

Applying the SPF to Reach LGBTQIA Youth and Young Adults

What are all those acronyms?

SPF is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Strategic Prevention Framework, which can be used to guide prevention efforts. That process includes assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation and evaluation--all with a focus on sustainability and cultural responsiveness.

LGBTQIA is shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. It's important to ensure our prevention efforts are culturally responsive to the LGBTQIA community. It's also important to recognize the layers of identity within the LGBTQIA community--for example, bisexual women and girls tend to face greater substance use disparities, and bisexual women and girls of color even greater disparities.

How can the SPF help?

ASSESSMENT

- Assess the needs of LGBTQIA youth and young adults by looking at data on substance use and related risk and protective factors
- Assess existing community resources such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) within schools
- Assess the readiness of parents, schools, and the broader community to address LGBTQIA disparities

CAPACITY

- Build trust with members of the LGBTQIA community through open dialogue and sincere engagement
- Provide LGBTQIA-specific diversity training for professionals in the community, including: teachers and other school staff, law enforcement officers, public health officials, social workers, business owners, healthcare providers, etc.

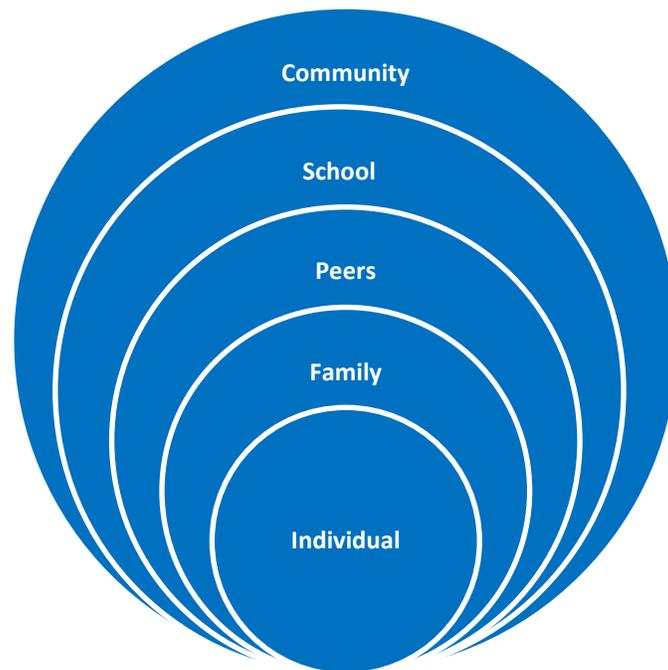
PLANNING + IMPLEMENTATION

- Involve LGBTQIA youth and young adults, and their families, in the planning process in meaningful ways
- Identify promising strategies for supporting LGBTQIA youth and young adults (i.e., GSAs, inclusive curriculum, safe spaces)
- Adapt substance use prevention strategies as needed to better reach LGBTQIA youth and young adults

EVALUATION

- Track increases in the number of LGBTQIA youth and young adults, and their families, in your coalition and youth groups
- Measure the extent to which substance use prevention strategies are effective for LGBTQIA youth and young adults as compared to their cis-gender and heterosexual peers
- Track reductions in substance use and risk factors, and increases in protective factors, for LGBTQIA youth and young adults

Where can communities intervene to enhance supports for LGBTQIA youth and young adults?



Individuals: Work to reduce individual risk factors such as depressive symptoms or stress. Work to enhance protective factors such as coping skills.

Family: Provide support and resources for parents of LGBTQIA youth and young adults, such as parent support groups or toolkits. Identify parents of LGBTQIA youth and young adults who can serve as mentors to other parents who have kids coming out. Provide LGBTQIA-specific diversity training for all interested parents—even if they don't have a child who is LGBTQIA, their child may have friends who are.

Peers: Identify peer advocates who can help ensure neighborhoods and schools are welcoming spaces. Offer bystander training to enable peers to intervene when LGBTQIA youth and young adults are bullied or harassed. Identify LGBTQIA community members who can serve as mentors for youth as they are coming out.

School: Provide safe spaces for LGBTQIA youth and young adults. Ensure curricula and other education materials are inclusive of the LGBTQIA community. Identify trusting teachers and staff who LGBTQIA youth and young adults can talk with about issues.

Community: Encourage businesses to create welcoming environments for LGBTQIA youth and young adults by using inclusive signs, stickers and/or flags. Provide LGBTQIA-specific diversity training for professionals in a variety of sectors.