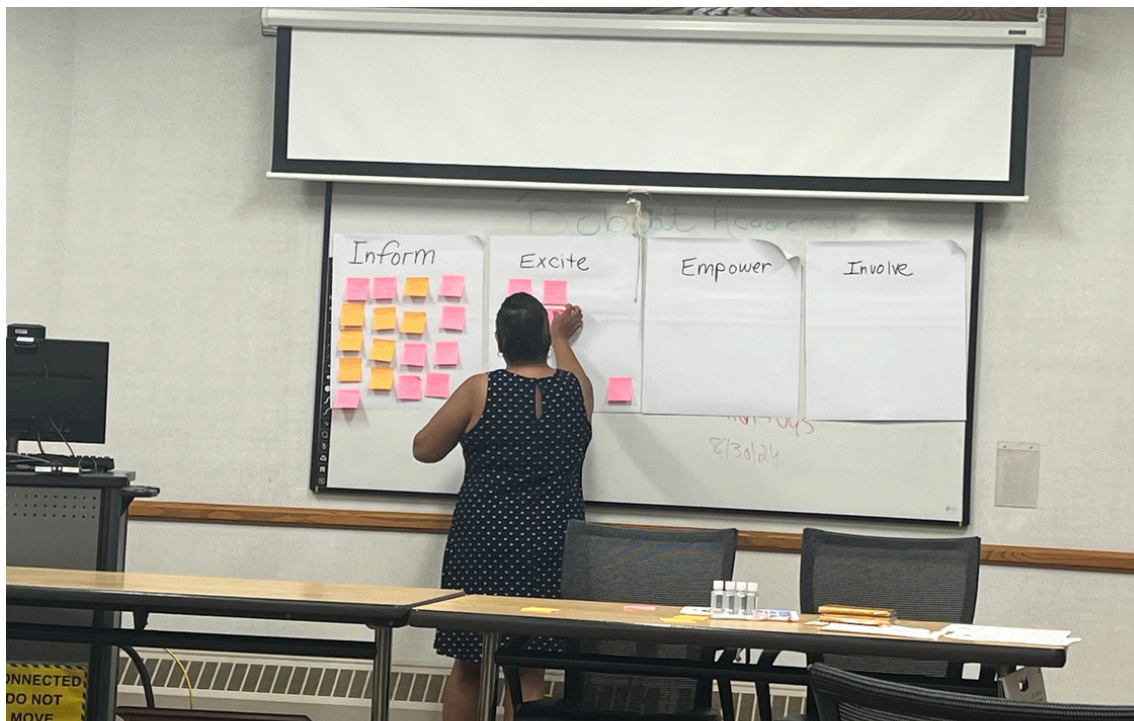
The following results are valued by the Leadership team

- OHYES! Data is showing that since the beginning of the initiative, there has been a very slight increase in young people reporting that in the past 12 months their parents have discussed with them the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, & drug use, with 49.39% reporting “yes” in the 2021-2022 year for Lawrence County. In 2017-2018, 47.79% of Lawrence County youth reported “yes” according to the OHYES! Data.
- While advertising for the “Talk. They Hear You.”[®] program, the leadership team has found that there has been a significant amount of exposure to the public through the digital media approaches. Partnerships with Bullseye Media for the previously mentioned videos and geofencing, and IHeart Media for radio presence have promoted the initiative through individual impressions.

Results from October 1st, 2023 - December 31st, 2023 are:

- Bullseye Media: 532,000 impressions
- IHeart Media: 343,000 impressions
- Total: 875,000 impressions

Sustainability Question #3: Authorizing Environment - What institutional supports, structures, and/or policies need to be in place to achieve sustainability of your SPF-PFS initiative?



It may be helpful to frame your answers using the following four SWOT Elements:

Strengths - What current institutional supports, structures, and/or policies support your SPF-PFS initiative (however you define it)?

Weaknesses - Of these structures, which could be strengthened to ensure sustainability of SPF-PFS initiative (however you define it)?

Opportunities - Which structures are still needed to ensure sustaining your SPF-PFS initiative (however you define it)?

Threats - What structures are blocking or obstructing your SPF-PFS initiative (however you define it)?

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- School buy-in - They are using OHYES! Data related to underage drinking
- School policies - SEL requirements & Other substance misuse/violence prevention mandates
- Youth-led Prevention model[PS1] (YLP is a data-driven model that develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes around youth empowerment to make positive change in their schools and communities related to substance misuse prevention and mental health promotion) relies on OHYES data
- Mechanism to use the survey
- Use of the OHYES! Survey Data by the youth ensures that services are most effective for the youth. Youth have a voice in what services they receive
- Having national and state data, not just local.
- Authorizing Environments: Schools, Funders

Weaknesses

- Sex-related/LGBTQ+ data is not collected due to school concerns about parent consent
- School staff overwhelm - Time to use and usefulness of data
- Continued conversations with superintendents are necessary
- Schools may need conversations around how they can use the data - strategic planning, grants, etc. Need to know that youth can actively use it
- Inconsistency of survey from the state.
- More media (radio, print, geofencing, digital ads, etc. through Bullseye Media/IHeart Radio) about awareness[PS1] and use of the survey Could be more proactive in advertising statewide

Opportunities

- Media campaign could be helpful at state and local levels. Possibly have youth voice in the promotion of the survey
- Liaison/Info session - Discuss how this data can be used for grants
- Using data to design no-cost materials lessons/videos/etc
- Have youth speak to superintendents about how their schools have been positively impacted
- Upcoming improvements to survey platform

Threats

- Funding sources - Identifying sources
- Emerging substance trends - evolving data needs
- Infrastructure for implementation
- Gaps in understanding of how the survey data can be used and its importance for Youth-led Prevention efforts
- Gap in survey coordinator training statewide How do you work through the process

Sustainability Question #4: Operational Capacity - What capacity is necessary to sustain this effort and where will that capacity come from?

Strengths -

- What operational capacity has your agency, organization, coalition or community built through networks (i.e., partnerships, collaborations, etc.) during this grant opportunity?
- What internal operational capacity has your agency, organization, coalition or community built through this grant opportunity?
- What current skills and expertise does your initiative rely on to sustain your initiative's positive outcomes?
- What current resources are necessary to sustain your SPF-PFS initiative?

Weaknesses -

- Of the resources listed, which are insufficient?

Opportunities -

- Of these skills and expertise, which could be strengthened to ensure sustained positive outcomes?
- How will this increased internal capacity contribute to the sustainability of your SPF-PFS efforts?
- Which skills and expertise are still needed to sustain positive outcomes?
- How will these networks contribute to the sustainability of your agency, organization, coalition or community's SPF-PFS efforts?

Threats -

- Of the resources listed, which are vulnerable?

Strengths

- Throughout the SPF-PFS initiative, we have developed a closer relationship with the Voinovich School, which has connected us to other networks of support. Similarly, this fostered a close relationship with Adams County and we have been able to make further connections to other agencies and supports through them. For example, Adams County helped to support our Hidden in Plain Sight initiative. These relationships naturally also lent themselves to support throughout the data collection process.
- Through this grant, we have seen great growth within the agency (for example, the expansion of data collection to all Lawrence County schools). Additionally, we have added additional staff members, helped to develop a succession plan for moving forward, and supported the advancement of credentials for staff.
- **What current skills and expertise does your initiative rely on to sustain your initiative's positive outcomes?** One critical skill needed is the ability to build relationships. When developing these networks, or connecting with schools for the data collection process we are able to better serve our community.
- **What current resources are necessary to sustain your SPF-PFS initiative?** Resources needed are primarily partnerships. Luckily the OHYES! Survey comes to schools at no cost, and so the funding needed is mostly directed at staff wages for their time helping schools work through the survey process. The support from the Voinovich School and OHMHAS is one of the elements that most critically impacts data collection.

Weaknesses

- Lack of sufficient funds to keep programming at current funding levels.
- All Scioto County Schools have not yet bought in to data collection through OHYES!
- In the future, participating school districts may need to provide funding to cover expenses for data collection should current implementation of the OHYES! survey change.

Opportunities



- The establishment of data collection through OHYES! has put us in a good position to apply for Drug-Free Communities dollars to expand our work around SPF to include two other substances.
- Sharing our work and what we have learned through our work with this initiative has led to a larger collaboration of prevention professionals within and outside of the state of Ohio.
- Expanding our prevention work to include additional schools in Scioto County.

Threats

- **Drug-Free Communities funding is very competitive NOFO.**
- The partnership with Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service provided technical assistance and made data collection more accessible for our agency. While we know that there would never be a time when we would not be able to reach out to them for support, we anticipate that their capacity to provide this technical assistance will be diminished.

Reflections & Next Steps

- Throughout the SPF-PFS initiative there has been ongoing discussion regarding the sustainability of efforts and an emphasis on it as a central element of the SPF process. For example, our agency has grown in the field because of mentorship and coaching provided by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service. We are more confident in our ability to collect data, analyze results to identify a problem of practice and be knowledgeable about evidence-based strategies to address the issue at hand. Our relationships with our local community, schools, agencies and government has grown and we are now looked to as experts in the prevention field. Data collection is a key element of the SPF and we are fortunate to have a state partner that assists us in the provision of a quality collection tool.
- As with most grant-funded initiatives, organizational capacity and funding are potential obstacles for the continuation of data collection efforts and the “Talk. They Hear You.”[®] program. As additional funding streams are added, the responsibilities and deliverables for these initiatives will also be included.
- Continuing to work with local schools is key in our data collection efforts. The OHYES! survey administered in the local schools provides the information needed to make data-informed strategic plans. With the SPF as our planning tool, the River Hills Prevention Connection Coalition and our youth-led IMPACT teams plan strategies that address local conditions. While this work will continue regardless of future funding, our coalition plans to apply for the Drug-Free Communities grant to continue the growth and expansion of prevention work in Lawrence and Scioto Counties.

Update: Impact Prevention Inc. received a Drug-Free Communities Funding Award in September 2024



Contact us:

**Impact Prevention Inc.
Riverhills Community Center
628 South 9th Street
Ironton, OH 45638
mollie@impactprevention.org
meagan@impactprevention.org**